



2020 - 2036

Made Neighbourhood Plan (December 2021)

Wooler Parish Council



Foreword

Our Neighbourhood is great. Our aim in this Plan is to make it even better. We are talking about the next fifteen to twenty years, which to youngsters is a lifetime. A lifetime of living, working and, hopefully, time for playing.

Supported by the Parish Council, but put together by people who are passionate about the place and the people who live in this wonderful area, countless hours of discussion, debate and careful thought have gone into this document.

Everyone in the community has a voice, with different agendas, different attitudes. We've tried to balance these many voices with common sense and a fairness to everyone.

Without the input from all areas of the Parish, this document would not be what it is. We thank everyone for their input.

Ideas are great! Actions are better!

Chair of Wooler Neighbourhood Plan



Chair of Wooler Parish Council



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1.0 Introduction

What is a Neighbourhood Plan, and how does it fit into the Planning System?

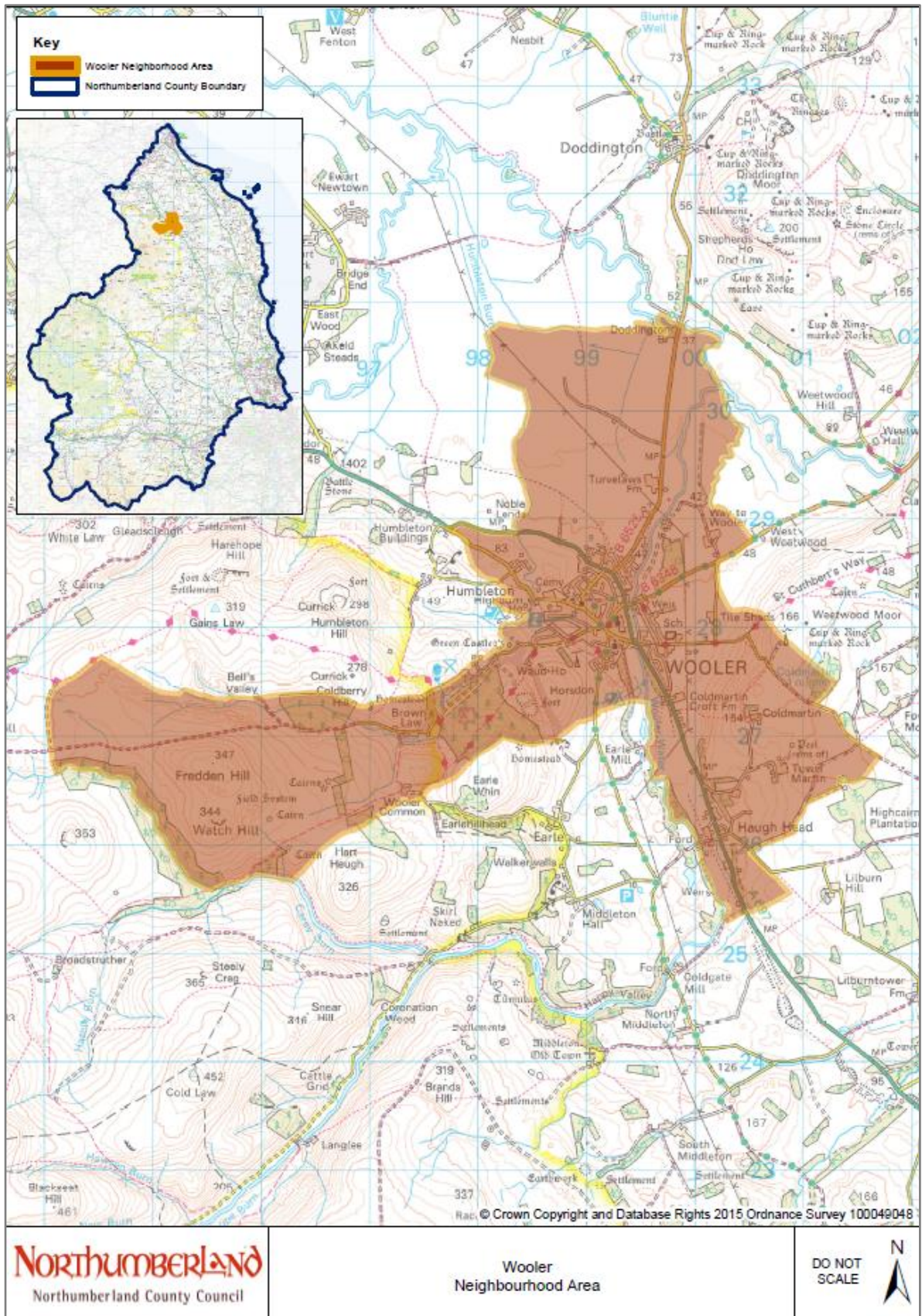
1.1 In April 2012 the Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers to allow local communities to shape development in their areas by preparing a neighbourhood development plan.

1.2 The national planning system requires that decisions are made on planning applications in accordance with policies contained in the statutory development plan for an area unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan), forms part of the statutory development plan for Wooler Parish and will be used to decide whether to approve or refuse planning applications in the area. The Plan has been prepared having regard to national planning policy and guidance and is in line with strategic policies in the current statutory development plan.

1.3 The Plan will be used by planning officers at Northumberland County Council and Northumberland National Park Authority to determine planning applications alongside the rest of the current statutory development plan. It will also be used by planning inspectors when determining planning appeals.

1.4 The whole of Wooler Parish was designated for the purposes of 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in November 2015¹ as the area for the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan (see map). The Plan relates only to this Parish and to no other areas and is the only neighbourhood plan in the designated area. Wooler Parish Council is the qualifying body entitled, through planning legislation, to prepare a neighbourhood plan for the area. This Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group consisting of Parish Councillors and local residents. The Steering Group has been given formal authority from the Parish Council to carry out this work. Support and assistance has been provided by officers from Northumberland County Council and the Northumberland National Park Authority.

¹ Northumberland National Park subsequently approved this designation.



Wooller Neighbourhood Area Map



Wooler from the parish church, looking towards Humbleton Hill

What can a neighbourhood plan do for Wooler?

1.5 A neighbourhood plan is a community-led planning framework for guiding the future development of an area, whilst ensuring that important local assets are conserved and improved. This Plan is about the use and development of land and contains a vision, a set of objectives and planning policies for improving the area. It allocates key sites for development and supports other types of development whilst seeking to protect those elements of Wooler that are cherished.

1.6 People in Wooler want to see the Parish grow and become a more self-sustaining community which has an appropriate amount of housing, employment and business opportunities, as well as a strong and cohesive community with facilities and services to support local people. We also want Wooler to remain an attractive centre, building on its function as a gateway to the National Park and bringing visitors to the area.

1.7 The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan will be instrumental in ensuring that Wooler grows in a sustainable way and in a way that will meet objectives identified by the local community. The Plan will guide the physical development of the Parish over the Plan period. The Plan will help to maintain all the benefits we have, but just as importantly, to ensure that all new development (for example, the houses we need and the jobs we want to create) adds to the character of the Parish by being well located and well designed.

1.8 The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan provides locally specific planning policies which give clear guidance as to what kind of development will or will not be supported in the Parish.

1.9 This means that, for the first time, our community will have a formal say in how our Parish develops as a living, working, sustainable community. The Plan additionally contains a number of 'Community Actions' which cover other issues raised by the community which are not land-use planning issues.

What evidence have we used to prepare the plan?

1.10 Extensive evidence has been used to prepare the Plan. Much of this evidence has come from local consultations. In addition, evidence already collected by Northumberland County Council to inform their emerging Northumberland Local Plan has been used. Previous studies of the local economy, housing, landscape and townscape of Wooler and the wider Glendale area have also been reviewed.

1.11 Wooler Parish Council commissioned, in partnership with Community Action Northumberland, a full Housing Needs Assessment for Wooler. The Parish Council also commissioned AECOM consultancy (through Locality) to produce a suitability assessment of a number of housing sites, green spaces and employment sites. AECOM have also produced a Housing Needs Assessment to advise on the need for new housing in the Parish and have carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan as a whole.

1.12 A full list of the documents produced as an evidence base for the Plan is provided at Annex C. All documents are contained on the Neighbourhood Plan website: www.northumberlandparishes.uk/wooler/documents/neighbourhood-plan

What consultation has taken place?

1.13 The Steering Group has engaged with the local community and other stakeholders through direct consultation via a series of consultation events and questionnaires over the two years of the Plan's development, each focussing on themes and topic areas. The website www.northumberlandparishes.uk/wooler/documents/neighbourhood-plan has been regularly updated with information about the content and outcomes of consultation. The final stage of consultation carried out by Wooler Parish Council was the Regulation 14 (pre-submission) Consultation in spring 2019. The results of that consultation and information about how the Plan was amended to incorporate comments is contained in the Consultation Statement which was submitted to the County Council with the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan. The County Council subsequently carried out further publicity and consultation for a period of six weeks on the submitted Plan prior to an independent examination being undertaken.

National and Local Planning Policy Context

1.14 The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan must help deliver sustainable development in the context of strategic policies contained in the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.

1.15 Neighbourhood plans must also be prepared having regard to national planning policy and guidance. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) combined with National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides the most up to date advice from Central Government on planning policy.

1.16 The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should 'support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies'.

1.17 Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict, unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

1.18 This plan seeks to give clarity to developers and to the local community about the kind of development which will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area.

2.0 Wooler Today: Vision, Objectives and Key Issues



Wooler from Whitsun Bank

2.1 Wooler Parish, in North Northumberland, includes a lively market town and outlying settlements surrounded by fields and woodland. Wooler Town is a living and working centre with a mix of businesses, and acts as a service centre for the wider rural area. It is set in a beautiful landscape on the edge of the Cheviot Hills. It is a popular tourist destination and acts as a Gateway to the Cheviots and the Northumberland National Park. Wooler has a strong sense of community, rooted in its agricultural past, which is still very much alive today. A functioning mart and a number of local businesses and retailers, make Wooler an attractive market town.

2.2 Consultation in the local community identified a number of key issues, some of which could be addressed through planning policies and some of which will need to be addressed in other ways. These are being considered as Community Actions to be taken forward by Wooler Parish Council (See Annex B). The issues which can be addressed through planning policies have been grouped into five themes. This section examines each theme in turn and outlines the objectives agreed to address the issues of these themes. Planning policies to guide development overall are then provided in Part I of this Plan, followed by policies related to specific development allocations in Part II. Parts III to VII then provide policies to achieve each of the objectives.

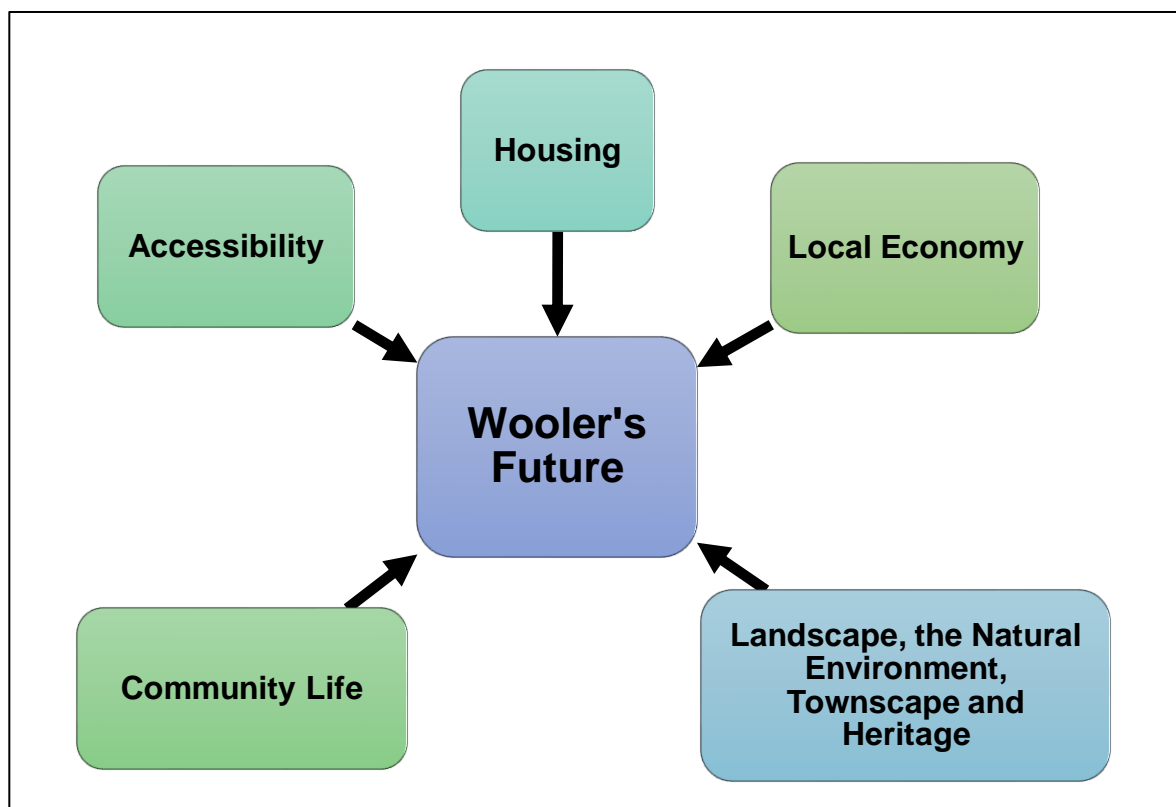
2.3 Based on community consultation and key issues identified in the process, the following vision has been agreed for the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan:

Our Vision

By 2036, Wooler, as the Gateway to the Northumberland National Park and an important service-centre to the surrounding area, will be a sustainable, vibrant and friendly place for all ages to live, work and play. It will be a place with a strong sense of community: a place which attracts visitors and welcomes new residents. To sustain shops and services, and to achieve a more even mix of young and old, Wooler will grow, ensuring that new development provides the right type and mix of housing to cater for all ages. Our town centre will continue to flourish, and Wooler will have more opportunities for business enterprise to start and to grow, with an emphasis on providing more employment opportunities, especially for younger people. All these aspirations are set within the context of respecting and making the most of our special landscapes, natural environment, townscape and distinct local heritage.

Objectives and Key Issues

2.4 This vision is supported by 5 key objectives which revolve around the distinct themes of Housing; Local Economy; Landscape, the Natural Environment, Townscape, and Heritage; Community Life; and Accessibility. These objectives, and the policies which develop from them, should always be seen as interrelated, and in the context of the overall vision.



Objectives for Wooler

Objective 1: Housing

To encourage the provision of well-designed new housing which respects the distinctive landscape and townscape of Wooler Parish and provides variety and choice for people in order to enable more young families to stay or to move into the area, and to help those on lower incomes and older people to meet their housing needs.

2.5 Key Issues raised by the local community and other studies:

- Previous studies of housing needs in our area, as well as comments in surveys and during consultation events, underline that our present stock of housing units is not sufficient to meet present and future needs;
- Our Housing Needs Assessments identify a need for affordable housing (social housing, private rented housing and for part-purchase) especially for newly forming households;

- There is a need for smaller housing units for older people seeking to downsize and for those with disabilities;
- There is a particular need for affordable housing for young families;
- There is a need to provide for live-work opportunities for those starting a business or working from home and for self- build plots;
- There is an increasingly ageing population (above the County average) resulting in a shortage of extra-care housing;
- There is potential for new residential uses by converting existing buildings and using brownfield sites in the town;
- A lot of land is available for housing, within and adjacent to the existing built-up area of Wooler. Some of these sites could accommodate a considerable number of units;
- The community has a strong desire for new development to be of appropriate design and layout and 'fit in' to local character. There is a desire to avoid the reproduction of 'mass produced' design for larger schemes;
- There are constraints to the delivery of housing, such as sensitive landscapes, archaeology and the natural environment.

Objective 2: Local Economy

To enhance Wooler's economy with increased opportunities for business growth and to maintain a vibrant town centre to attract a variety of businesses.

2.6 Key Issues raised by the local community and other studies:

- We don't want Wooler to become just a 'dormitory town'. So we have to try to do things that will ensure Wooler remains a thriving working, as well as living, community and a balanced and vital part of North Northumberland;
- Change in the location of our schools has already altered the dynamics of the town centre and footfall is well down;
- Out of town and online shopping is making it difficult for traditional high streets;
- Nurturing fragile small businesses is vital and needs promoting at the local level;
- Tourism needs to respect the special qualities of the area;
- Businesses need good quality infrastructure – broadband, energy supply, water supply etc. Not all parts of the area are well-served in this respect;
- Support for business parks and storage facilities for small firms needs to become easier;
- Sustaining opportunities for local businesses is as important as maintaining our heritage;
- We need to sustain our future energy needs but must not damage our key landscape assets so any proposed renewable energy projects need to be carefully assessed and managed.

Objective 3: Landscape, Natural Environment, Townscape and Heritage

To cherish our distinctive landscapes, natural environment, townscape and local heritage by ensuring new development is located to encourage improvements in key areas of the town and to ensure that the design of new development pays special attention to the distinctive character of Wooler Parish. Our historic environment will be an inspiration to shape new development and our heritage assets will be protected for future generations.

2.7 Key Issues raised by the local community and other studies:

- Any new development must be in keeping with the special qualities of the surrounding landscapes and safeguard key views;
- We need to conserve particularly sensitive areas of Wooler, such as the western and south-western edges of the town, in order to safeguard how the town looks when seen from elsewhere, and particularly from the Northumberland National Park;
- New development should be encouraged but as far as possible it should be clustered in and around the existing settlement, particularly around the northern and eastern edge of Wooler town to minimise landscape impacts;
- The visual appearance of the eastern and southern settlement edges of Wooler could be enhanced, perhaps with more tree planting;
- Wooler is an important 'gateway' town for visitors to the Cheviots and the wider Glendale area and needs to look well-cared for, with its particular character maintained and enhanced, as this makes a difference both to the quality of life of residents and in attracting visitors;
- The stretch of South Road between The Peth and Berwick Road detracts from the appearance of this important part of Wooler; there is a need to improve and regenerate this area of the town;
- There is a need to maintain and improve our key open and green spaces (see Community Section);
- Key aspects of Wooler's townscape identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal for Wooler need to be specified and included in planning policies;
- We need to promote our heritage of ancient monuments and other historic assets through the provision of more interpretation boards and trails;
- We need to ensure that new development does not have a negative impact on our lesser known heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets, and our ancient monuments;
- We need to ensure that we protect and cherish our natural environment and wildlife.

Objective 4: Community Life

We will protect existing community facilities and services and support the development of new ones to maintain a vibrant local community and attract visitors to the area.

2.8 Key issues raised by the local community and other studies:

- Recent years have seen the loss of a number of services and facilities, including the dentist and two banks. A school building and the building for the Sure-Start project for young families are no longer used due to the First School being moved to the Middle School site;
- There is very limited 'early years' (0-2 years) provision in the Parish;
- The community are concerned that there should be no further loss of facilities. Wooler has recently lost its last remaining bank. Other facilities such as the Schools, the Post Office, the Community Police Service, the Fire Station, the Medical Centre, the Library and Tourist Information Centre within the Cheviot Centre are all vital for our community to continue to function sustainably. Our community is growing and, in order to thrive, we need to ensure our daily needs are met and that our community is a safe place to live;
- There is a shortage of cemetery space in Wooler and provision of an additional local site is a priority;
- There are a number of premises and buildings available for social and community gatherings. Many local clubs and societies are dependent on these facilities for meetings and/or fundraising activities. We would like to provide a positive policy framework to protect these assets;
- The community would like to retain venues for structured outdoor activities and informal recreational uses;
- There is no leisure centre in Wooler and no public swimming pool (other than a small swimming pool at the nearby caravan site and a shallow pool at the School).

Objective 5: Accessibility

Ensure new development contributes to the accessibility of Wooler for residents and visitors. We want better access links between the town centre, the countryside, housing areas and employment areas. We also want to ensure that parking is managed in a way that does not have a negative impact on the landscape.

2.9 Key Issues raised by the local community and other studies:

- The hilly nature of access to the town centre leads to many residents and visitors using cars and mobility scooters;
- The need to improve the experience of residents and visitors walking round Wooler is important, and in particular the footpaths along the A697 and towards the top of Ryecroft Way are inadequate and dangerous in parts;
- The road junction outside the Co-op is very difficult to negotiate for pedestrians and drivers;
- Some public footpaths are overgrown and/or dangerous;
- The difficulties in parking and the limited bus services restrict access for visitors into Wooler and Wooler residents out of Wooler. As tourism is a major contributor to the economy it is crucial that access is improved;
- There is insufficient parking in close proximity to the town centre particularly providing level access to the town centre;
- Parking on pavements in the High Street and in residential areas creates difficulties for pedestrians and in relation to emergency service access;
- Most family units have two (and sometimes more) cars and this impacts on parking space;
- There is a lack of signage around the town to indicate footpath routes and key locations;
- There are traffic 'pinch points' at the junctions of High Street/Ramsay's Lane and the A697/Chatton Road Bridge and A697/Brewery Road;
- There are a limited number of charging points for electric cars.

2.10 These objectives, in combination, deliver the vision for Wooler. The policies in Part I provide an integrated, over-arching approach to Wooler's future development in the context of the above vision and objectives. The policies in Part II detail specific development allocations resulting from our approach. Parts III to VII provide policies relating specifically to each objective. The policies to deliver each objective are set out in the table overleaf.

| Objective | Policies to achieve this objective |
|--|---|
| Objective 1: Housing | <i>Policy 1: Discharge into the Rivers Till and Tweed</i> <i>Policy 2: Locally Distinctive and High-Quality Design</i> <i>Policy 3.1: Land at the Former First School Site off Burnhouse Road</i> <i>Policy 3.2: Land South of the Martins</i> <i>Policy 3.3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's / Ferguson's Yard</i> <i>Policy 3.4: Land at Burnhouse Road</i> <i>Policy 4: Housing Development in the Plan Area</i> <i>Policy 5: New Housing Development – Design Principles</i> <i>Policy 6: Rural Exception and Entry-Level Exception Affordable Housing</i> <i>Policy 7: Housing for Older People</i> <i>Policy 8: Housing Development in Outlying Settlements</i> |
| Objective 2: Local Economy | <i>Policy 1: Discharge into the Rivers Till and Tweed</i> <i>Policy 2: Locally Distinctive and High-Quality Design</i> <i>Policy 3.3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's / Ferguson's Yard</i> <i>Policy 3.5: Land East of the Auction Mart</i> <i>Policy 9: Existing Employment Sites</i> <i>Policy 10: Business Development</i> <i>Policy 11: Development in the Main Shopping Streets in Wooler Town</i> <i>Policy 12: Tourism Facilities</i> <i>Policy 13: Overnight Tourist Accommodation</i> <i>Policy 14: Broadband Provision in New Development</i> <i>Policy 15: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development</i> |
| Objective 3: Landscape, Natural Environment, Townscape and Heritage | <i>Policy 1: Discharge into the Rivers Till and Tweed</i> <i>Policy 2: Locally Distinctive and High-Quality Design</i> <i>Policy 3.3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's / Ferguson's Yard</i> <i>Policy 3.4: Land at Burnhouse Road</i> <i>Policy 16: South Road, the Peth and the Gateways to Wooler Town</i> <i>Policy 17: Landscaping, Hedgerows and Trees</i> <i>Policy 18: Wooler Conservation Area</i> <i>Policy 19: Development on the Western and South-western Edges of Wooler Town</i> |
| Objective 4: Community Life | <i>Policy 1: Discharge into the Rivers Till and Tweed</i> <i>Policy 2: Locally Distinctive and High-Quality Design</i> <i>Policy 3.1: Land at the Former First School Site off Burnhouse Road</i> <i>Policy 3.6: School Farm Field, Weetwood Road</i> <i>Policy 20: Local Green Spaces</i> <i>Policy 21: Recreational Land and Facilities</i> <i>Policy 22: Community Facilities</i> <i>Policy 23: New Community Facilities</i> |
| Objective 5: Accessibility | <i>Policy 3.1: Land at the Former First School Site off Burnhouse Road</i> <i>Policy 3.2: Land South of the Martins</i> <i>Policy 3.3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's / Ferguson's Yard</i> <i>Policy 3.5: Land East of the Auction Mart</i> <i>Policy 3.6: School Farm Field, Weetwood Road</i> <i>Policy 24: Footpaths and Cycleways</i> <i>Policy 25: The Wooler Railway Line</i> |

The Policies to deliver each Objective

3.0 Planning Policies

3.1 Land use planning policies provide clarity on what development will be supported in the Plan area and what criteria will be used to establish whether a proposal is acceptable or not.

3.2 Decisions on planning applications must be made using the statutory development plan. Decisions must also have regard to other material considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.

3.3 Once the Neighbourhood Plan is brought into force it becomes part of the statutory development plan and the policies in the Plan will take precedence in decision-making over any relevant policies in the current development plan if there is any conflict between those policies. Any planning proposal must be in accordance with the prevailing approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.²

3.4 Where issues have been raised by the local community that are not land-use planning matters, 'community actions' have been proposed. A full list of these actions is provided in Annex B and Wooler Parish Council will take these forward and monitor progress.

Strategic Planning Context

3.5 The current strategic planning context for Wooler is set out in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan (1999). That Local Plan identifies the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed as the main focus for development in the former Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed; and seeks to encourage Wooler to maintain its role as a secondary centre for housing, employment and the provision of services. The emerging Northumberland Local Plan defines Wooler as a second tier 'Service Centre', sitting below 'Main Towns' such as Berwick-upon-Tweed in the settlement hierarchy for Northumberland. This is essentially the same strategic land-use planning context as exists currently through the Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan. The emerging Northumberland Local Plan expects that Service Centres, including Wooler, will accommodate employment, housing and services that maintain and strengthen their roles. Strategic planning policies for that part of the Parish situated within Northumberland National Park are set out in the Northumberland National Park Local Plan (July 2020)

3.6 Wooler is a local hub for services for its satellite communities. It has an important cluster of agricultural engineering and construction companies. The County Council has proposed through the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that the scale of development directed towards Service Centres will generally be at a lower level than that proposed for Main Towns. The emerging Northumberland Local Plan proposes a minimum housing requirement for Wooler Parish of 170 net additional dwellings over the plan period. The County Council has confirmed that this should be treated as an indicative minimum requirement until the emerging Local Plan is adopted; and is satisfied that this amount of additional housing will be met through existing commitments.

² Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Reading the policies

3.7 Each planning policy itself is contained within a blue box. Each policy is preceded by an explanation of that policy, providing more information and background to the specific policy and assisting its interpretation.

3.8 The Plan is to be read as a whole. Cross-referencing within policies is kept to a minimum. All policies relevant to a decision on a planning application should be read in conjunction with each other.

3.9 Clarity on the meaning of words and phrases used both in policies and supporting text is provided in the glossary at the end of the Plan (Annex A).

Part I: Sustainable Development

3.10 Policies in this section promote the achievement of sustainable development and thereby seek to realise the vision for Wooler Parish set out in the Plan. These policies should be read alongside all other relevant policies in the Plan. At the heart of the vision for the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan is the desire to achieve development which will sustain our community into the future, by providing housing, opportunities for employment and improved community facilities within the context of preserving what is special about Wooler and the landscapes around it. Specific policies elsewhere in the Plan relate to individual types of development.



Looking over Wooler from the top of Humbleton Hill

3.11 Planning legislation and national planning policy and guidance identify a clear approach to the management of development in certain designated areas. National Parks have the highest status of protection in relation to their landscape and scenic beauty. National planning policy requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. It is also a requirement that great weight be given to the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage in such areas. It is expected that the scale and extent of development in National Parks will be limited and that planning applications for major development will be refused other than in exceptional circumstances in accordance with national planning policy and relevant policies in the Northumberland National Park **Local Plan** ~~Core Strategy and/or the development plan~~.

Policy 1: Discharge into the Rivers Till and Tweed

3.12 The Wooler Water is part of the Till Catchment Rivers Site of Special Scientific Interest and River Tweed Special Area of Conservation, and thus is protected under national and international wildlife legislation. Unfortunately there has been a longstanding failure of the stretch of river below the outflow from the Wooler Sewage Treatment Works to reach its SSSI condition target for water quality, primarily because of the amount of phosphorus that enters the river from that outflow. To address this issue Northumbrian Water is currently installing a phosphate-stripping plant at the Sewage Treatment Works under its PR14 investment programme, and this is due to become operational by April 2020. However, until that unit becomes operational, any further increase in sewage flows to the treatment works

is going to exacerbate this problem, and therefore it is necessary to ensure that the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan does not permit any new development to be occupied until that plant is operational.

3.13 Water quality limits are reviewed periodically, and the limit for phosphorus may well be further reduced in the future. As planning applications come forward over the lifetime of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans, these will be subject to individual Habitat Regulations Assessments with regard to the River Tweed SAC and assessment of impacts on the Till Catchment Rivers SSSI. This will ensure that the planning process can take account of changing parameters for water quality.

Policy 1: Discharge into the Rivers Till and Tweed

Development that requires any discharge through the Wooler Sewage Treatment Plant shall not be brought into use until work to install equipment to remove phosphorus from Wooler Sewage Treatment Works is complete and that equipment is operational.

Where feasible, development proposals should incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System or demonstrate why such a system would not be practicable.

Policy 2: Locally Distinctive and High-Quality Design



Proposed Distillery at Redpath's/Ferguson's Yard

3.14 Policy 2 seeks to ensure that new development has appropriate regard to the principles of good design and defines what is meant by 'high quality' and 'locally distinctive' design in the context of Wooler.

3.15 The site and wider context for a development proposal should be assessed in detail from the outset. This assessment should be informed by an understanding of the character of the area surrounding the development site. Policy 2 lists factors that are important to consider when developing a design for a proposal and establishes the criteria against which a development proposal will be assessed when a decision is made on any planning application.

3.16 Each site is individual and no one architectural approach should be supported over any other provided it addresses its context and character and the overall result is one which is harmonious within its context.

3.17 The topography of Wooler is unique and it provides opportunities for views into and out of the town, across Glendale and to and from the Northumberland National Park and the Cheviots. Where appropriate a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment shall be undertaken to demonstrate how the development proposal will impact on important views within Glendale and into and out of the Northumberland National Park.

3.18 There are a number of designated heritage assets in the Plan Area, including listed buildings. The Wooler Conservation Area is in itself a designated heritage asset. This policy seeks to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the significance and setting of those heritage assets, as they are key to the regeneration and growth of Wooler as a market town and as a tourist destination.

3.19 The Northumberland International Dark Sky Park is partially within the Neighbourhood Area. Although Wooler Town itself is not within the Dark Sky Park, development here may have a significant impact on the appreciation of dark skies in the nearby National Park. Policy 2 seeks to recognise the importance of this matter when considering the impact of new development.

3.20 Amenity for residents is a key consideration in any new development. Proposals in the Plan Area must ensure that new development does not result in significant adverse amenity impacts. Due to the rural nature of the area, impacts which may be considered acceptable in a more urban context could have a higher relative impact in the Parish.

3.21 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making. The government set out its commitment to biodiversity in the '*Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*'. Policy 2 seeks to secure net gains in biodiversity from development proposals, where possible.

3.22 Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before development took place. Applicants will be required to demonstrate adherence to good practice principles as published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and show how they have followed the mitigation hierarchy. All developments, regardless of scale, should make provision, proportionate to the size of the project and its likely impacts on biodiversity, for net gains in biodiversity. Applicants must ensure the net gain is measurable against a recognised biodiversity metric such as that published by DEFRA. A revised version of this metric (Biodiversity metric 2.0) is expected to be published by Natural England in December 2020. Further information and guidance is available on the CIEEM website: <https://cieem.net/i-am/current-projects/biodiversity-net-gain/>

Policy 2: Locally Distinctive and High-Quality Design

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have taken account of their setting and the local vernacular in order to create a high quality and locally distinctive design that will enhance the character and quality of the area. Proposals should demonstrate:

- a) how they respond positively to, and enhance, local character and are sympathetic to local character and history through the use of locally distinctive materials; paying attention to local architectural detail; achieving visually attractive design; having careful regard to orientation, form, layout, height, scale, massing and density of development, ensuring suitability of the location and design of any means of access; and through the appropriate use of hard and soft landscaping; and
- b) how the height, form and external appearance of new development gives full consideration to important views into and out of the town, particularly to its context within Glendale and the Northumberland National Park and to views into and out of the Park; and
- c) where relevant, how they make a positive contribution to the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets (including that generated by their setting); and
- d) how measures have been incorporated to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity and the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park; and
- e) how measures have been incorporated to promote sustainable and low carbon design including where appropriate, measures to encourage energy conservation, embedded renewables and water conservation; and
- f) that the massing, height, scale and proximity of the proposed development does not result in an unacceptable loss of light or overshadowing, or other unacceptable adverse amenity impacts on neighbouring properties including those of existing or future residents; and
- g) that the proposal will achieve a net-gain for biodiversity, through mitigation, restoration and/or compensation measures demonstrated in a measurable way.

Schemes which incorporate innovative design will be supported providing they adhere to the design principles contained in this policy.

Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Part II: Development Allocations

3.23 Policies in this section allocate land for specific forms of development during the period of the Plan. These include mixed use development, sites where a range of uses may be appropriate, sites allocated for housing development and employment uses.

3.24 Neighbourhood plans may allocate land for particular forms of development and they can allocate land for development that may accommodate a range of suitable uses. This section identifies six sites, within and on the edge of Wooler, that are allocated for development in the Plan. Site specific policies describe any particular constraint or requirements associated with each of the six sites. The allocations describe sites for housing development; prescribed mixed uses; a range of uses; and employment-related uses.

3.25 Wooler has an ageing population. In order to address the relative imbalance between younger and older people in the Parish and to support the expansion of local services and facilities, Wooler Parish Council want to plan for more homes than the indicative housing requirement for the Parish of 170 additional dwellings identified by Northumberland County Council over the period 2016-2036.³ The Parish Council also wants to support opportunities for investment to provide additional employment, recreational, community and leisure-related uses in the area.

3.26 It is therefore proposed to allocate additional land for housing development through the Plan in order to promote sustainable growth in addition to those sites that currently benefit from planning permission. Two sites are allocated specifically for housing development: land south of The Martins (Site 2) and land at Burnhouse Road (Site 4). Housing development is supported on the former First School site (Site1) which is also expected to provide community, recreational and small-scale business uses and an extension to the cemetery alongside any new housing. Housing would be supported on the Redpath's/Ferguson's Yard site (Site 3). This site is also recognized as a suitable location for a wide variety of uses including business, leisure, recreational, retail and tourism.

3.27 A site allocation for employment uses is provided on land to the east of the Auction Mart (Site 5). This site was allocated for employment uses in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan 1999 and the County Council intend to carry forward this allocation into its new Local Plan. Wooler Neighbourhood Plan proposes to support this continued approach in seeking to accommodate growth in employment opportunities in Wooler.

3.28 Finally, a site for a range of community uses, now leased by the County Council to Wooler Parish Council, has been allocated on Weetwood Road (Site 6).

3.29 The sites with housing potential have been identified following detailed site assessments and consultation with a range of stakeholders. Information on the availability of sites has been obtained from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments prepared by the Local Planning Authority and information collected through its most recent 'call for sites' to support the emerging Northumberland Local Plan which encouraged landowners to submit details about their land holdings and development aspirations for a range of uses. (See *Site Selection Approach report 2019* and the *AECOM Housing Sites Assessment Report 2018*).

3.30 The sites allocated are considered to be sustainable and deliverable based on an

³ See Site Assessment Approach Report

assessment of their proximity to existing services and facilities, accessibility, and availability for development. The Heritage Impact Assessment, which accompanies and is attached to an Addendum to the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan, emphasizes the importance of considering the impact development proposals may have on the Conservation Area and other heritage assets. This matter is recognised and addressed, where necessary, in specific policies concerning the allocation of land for development. The following six sites are allocated for development in Policies 3.1 to 3.6:

- Site 1: The former First School Site off Burnhouse Road is allocated for housing development, community and small-scale business uses
- Site 2: Land south of The Martins is allocated for housing development
- Site 3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's/Ferguson's Yard is allocated for a range of uses
- Site 4: Land at Burnhouse Road is allocated for housing
- Site 5: Land east of the Auction Mart is allocated for employment uses
- Site 6: School Farm Field, Weetwood Road is allocated for recreational and community use

Policies 3.1 to 3.6 describe in detail any specific requirements for each allocated site. Precise site boundaries are shown on the Policies Map.

Policy 3.1: Land at the Former First School Site off Burnhouse Road (Site 1)



Aerial photo of Site 1

3.31 Policy 3.1 relates to the former First School site off Burnhouse Road. This site is currently owned by Northumberland County Council. It is proposed that the northern part of the site will be used to extend the cemetery which is now at capacity. The southern part of the site contains the old school buildings which could be converted or demolished. The site could provide for a range of community and recreational uses, as well as some small-scale employment/micro-business uses. A detailed master-plan for the site will be required. It is expected that a minimum of 10 residential units will be provided on this site. Any housing scheme must include an element of affordable housing. If the site is used predominantly for housing, some contribution to the community for recreational uses elsewhere will be expected.

3.32 The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan stated that this policy should include a requirement to incorporate landscaping to improve the natural environment. It is therefore a requirement in any master plan for the site that careful consideration is given to habitat creation, retention of a buffer area of trees, and other features that will deliver gains for biodiversity.

Policy 3.1: Land at the Former First School Site off Burnhouse Road (Site 1)

This site is allocated for a mix of uses, including housing. Before any development starts, a detailed master-plan must be prepared in consultation with the local community and submitted with any planning application. The master-plan must detail the layout of any proposed scheme and include a clear indication of how landscaping and habitat creation will be incorporated into the design to minimise negative effects on the natural environment. A Heritage Statement shall be prepared as part of the masterplan and subsequent planning applications to consider and address the impact of the development on the Wooler Conservation Area and its setting.

Development of the site should include at least provision for the following:

- a) an extension to the cemetery on the northern part of the site;
- b) at least 10 new dwellings, a proportion of which should be affordable housing according to Policy 4; and
- c) some community and/or recreational facilities.

Proposals which include opportunities for small-scale business use will also be supported subject to compliance with policies in the Plan regarding design, development impact and amenity considerations.

All proposals should include provision for pedestrian movement (including with wheelchairs and mobility vehicles) and cycles; and play space where appropriate.

Policy 3.2: Land South of the Martins (Site 2)



Aerial photo of Site 2

3.33 Policy 3.2 relates to land south of The Martins. This land is currently occupied by Wooler Football Club and it accommodates a full-size football pitch. To the west of the site is Bridgend Park. To the north is The Martins, which is a relatively high-density housing development. To the east and south is open countryside. The site is close to and within walking distance of Glendale Community Middle School and Wooler First School. The site is in the ownership of Northumberland County Council. Highway and pedestrian access can be achieved from The Martins. A Transport Assessment will be required to determine the need for any improvements required for pedestrian and cycle access from the site to the town centre, including provision for wheelchairs and mobility vehicles.

3.34 The site could, beyond the Plan period, be extended further to the east and south. The policy therefore seeks to ensure that appropriate provision is made for access to land to the south and east in the event of further housing development taking place there at a future date.

3.35 As this is the only fully-equipped football pitch in Wooler, a replacement football pitch in an equally accessible location must be made available for use prior to any development taking place on Site 2.

Policy 3.2: Land South of the Martins (Site 2)

This site is allocated for housing and should deliver a minimum of 40 residential units, a proportion of which should be affordable housing in accordance with Policy 4. Any planning application for development on this site must include a Transport Assessment that demonstrates how the scheme will:

- a) provide safe pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the site; and
- b) provide adequate off-street car parking within the development to prevent on-street parking on Brewery Road or The Martins; and
- c) retain provision for safe vehicular and pedestrian access from within the site to land to the east and south of the site to allow for future expansion; and
- d) mitigate adverse impacts on traffic and pedestrian movement along Brewery Road and access to the Peth across the A 697.

No development shall take place on the site until a replacement football pitch and any associated facilities of equivalent or better size and quality have been provided and are available for use.

Policy 3.3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's / Ferguson's Yard (Site 3)



Aerial photo of Site 3

3.36 This land is allocated for a range of uses. The aim of the Parish Council is to bring this site forward for development, to improve the appearance of this part of Wooler.

3.37 This land is a brownfield site within the built-up area of Wooler. It is a prominent site in the town and is within the Wooler Conservation Area. Any scheme here must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wooler Conservation Area. This could be

achieved through sensitive and well-landscaped design. A high-density housing development here would be supported given the central location of the site. A range of other uses will also be supported and Policy 3.3 does not look to be prescriptive on appropriate uses for the site.

3.38 Any scheme must retain the mature belt of trees to the west of the site along Tower Banks which are identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as being of significance to the character of the Wooler Conservation Area. These trees are specifically identified in Policy 17. Other requirements are related to safe access to the site and to ensuring that any uses that are vulnerable to contamination are made safe from such contamination by a thorough assessment and appropriate mitigation measures where necessary.

3.39 A small portion of the site lies within Flood Zone 2. A Flood Risk Assessment should be prepared for any development proposal on the site. Flood mitigation measures will be required if a risk is identified with development directed to the areas of lowest flood risk.

Policy 3.3: Land on South Road known as Redpath's / Ferguson's Yard (Site 3)

Development of the site shall be laid out and designed to have a positive impact on the character and appearance of this prominent site in the Wooler Conservation Area. A Heritage Statement shall be submitted as part of any planning application to consider and address the impact of the development on the Wooler Conservation Area and its setting. Proposals, including housing (including high density housing), retail, employment, tourism and recreational uses will all be supported on this site.

Any scheme must ensure the following:

- a) the retention of the tree group to the west of the site along Tower Banks which must be protected from damage prior to the commencement of development; and
- b) safe pedestrian and cycle access can be achieved from the development to the town centre, local services, and to areas east of the A697; and
- c) where housing or a use vulnerable to contamination is proposed, any contamination on the site is identified through a Land Contamination Report which must be submitted with any planning application. The implementation of any necessary contamination remediation measures will be secured through planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate and shall be implemented as necessary prior to the commencement of development on the site; and
- d) A Flood Risk Assessment shall be prepared when considering development on the site. Development shall be steered to areas of lowest flood risk and away from Flood Zone 2.

Policy 3.4: Land at Burnhouse Road (Site 4)



Aerial photo of Site 4

3.40 This is a greenfield infill site on the western edge of Wooler, within easy walking distance of services and facilities. A planning consent has been granted on the site but has since lapsed. This site is on the western edge of the settlement, and as such, any development here must have particular regard to Policy 19 of the Plan which seeks to ensure appropriate landscaping as part of any scheme on the western and south-western edge of Wooler. The site is prominent in the landscape and adjacent to the Conservation Area. A detailed landscaping plan will be required to assess the impact of any development on the setting of the Conservation Area, and on the wider landscape.

Policy 3.4: Land at Burnhouse Road (Site 4)

This site is allocated for housing development of between 10-15 units, a proportion of which should be affordable in accordance with Policy 4. Any planning application for development on this site must be accompanied by:

- a) a detailed landscaping plan to ensure that any impact on surrounding properties and the surrounding landscape is minimised and mitigated; and
- b) a Heritage Statement to assess the impact of any scheme on the Wooler Conservation Area and its setting.

Development on this site will be expected to reflect the density of existing residential development to the north and east of the site.

Policy 3.5: Land East of the Auction Mart (Site 5)



Aerial photo of Site 5

3.41 This site, also known as the Mart Field, is allocated for employment uses in the current Local Plan and the County Council intends to carry forward this allocation into the new Northumberland Local Plan. Wooler Neighbourhood Plan proposes to support this continued approach in seeking to accommodate growth in employment opportunities in Wooler. This allocation is based on the evidence presented in support of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

3.42 The policy supports proposals for wider employment-generating uses on this site. The definition of 'wider employment-generating uses' is contained in the Glossary to this Plan.

Policy 3.5: Land East of the Auction Mart (Site 5)

This site is allocated for employment uses falling within classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order and other wider employment-generating uses, provided those uses are compatible with other businesses proposed on the site and with adjoining land uses. Any scheme to develop this site must be accompanied by:

- a) a Transport Assessment which must show how movement within the site is organised for vehicles, pedestrians and cycles, and ensure that adequate access for vehicles, pedestrians and cycles is provided from the Berwick Road to the A697; and
- b) a Master Plan for the site, recognising that housing development may be adjacent to this site in the future.

Any measures to mitigate impacts identified through those Assessments shall be secured by planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate and implemented as necessary in a timely manner to support the sustainable development of the site.

Policy 3.6: School Farm Field, Weetwood Road (Site 6)



Aerial photo of Site 6

3.43 This site, known as the School Farm Field, is currently leased from Northumberland County Council by Wooler Parish Council. The site is predominantly green field and is located adjacent to existing housing on the edge of the main settlement. This site has previously gained outline planning permission for residential development in 1988, however this has since lapsed. The site could provide for a range of community and recreational uses, as well as some small-scale employment/micro-business uses. Further consultation will be carried out with the community and local businesses to identify the type of recreational and community uses and the amount and type of small scale business development that should be provided on the site, and the sources of funding.

Policy 3.6: School Farm Field, Weetwood Road (Site 6)

This site is allocated for future recreational and community use. Community uses and small-scale business uses managed by the community will also be supported on this site. Any development proposals should show how pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access to the site is to be provided to the Weetwood Road bridge and across the A697.

Part III: Housing



Greendale Court from Horsdonside

Development Strategy for housing in the Neighbourhood Area⁴

3.44 The overarching strategy for Wooler is to promote housing on sites allocated in the Plan; on other sites that come forward within the built up area of Wooler; on sites on the edge of the settlement that meet criteria in other policies in the Plan; and in the outlying settlements; and through conversion and sub-division. Proposals for housing in these locations will be subject to criteria set out in the policies in the Plan.

3.45 Most housing in Wooler is clustered in and around the main settlement, which extends out eastwards towards Tile Sheds and southwards along the A697, with outlying farmsteads and settlements at Turvelaws, Way to Wooler, Coldmartin, Towermartin, Westmartin and Gallowlaw.

3.46 The 2011 census recorded 1095 dwelling units in Wooler Parish, and Northumberland County Council rates data for 2015 recorded 1123 residential properties. Nearly 90% of the units recorded in the census were occupied as permanent dwellings⁵. Most units were detached, semi-detached or terraced houses or bungalows, with 128 maisonettes or flats. There are also 67 permanently occupied caravans or other temporary structures.

3.47 After the Second World War, there was a big increase in new housing, while over the years many small older cottages have been combined into larger units. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of housing units, some created from former shops and other non-residential buildings, some built on small sites within Wooler itself, and some developed on the margins of the Parish, notably the Bridgend Residential Park and the Fenton Grange development. Northumberland County Council estimated that, in the decade up to 2015, an average of 14 units per annum had been added to the housing stock.⁶

3.48 Of the 974 households recorded in the census, 59% owned their home, 24% lived in

⁴ For more detail, see *WNP Housing Background Report 2018* and the *Site Selection Approach Report 2019*.

⁵ 121 or 11.1% were unoccupied. The 2015 rates data recorded 5% of properties in the wider Wooler Ward as vacant.

⁶ See *WNP Housing Background Report 2018*

socially rented homes and nearly 17% rented privately. 37% of households were single persons, many of whom were over 65.

3.49 In recent years, Wooler has experienced many of the trends found elsewhere in the country – house prices rising above local income levels; a growth in private renting; a mismatch between household size and the size of available housing units. Young people and young families have difficulty finding affordable units while some older people, who look for opportunities to downsize from larger homes, also find it difficult to find homes.

3.50 Evidence shows a lack of affordable housing⁷ for young people and for older people. The Wooler Housing Needs Survey (2018) produced by Community Action Northumberland (CAN) finds that there is a need for more affordable housing in the Parish. This could be delivered through market housing schemes providing an element of affordable housing, developer contributions towards provision of affordable housing, through schemes for social housing for rent or through Community-Led housing schemes which could be taken forward by the local community. The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment also stresses the need for more affordable housing, including for people in surrounding areas who look to Wooler for potential housing.

3.51 Due to demographic changes in Wooler, the main challenge is to expand the housing stock to provide more opportunities for younger local people to remain, while ensuring enough appropriate housing is available to meet the needs of our ageing population.

3.52 The NPPF requires strategic policy-making authorities (Northumberland County Council) to establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflect the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. Where it is not possible to provide a housing requirement figure that has been adopted as part of the development plan, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should provide an indicative requirement figure on request.

3.53 Northumberland County Council has advised that the indicative housing requirement for Wooler Neighbourhood Area is for 170 additional dwellings over the period 2016 – 2036. This figure is expressed as a minimum housing requirement for the Wooler Neighbourhood Area in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Northumberland National Park Authority considers Wooler a suitable location for housing which meets the needs of the Park. However, the aspiration of Wooler Parish Council is to continue to try to meet the challenge of providing enough housing to meet the needs of those sectors of the population who find it hard to find houses they can afford and that are of an appropriate size.⁸

3.54 Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly. National planning policy requires that opportunities should be made available on small and medium-sized sites. Most of the sites allocated for housing in the Plan are medium-sized and at least 10% of dwellings will be delivered on sites of under 1 hectare. Most housing development in the Plan period is expected to concentrate on a few sites in and adjacent to Wooler Town. In

⁷ Affordable housing is defined in the glossary of the Plan

⁸ Note that NWL and the Environment Agency have both confirmed that there is capacity in the Wooler Sewage Treatment Works for a further 120-140 housing units in addition to those with outstanding planning permissions.

the longer term, beyond the period of the Plan, if the town continues to grow, sites to the northeast and south east of Wooler Town may need to be brought forward for development. As of 2019, there were extant planning permissions for around 140 dwelling units, though there is no guarantee that these will all be delivered⁹.

3.55 There was a high level of support within the local community for bringing forward land for housing development, particularly to provide housing to meet local needs and housing for young families. It is widely accepted that Wooler needs to grow in order to sustain a strong and vibrant community and to support existing services and the provision of new services and facilities.

Policy 4: Housing Development in the Plan Area



Housing at Fenton Grange

3.56 This policy seeks to provide the overarching policy for new housing in Wooler, which is to support new housing development on the allocated sites as shown on the Policies Map and identified in the Plan. The policy supports development on brownfield sites and other infill sites within the built-up area of Wooler.

3.57 In addition to specific allocations, the policy supports the provision of additional small-scale housing development (9 units or less) on the edge of Wooler, on sites which are not allocated. These are considered as 'windfall sites' (see Glossary). This is part of the overall strategy to maximise the provision of additional housing in the town, which is felt to be fundamental to the town's long-term prosperity and sustainability. There will also be opportunities arising for the sub-division of existing properties, and for the conversion of existing buildings, to provide additional residential accommodation. These are supported through Policy 4.

3.58 The policy supports the provision of small-scale housing on the edge of the settlement. Particularly sensitive edges to the settlement are identified in Policy 19 and shown on the Policies Map. Any proposals on this edge must be considered in line with Policy 19, with special regard being had to any potential landscape impacts in the immediate and wider area.

⁹ See WNP Housing Background Paper para 5.4 (Table 4) and the Site Selection Report 2019, para 5.7 (Table 1), update to 2018. Note that the Weetwood Road permission has been reduced from 83 to 73 units in its final form.

3.59 The policy also supports the provision of a limited number of dwellings in the outlying settlements which are identified separately in Policy 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.60 All schemes of 10 dwellings or more are required to provide affordable housing as set out in the NPPF. Where provided, affordable housing should be well-integrated into the development as a whole. The example of Fenton Grange, a scheme of 55 units completed in the mid-2010s, shows what can be achieved. It has a mix of houses for sale of different sizes, with some equity-share units, units let at affordable rents, and bungalows for older people. The definition of affordable housing is provided in NPPF and in the glossary of this Plan.

3.61 Both the specially commissioned Housing Needs Survey for Wooler Parish undertaken in late 2017 by Community Action Northumberland (CAN) and the Housing Needs Assessment undertaken by AECOM have identified a need for affordable housing in the Wooler area.

3.62 The survey found that 56 households had a housing need that is not being met by their current situation. Not all of those who have a housing need require affordable housing. Just over half of those who expressed a housing need were owner occupiers. Of the 56 people who had expressed a housing need, 37 people were 65 or over, suggesting a particular need for older people's housing. 14 people were under the age of 25.

3.63 With regard to affordability, 16 households would like a rented property from the local authority; 15 households would like to rent from a housing association (although respondents could indicate multiple preferences); 5 households were interested in shared ownership; and 3 households indicated an interest in buying a 'starter home'.

3.64 There is a strong preference for smaller properties, both for rented and market housing. All owner-occupiers who responded wanted a 1 or 2 bedroom property, with a high percentage of households wishing to downsize, and find property more suitable for older people. In order to support young families, both those already in the area and who may move to the area, the Plan also seeks to enable the provision of further affordable and modestly priced 2 and 3 bed dwellings.

Policy 4: Housing Development in the Plan Area

In addition to those sites allocated for housing development in the Plan, and subject to criteria defined in other policies in the Plan, new housing development will be supported as follows:

- a) on brownfield and infill sites within the built-up area of Wooler Town;
- b) small-scale schemes of up to 9 dwellings on the built-up edge of Wooler Town where the site is accessible and well-related to existing residential development, providing it complies with Policy 19 which refers to the sensitive settlement edges;
- c) a limited number of dwellings in the outlying settlements identified in Policy 8; and
- d) through conversion and subdivision of existing buildings.

15% affordable housing will be sought on-site for schemes of 10 dwellings or more.

Affordable housing provided on site should be well integrated into the overall development.

The type and size of new open market housing and affordable housing should reflect the identified local need for smaller homes of one, two and three bedrooms including the need for bungalows.

Policy 5: New Housing Development – Design Principles

3.65 This policy seeks to ensure that schemes for housing which come forward for development follow principles for good design.

3.66 Policy 5 seeks to ensure that new housing development is sustainable, by ensuring that specific attention is paid to the need to incorporate suitable landscaping, retention of natural features where applicable, access to the development by cycle or walking, and the provision of enough vehicular parking within the curtilage of proposed dwellings to minimise the impact on off-street parking, which is becoming an increasing issue in Wooler. The policy also seeks to ensure that new housing development incorporates suitable green spaces including, where required, children's play areas.

3.67 *Building for Life 12*¹⁰ sets out a series of principles that should be incorporated into housing development to achieve high quality development. The NPPF advocates the use of *Building for Life 12* as a design tool. Early consultation with the local community, the Local Planning Authority, and the use of design tools such as *Building for Life 12* is likely to result in high quality and sustainable development.

¹⁰ Building for Life 12 (Third Edition), Design Council, January 2015

Policy 5: New Housing Development – Design Principles

All new housing proposals on allocated and windfall sites will be required to demonstrate how the development:

- a) incorporates landscaping to soften the impact of the development on the wider landscape, particularly on the western and south-western edge of Wooler;
- b) ensures the retention of existing trees, hedgerows and natural features wherever possible, and incorporates them into the design of the scheme;
- c) provides for safe vehicular access to any site and safe cycle and pedestrian access (recognising the needs of people with wheelchairs or buggies), both within the housing development itself and, where appropriate, into the centre of Wooler;
- d) achieves high quality design which respects the design and character of surrounding properties and the setting of the development as set out in Policy 2;
- e) ensures a Sustainable Drainage System has been incorporated or demonstrates why such a system would not be practicable in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan;
- f) provides sufficient car parking space within the curtilage of each proposed dwelling in accordance with the Local Planning Authority approved parking standards thereby limiting any impact on highway safety arising from on-street car parking;
- g) provides sufficient open space and children's play areas to meet the reasonable needs of future occupants of the dwellings; and
- h) demonstrates that the local highways, drainage and sewerage systems can accommodate the development, or that any necessary improvements to such infrastructure will be secured as part of any planning permission and will be available to serve the development before it is first required.

All housing developments are encouraged to incorporate the principles outlined in Building for Life 12. Planning applications should be accompanied by evidence demonstrating the use of those principles in the evolution of the design of a scheme, where applicable.

Policy 6: Rural Exception and Entry-Level Exception Affordable Housing



Affordable flats provided above the Co-op, through conversion

3.68 Policy 4 requires the provision of affordable housing through market housing schemes of 10 units or more. There are, however, other ways that affordable housing can be provided.

3.69 Policy 6 supports these alternative mechanisms for delivering affordable housing; for example, through Registered Social Landlords, local Community Trusts, Community-led Housing Schemes and through rural exception sites as defined in the NPPF.

Policy 6: Rural Exception and Entry-Level Exception Affordable Housing

Proposals for affordable housing, including community-led housing schemes, delivered as 'rural exception sites' in accordance with the limitations and definitions for such sites as set out in national planning policy, on small sites on the edge of the settlement of Wooler will be supported where it has been demonstrated that the development:

- a) will have no significant negative impact on the character and setting of the settlement;
- b) will not harm the character, appearance or setting of the Wooler Conservation Area; and
- c) will ensure that the landscape and scenic beauty of the Northumberland National Park is conserved or enhanced.

Proposals for 'entry-level exception sites' housing schemes that accord with the limitations and requirements for such schemes as set out in national policy and guidance will be supported.

The design and impact of rural exception sites and entry-level exception sites housing proposals will be assessed against the requirements of relevant policies in the development plan.

Policy 7: Housing for Older People



Housing for older people in Greendale Court

3.70 Northumberland has an ageing population, a trend which is projected to continue in the near future. 24% of the population in Northumberland are aged 65 or over. For Wooler, this figure is 30%, indicating that Wooler has a significant ageing demographic.

3.71 The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Northumberland indicates that, in part as a consequence of the projected ageing population, the majority of need over the next 5 years is expected to be for 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom properties, together with some 1-bedroom homes. This County-wide need is reflected in Wooler in the Housing Needs Assessment that was undertaken for the Parish.

3.72 In terms of dwelling types, the County SHMA identifies a need split equally between houses for families upsizing and first-time buyers/movers, and bungalows or level-access accommodation for older people downsizing, together with flats. Analysis of aspirations and expectations in the SHMA suggests a greater need for 1 and 2-bedroom bungalows and level-access flats, reflecting in particular the needs of an ageing population.

3.73 In Wooler, the Housing Needs Assessment found that there were a significant number of older people in housing need (some owner-occupiers) who needed to downsize. There appears to be a strong demand for one bedroom and two-bedroom bungalows. Some of this demand could be met by small schemes of extra-care housing.

Policy 7: Housing for Older People

Subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan, support will be given to the provision of housing for older people, especially in central and accessible locations in Wooler. This includes proposals for the provision of extra-care housing, later living schemes, residential extensions for older family members, sheltered housing and one and two-bedroom bungalows adapted for enhanced accessibility.

Policy 8: Housing Development in Outlying Settlements



Housing development opportunities at Gallowlaw

3.74 There are a number of outlying settlements in Wooler Parish which could accommodate a small amount of new housing to meet local needs. Housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of these settlements, especially where this will support local services.

Policy 8: Housing Development in Outlying Settlements

In the outlying settlements of Tile Sheds, Haugh Head, Turvelaws, Way to Wooler, Coldmartin, Towermartin, Westmartin and Gallowlaw the following forms of housing development will be supported:

- a) single self-build dwellings;
- b) single custom built dwellings;
- c) conversions; and
- d) rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

Isolated Housing Development in the Countryside

3.75 National planning policy states that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided other than in the exceptional circumstances listed in the NPPF. Proposals for the development of isolated housing in the countryside in the Neighbourhood Area will be considered against national planning policy. Proposals for the conversion and change of use of non-residential buildings and the re-use of redundant or disused buildings to residential use will be considered against policies in the statutory development plan.

Part IV: Local Economy¹¹



Wooler High Street

Background

3.76 Wooler is a key service centre for the wider rural area of Glendale, and acts as a local hub for rural businesses. Wooler has always been a living, working community, although there is much anecdotal evidence of young people and families moving away from the area in search of jobs and housing.

3.77 Market towns such as Wooler are a vital element in the visitor economy across the North East and Wooler needs to make the most of its natural and cultural heritage and distinctiveness to develop an excellent visitor welcome. Wooler is an important gateway to the Northumberland National Park, as a base to explore the Cheviots and beyond.

3.78 The policies in this Part focus on maintaining the vibrancy of Wooler (in combination with other policies in the Plan) and on encouraging more tourism and small business development opportunities.

3.79 It is still the case that among those aged 16-74, one third either walked to work or worked from home in 2011 (census: 34.9%). Of those in this age group who worked at this date, 20% were in the wholesale, retail and motor repair trades, 13% in accommodation and food services, 11% in construction work, and 10% in health and social care. 13% of those in work were self-employed, and around 24% were already retired. 16% worked part-time. Only 4% were unemployed in 2011. Income levels, however, are low for many households.

3.80 Within and around Wooler, there are a few medium-sized employers. Otherwise, the local economy is dominated by small independent shops and businesses, along with farm businesses and tourism and community-related enterprises. There has also been an increase in micro-businesses, people working from home or in small affordable business units within the town such as those provided at the Cheviot Centre and on the Glendale Business Park.

3.81 While young people report a lack of job opportunities, many employers also report difficulty in recruiting both permanent staff and apprentices from within the local area.

¹¹ For more detail, see *WNP Local Economy Background Report*

Policy 9: Existing Employment Sites

3.82 This policy seeks to retain land currently or last in use for employment purposes in Wooler Parish.

3.83 Wooler has two active industrial estates: the Glendale Business Park at Haugh Head, including the garage and adjacent sites (outside the main town of Wooler); and the Wooler Industrial Estate on the eastern edge of the town. Both these sites are shown on the Policies Map and are protected for existing and future employment use. The policy seeks to secure some flexibility as to the future use of these sites by allowing additional uses related to the main B1, B2 or B8 uses¹² of the site. For example, if an industrial use wished to incorporate a retail element related to the main use then planning permission would be supported. Further land has been allocated for employment uses in Policy 3.5 (site 5).

3.84 The policy supports proposals for wider employment-generating uses on these sites. The definition of 'wider employment-generating uses' is contained in the Glossary to this Plan.

Policy 9: Existing Employment Sites

The following sites are shown on the Policies Map and will be retained for employment use:

IP1 Wooler Industrial Estate on Berwick Road

IP2 Industrial land at Haugh Head including the Glendale Business Park

Proposals for B1, B2 and B8 uses will be supported on these sites.

Development of non-B-Class employment generating activity on these sites will be supported as exceptions only if the development:

- a) Directly supports and is ancillary to the primary functioning of the site as a location for B1, B2, and B8 development;
- b) Will not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of existing or future B-Class operators on the site; and
- c) Ensures that B-Class uses remain the majority activity on site.

Proposals should demonstrate that they will not give rise to an unacceptable increase in traffic generation.

Proposals for haulage sites within the existing employment sites must demonstrate that there is adequate provision for parking and turning circles and ensure safe access to and from the local highway network.

¹² The *Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order (1987 as amended)* defines B1 as offices or similar, B2 as general industrial and B8 as storage.

Policy 10: Business Development

3.85 The success of the existing rural enterprise hubs at the Cheviot Centre and the continuing demand for small units at the Glendale Business Park show that there is significant demand for smaller business units for sole traders and start-up businesses.



Business 'pods' at the Cheviot Centre

3.86 This policy seeks to support the provision of further small business units within Wooler to encourage the growth of this sector of the economy. Some small business units are located outside the main town (for example rural businesses on local farms). The policy seeks to support the growth of this type of development through new-build and conversion of existing buildings, including in the countryside beyond the main town, since this can help small businesses get off the ground. Any development located outside the main town must demonstrate how it respects the character of the countryside.

Policy 10: Business Development

Proposals for new-build and conversions to accommodate new business units, offices, enterprise hubs, live-work units, and the expansion of existing businesses will be supported within and on the edge of Wooler Town subject to satisfying other policies of the development plan.

Proposals for sustainable small scale employment and business use will be supported in the outlying settlements identified in Policy 8 where they are well related to existing buildings and will not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety, the local landscape or heritage assets.

In the countryside outside the National Park, proposals will be supported which would enable the sustainable development and expansion of employment uses including: tourism; recreation; and the diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. Any such development must respect the character of the countryside.

Within the National Park, the proposed use should be compatible with and subsidiary to an existing farming or forestry activity in terms of physical scale, activity and function. These uses should not detract from the wider landscape character or negatively impact on natural or cultural heritage assets.

Home-based employment activities which would not unacceptably adversely affect the amenity of neighbours or neighbouring land uses would also be supported.

Policy 11: Development in the Main Shopping Streets in Wooler Town

3.87 The main retail area of Wooler Town stretches from the Market Place, along the High Street, Church Street and the Peth. The 'Main Shopping Streets' are defined on the Policies Map. Many retail and similar units are small independent businesses, providing a variety of shops and services, as well as cafes and eating places. These all contribute to bringing people to this area and sustaining its vitality. It is very important to people in Wooler to retain both the activity and ambience of this area.



Retail premises on Wooler High Street

3.88 The flow of people within this area has changed in recent years, with the relocation of the First School on Burnhouse Road and the shift of the Co-op from Mid-High Street to the Market Place.

3.89 Wooler's retail provision is also affected by the wider changes currently affecting the retail trade. Our aim is to retain retail provision along the main shopping streets in the Town; and to encourage activities and development projects which contribute to the vitality of this area throughout the day and evening.

3.90 Within this area, conversion to flats above the shops is welcome as this reinforces the flow of people in this important part of the town. Conversion to flats above shops is generally permitted development, but not in all cases. If a building is listed (which many of the shops in the town centre are) then these permitted development rights do not apply and full planning permission is required to change the use of any part of a building to a flat.

3.91 Outside these main shopping streets there are a number of smaller retail 'hubs' along South Road. These hubs provide valued 'corner shop' opportunities for local people as well as serving passing trade. Further retail development in these areas will be supported where the proposal will not have a negative impact on the vitality of the Town.

Policy 11: Development in the Main Shopping Streets in Wooler Town

The main shopping streets of Wooler Town are defined on the Policies Map. Proposals for A1 uses will be supported in the main shopping streets. Proposals for non-A1 uses in these streets will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use will contribute to the vitality of this part of the town through uses which would:

- a) generate an increase in footfall to the main shopping streets;
- b) generate additional visitors to the town including tourism visits;
- c) significantly improve the appearance of the building in which it is to be situated and/or the public realm;
- d) support existing businesses in the town;
- e) provide community facilities or other uses which benefit the local community

On upper floors along the main shopping streets, change of use to residential use or other business, community or leisure uses will be supported.

Proposals for changes of use to retail in areas outside the main shopping streets will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use will provide local services and not undermine the vitality and viability of the Town.

Policy 12: Tourism Facilities



Riverside Bar and related facilities

3.92 There is a real opportunity to further the development of Wooler as a tourist destination with a greater range of tourism facilities. Wooler could expand its role as a hub for visitors to nearby areas such as the Northumberland National Park, the Dark Sky Park and the Northumberland Coast.

3.93 Tourism facilities can enhance the town and surrounding areas for residents as well as visitors. Tourism offers opportunities for farm diversification schemes and the development of new tourism-related businesses. There is also the potential for tourism to complement existing business, as well as to encourage the provision of new facilities (for example leisure-related facilities) that could also be of benefit to the local community.

3.94 Northumberland National Park attracts increasing numbers of visitors who enjoy walking and cycling. This policy seeks to support the development of tourism facilities to support a growth in these activities.

Policy 12: Tourism Facilities

The following proposals for the development of tourism facilities will be supported where that development respects the character of the countryside:

- a) the extension and expansion of existing tourism facilities;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) proposals that support outdoor recreation activities, particularly walking and cycling,
- d) proposals related to the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park designation;
- e) the development of small-scale car parking provision and waymarked trails to support tourism related to the Northumberland National Park and the surrounding area.

All developments must demonstrate how they comply with requirements for high-quality design as set out in Policy 2.

Policy 13: Overnight Tourist Accommodation



Holiday accommodation converted from a former police station and courthouse

3.95 There is a large static and touring caravan park and a smaller caravan and camping park in Wooler Parish. The Riverside Caravan Park, to the south of Wooler town, currently has 464 static units as well as 37 vans and lodges, and space for up to 20 touring caravans. Another 30 static units have now been completed. The units are partly in private ownership and partly for hire. The site is largely self-contained, but with an indoor swimming pool, play park, bar and restaurant on the opposite side of the A697.

3.96 Highburn House Caravan Park to the west of Wooler has around 47 static units, as well as 50 pitches for tents and touring caravans.

3.97 Although the provision of static caravans in Wooler has brought many people to the area, there is now one such unit for every two households in the parish. There is concern in the community about the scale in particular of static caravan park provision.

3.98 Further substantial increase in the number of static caravans would have an adverse impact on the local landscape. Small scale proposals promoting other forms of tourism development are welcome as these would provide more variety to the tourism offer.

Policy 13: Overnight Tourist Accommodation

Proposals for bunkhouses, chalets, touring caravan sites, yurts, static caravans and camping accommodation will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the development can be accommodated within the capacity of existing drainage and water supply infrastructure;
- b) no significant adverse impact on highway safety would arise from the development;
- c) no significant adverse impact on residential amenity would arise from the development;
- d) the development can be accommodated sensitively in the landscape with particular care being given to the consideration of the impact of developments on sites in, or that can be viewed from, the National Park;
- e) where proposals would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum use that is viable and justifiable; and
- f) where development proposals affect a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is made, taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy 14: Broadband Provision in New Development

3.99 The provision of good telecommunications is particularly important in rural areas for businesses to operate effectively. Currently, fibre-optic connections are the most robust and future-proof method of delivering high performance connectivity and this should be incorporated into all future developments (where relevant) in the Parish.

Policy 14: Broadband Provision in New Development

Applications for new development should ensure provision is made for suitable ducting to enable more than one service provider to provide a fibre connection to individual properties from connection cabinets located on the public highway, or some alternative point available to different service providers.

Policy 15: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

3.100 There is a desire to encourage the use of renewable energy in the Neighbourhood Area. Many smaller scale forms of renewable energy on residential properties, such as solar panels and heat pumps, in most cases do not require planning permission.

3.101 Small-scale proposals which will require planning permission will be supported as long as there is no negative impact on the local landscapes. In particular, consideration will be given to the proximity of the Northumberland National Park and to the historic environment in determining landscape impacts of renewables schemes.

3.102 Residential amenity is always an important consideration in any development proposal. The impacts on residential amenity of renewables schemes, in terms of noise, vibrations, visual impacts and other amenity impacts will be an important consideration in determining the acceptability of any scheme.

Policy 15: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

Proposals for small-scale renewable energy developments including wind turbines, solar farms, district heating schemes and community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where they do not have an unacceptable negative impact on local natural and historic landscapes, the Northumberland National Park, the local highway network or other significant adverse impacts on residential amenity.

Part V: Landscape, Natural Environment, Townscape and Heritage



Wooler War Memorial on the Tory mound, from Tenter Hill

Wooler's landscape and natural environment

3.103 Our landscape, natural environment, townscape and heritage are a tremendous asset for our future, valued by local people and visitors alike. By landscape, we refer to the broad setting of hills and valleys, fields and trees, streams and rivers, in which we live our daily lives. By natural environment, we mean the habitats and wildlife in and around our Plan area.

3.104 Wooler Parish is part of a deeply rural landscape of far horizons and dark night skies which is rich in history and prehistory. Wooler Town nestles into the hillside where the Cheviot Hills meet the Glendale Plain and looks towards the ridge which surrounds the Plain. Views towards the Town from all directions are among the most striking in Northumberland, and the Town appears surrounded and interspersed with many trees. Views towards and out of the Town and the landscape generally, are valued by local people and visitors alike as very beautiful. The Parish is partly within Northumberland National Park and views into and out of the Park are also important.

Wooler's townscape

3.105 By townscape, we refer to the experience created by the buildings and streets and to the views in, out and around them, especially in Wooler Town itself.

3.106 Wooler is a small historic market town, characterised by traditional stone buildings and panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. The sloping topography has a strong influence that is expressed in steep or winding roads and terraced developments. The historic core of the settlement, now a Conservation Area, developed around the central market place and gradually expanded in a radial pattern on the hillside, is contained by areas of steeper topography and the river. More recent development is situated to the east of the Wooler Water.

Wooler's heritage

3.107 By heritage, we refer to what we have inherited from the past and what we especially value.

3.108 Wooler is rich in ancient and recent history and prehistory. In addition to the designated Conservation Area, there are numerous listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments scattered across the Parish, as well as other buildings and sites which are valued for their contribution to our local history. This heritage adds to the attraction of our area for visitors and also to how residents value our place.

Policy 16: South Road, the Peth and the Gateways to Wooler Town

3.109 The current appearance of South Road and The Peth in Wooler were identified through numerous consultations as having a negative impact on the 'gateway' into Wooler Town. These areas are the first parts of the town that visitors see and at present do little to attract passing visitors to the main part of the town. They do, however, offer an opportunity for sensitive regeneration to enhance the character of the area. Most of the land to the west of the A697 (South Road) is within the Wooler Conservation Area. It is therefore particularly important that development here conserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area.

3.110 To the rear of South Road and running along Tower Bank is a group of trees that add to the character of the area. These trees should be protected and retained in any development proposal along this side of South Road. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies this area of trees, which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

3.111 Pedestrian access can be an issue in this area and it is important that development proposals along South Road do not obstruct pedestrian access. This will mean either ensuring a pavement is retained to the front of the site or that access is provided through the site. If development is likely to increase the flow of pedestrians across the A697, a pedestrian crossing will be needed.

3.112 A significant number of respondents to various consultations said they would like to see Redpath's/Ferguson's Yard redeveloped. The key issue was to see something happening here. Policy 3.3 in the Plan allocates this site for development and supports a range of uses that may result in the sympathetic regeneration of this key site in Wooler.

Policy 16: South Road, the Peth and the Gateways to Wooler Town

Development proposals along the A697 (South Road) from The Peth to Berwick Road on the frontages defined on the Policies Map will be supported where they:

- a) enhance local character and context and improve the appearance of the street scene;
- b) provide landscaping to soften the impact of the development, improve the appearance of the area as a gateway to the town and retain the area of trees along Tower Banks as defined in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal; and
- c) incorporate suitable access for vehicles and provide safe access for pedestrians along the site frontage or through the site; and
- d) take opportunities to incorporate existing historic buildings along South Road and the Peth into the design of proposals.

Provision of small scale retail businesses, through the change of use of existing buildings or through new building, along South Road in Wooler will be supported where they will provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer which promotes the continued vitality and viability of the town subject to the provision of adequate vehicular access and sufficient car parking to serve the development.

Proposals for new development along the frontages defined on the Policies Map must demonstrate that the site is, or can be made, accessible for pedestrians from the centre of the town. Proposals for development between the Peth and the Weetwood Road bridge should provide, or contribute to providing, a pedestrian crossing at some point along this stretch of the A697.

Policy 17: Landscaping, Hedgerows and Trees



View behind the shops in Wooler High Street

3.113 As affirmed in previous studies¹³, trees are an important feature of Wooler's landscape and within Wooler Town itself. They also promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors and contribute to environmental sustainability. It will be particularly important to retain trees as part of development proposals in these areas and, in order to retain the rural feel of the town, to incorporate tree planting and landscaping into new development.

3.114 There are many ways biodiversity can be incorporated into development schemes. Provision can be made for the retention of habitats (such as trees, hedgerows, stone walls etc.). The careful design and layout of development with biodiversity in mind (for example 'green roofs') can ensure that negative biodiversity impacts can be reduced and mitigation measures incorporated, to secure an overall improvement for biodiversity. All proposals should seek to secure a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible in accordance with Policy 2.

Policy 17: Landscaping, Hedgerows and Trees

New development sites should incorporate tree planting and landscaping where possible to ensure that the impact in the wider landscape is kept to a minimum.

Development proposals should be designed and laid out to avoid the loss of trees and hedgerows. Any loss of trees or hedgerows must be clearly justified by evidence demonstrating why they cannot be incorporated into the development as part of the development proposal.

Where the loss of trees as part of a development proposal is unavoidable, then replacement trees at a ratio of two trees for each tree removed should be provided, of the same species or other native species, as part of the development proposal. Conditions will be placed on any planning approval to ensure their retention.

Where the loss of a hedgerow is unavoidable, new species-rich hedgerows should be planted on site.

The loss of trees and the erosion of the three main tree groups within the Conservation Area, as identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, will not be supported, except where safety considerations apply. These main tree groups are:

- a) the horse chestnut, beech and lime trees around the cemetery and churchyard of St. Ninian's Church
- b) the horse chestnut, beech and lime trees around the cemetery and churchyard of St. Mary's Church
- c) the dense tree belt in the vicinity of Tower Banks

¹³ Village Design Statement 2000; Wooler Conservation Character Appraisal 2005.

Policy 18: Wooler Conservation Area

3.115 Wooler Town is fortunate in retaining much of its architectural and historic character. Despite changes over the years, Wooler is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal of 2005 as being 'one of the finest historic settlements in Northumberland'. This is partly to do with the spectacular landscape setting within which the Town sits: an area designated as the 'Glendale Area of High Landscape Value'.

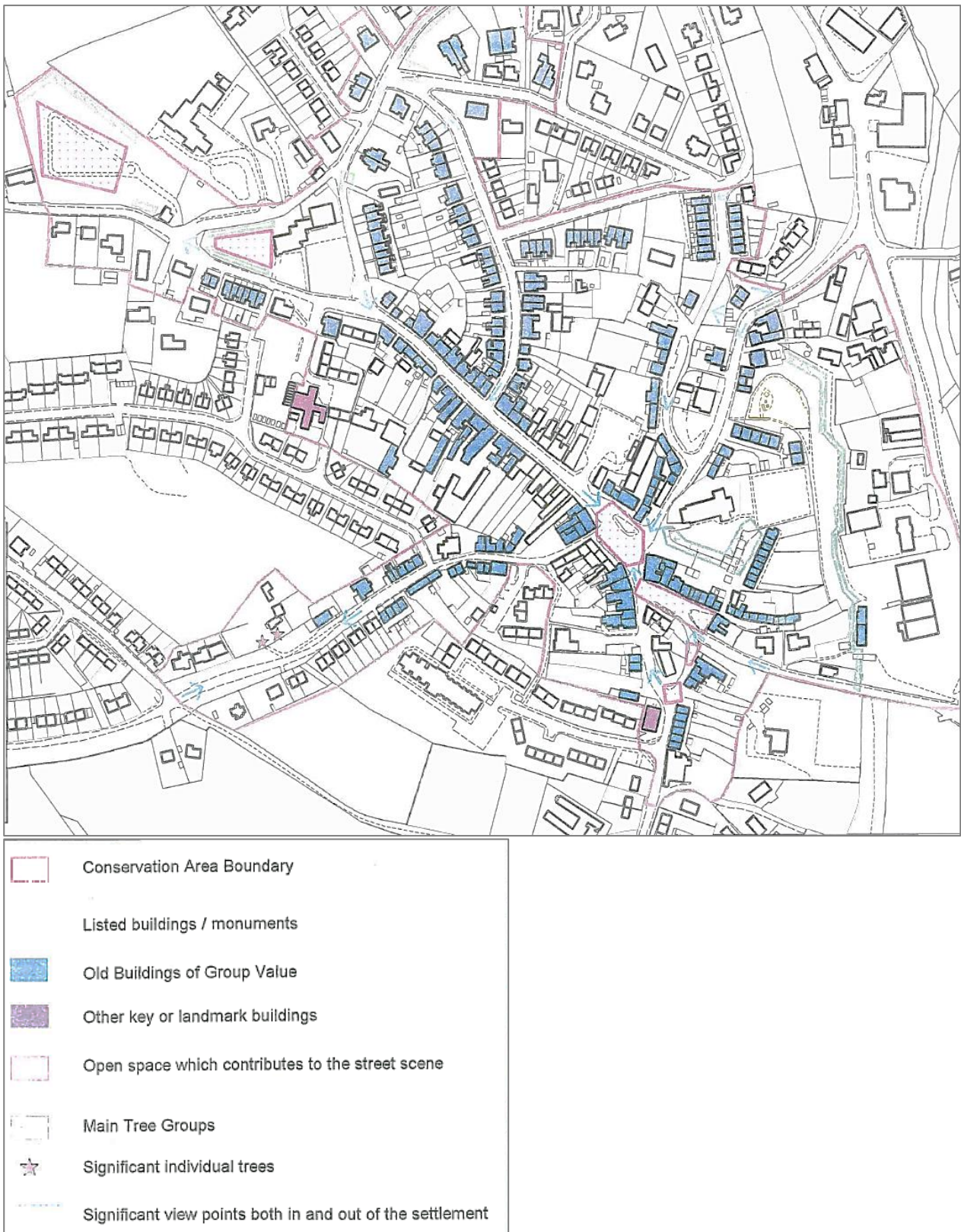
3.116 The Northumberland National Park is also partially within the Parish, and these designations emphasize the importance of the setting of Wooler Town for its landscape value. There are dramatic vistas down many of the streets in Town to the open moor and beyond, and it is these views and vistas that give the Conservation Area much of its character. The Conservation Area appraisal identifies buildings of 'group value', and other 'key' or 'landmark' buildings and important open spaces within the town. These are shown on the extract from the map, which follows on the next page.

3.117 Policy 18 seeks to conserve the high-quality shop fronts that Wooler Town already has. Many market towns across the country have lost original shop fronts, but Wooler has retained many of the original historic shop fronts which make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and the charm of the town.



Shop frontages along Wooler High Street

3.118 Contemporary designs are sometimes acceptable if they are of high quality, use traditional scale and proportions and respect the host building and the street scene. New frontages should represent locally distinctive characteristics in terms of design, scale, massing, height and materials.



Wooler Conservation Character Appraisal Map 2005

3.119 Character areas which contribute to the significance of the Wooler Conservation Area as identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 2005 are:

- i. **The High Street and Market Place Character Area** which is of particular historic and architectural value as a focus of Wooler's commercial centre. This character area includes 'burgage plots' on the southern side of the High Street which are of particular historic significance.
- ii. **The Victorian and Edwardian suburbs Character Area** is within the Conservation Area, and consists of an area of stone-built properties of high townscape quality. The roads included in this area are parts of Glendale Road, part of Tankerville Terrace, most of Ryecroft Way and part of Queen's Road, also part of Burnhouse Road to the west.
- iii. **Church Street and Tenter Hill Character Area** is of particular historic importance as the first developed area in the settlement and for its special architectural importance and high-quality townscape with St. Mary's Church as a major landmark.
- iv. **Ramsey's Lane and Cheviot Street Character Area** is included within the boundary of the Conservation Area because it comprises two early approach roads to the settlement. The area has buildings of architectural and historic interest and a townscape of high quality. Properties to the south end of Ramsey's Lane are more modern but provide a significant viewpoint and gateway into the area.

3.120 Listed buildings in Wooler¹⁴ contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Area, and the impact of any development on their setting will be a key consideration.

3.121 Trees are an important feature in Wooler's townscape. The main tree groups described in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal are of particular significance in the Conservation Area.

¹⁴ This list is on the www.northumberlandparishes.uk/wooler/documents/neighbourhood-plan website.

Policy 18: Wooler Conservation Area

All proposals for development within or affecting the setting of the Wooler Conservation Area must demonstrate how they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The following features are considered to be of particular importance:

- a) the relationship between the built-up areas of Wooler, the surrounding countryside, and key views out to the Glendale Area;
- b) townscape elements such as landmark buildings and buildings of group value, as defined in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal;
- c) historic shopfronts which should, be retained, restored or replicated as part of any development scheme affecting a historic shopfront;
- d) the distinct characteristics of the four 'character areas' defined in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal:
 - i) High Street and Market Place character area
 - ii) the Victorian and Edwardian suburbs character area
 - iii) the Church Street and Tenter Hill character area
 - iv) the Ramsey's Lane and Cheviot Street character area;
- e) the setting of the listed buildings in the town; and
- f) the protection of main tree groups described in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (see Policy 17).

Policy 19: Development on the Western and South-western Edges of Wooler Town



Horsdonside Hill

3.122 The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus development on the allocated sites on the eastern edges of Wooler, as identified on the Policies Map, and on infill and brownfield sites within the built-up area. The western and south-western edges of Wooler are sensitive due to their proximity to the Northumberland National Park and the special landscapes of Horsdon Hill and Humbleton Hill. This area is defined as that land located between the west side of Cheviot Street and the south side of Burnhouse Road.

3.123 The topography and landscape of the western and south-western edges of the town make it particularly sensitive to development. The Northumberland National Park is a short distance away, as are a number of scheduled monuments whose setting would be affected by large scale development, the largest of which is the Kettles ringwork 320m south west of Humbleton Mill. There is a large area to the west of Wooler that is a Registered Battlefield (Battle of Homildon Hill).

3.124 The Humbleton Hill and the Trows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also located on the western edge of Wooler. Further into the National Park are a number of larger areas of SSSI. In addition, the surrounding landscapes of Horsdon Hill and Humbleton Hill are identified as areas of high landscape sensitivity in the *Key Land Use Impact Study 2010*.¹⁵

3.125 The policy position for this sensitive edge of Wooler is therefore to allow small-scale development which is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that demonstrates that there would be no significant harm to the surrounding historic and natural landscapes. Significant mitigation may be required to ensure that the landscape impact of any development here is acceptable, through planting of native species and careful design of development.

Policy 19: Development on the Western and South-western Edges of Wooler Town

The western and south-western edges of Wooler are designated as a sensitive settlement edge. This is defined on the Policies Map.

On this sensitive settlement edge of Wooler, small scale proposals including housing development, will be supported only where they can be sensitively accommodated in the landscape. Any proposal to develop land in this area must be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

If landscape impacts are harmful and cannot be adequately mitigated through design and landscaping, then development will not be supported.

¹⁵ See especially Figure A2-26, p.A-104.

Part VI: Community Life



Glendale Middle School and Wooler First School

3.126 One of Wooler's main assets is its strong and welcoming community. People in Wooler have maintained its strong social core and are extremely active, with well over 20 clubs and societies. A lot of these activities take place in or near to Wooler. The Parish as a whole has much more to offer and the area is well-linked through bridleways, footpaths and cycle ways to the National Park and the Northumbrian countryside.

3.127 Wooler has a strong sense of community with education, health, social and leisure facilities which contribute to the local quality of life. The medical centre contains two GP surgeries and other medical facilities. These facilities need to be maintained and improved to help our community to thrive. Support will be given to the provision of new facilities where these will enhance the sustainability of community life and will meet the needs of an existing or growing and changing population.

3.128 Wooler also serves as a centre for a much wider rural catchment area and its facilities and services are of value to residents living well outside the parish boundaries. It also provides for many tourists during the year, especially in the summer months, who benefit from many of our community facilities. We would like that to continue to be the case by improving what we have to offer. We would like Wooler to maintain and improve facilities that would attract more young people to live in Wooler in order to re-balance the community while sustaining the rich range of activities available for older people.

3.129 The provision of good quality and varied open/green space available to all residents and to tourists is important for everyone's health and well-being.

3.130 The community has identified a need for better leisure facilities and in particular a local Leisure Centre. This could be part of a multi-purpose facility. Supporting development of a project like this would improve existing facilities for young and old. It may also encourage families to settle and remain in Wooler. It could also improve the appeal of Wooler's tourist offering. Such a Centre may increase provision of car parking to meet needs associated with the growing number of day visitors and those using the wide range of holiday accommodation that we have on offer.

Policy 20: Local Green Spaces

3.131 Residents in Wooler strongly value their local green spaces along with the biodiversity and recreational opportunities that green spaces provide both within, and on the edge of the town.

3.132 The designation of Local Green Spaces in Wooler is an essential dimension of planning for a growing but sustainable town. The NPPF identifies the following circumstances in which Local Green Space can be designated:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance;
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

3.133 Extensive consultation has revealed which of these green spaces are demonstrably special to the local communities they serve. Designation of these areas as Local Green Space is capable of enduring beyond the Plan period. A background paper¹⁶ illustrates each Local Green Space, provides maps, and explains how they are demonstrably special in terms of the criteria outlined in the NPPF and NPPG.

Policy 20: Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Spaces and are shown on the Policies Map:

GS1 Scott's Park
GS2 Bryson's Park
GS3 Tower Hill 'The Tory'
GS4 Cardingmill Plantation
GS5 The Ponds below Petersfield
GS6 Land east of A697/South Road

These sites will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt.

Proposals for development on these sites will not be supported 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.

¹⁶ Local Greenspace Assessment Dec. 2018

Policy 21: Recreational Land and Facilities



Wooler Football Ground

3.134 There are a number of recreational areas in Wooler Parish which are highly valued by the community. The policy seeks to ensure that these are retained and, if proposals for development do come forward that would have an impact on these sites that suitable provision is made elsewhere. Although these sites are highly valued by the local community, they are not formally designated as Local Green Space, as the community would accept provision elsewhere for these facilities.

3.135 This approach already applies in the Plan to Wooler Football Ground, which is on a site allocated for housing (See Policy 3.2). A housing proposal cannot go ahead on this site without the provision elsewhere of a site and associated facilities equivalent to or better than the existing provision.

Policy 21: Recreational Land and Facilities

Proposals which result in the loss of recreational facilities and spaces as identified on the Policies Map will not be supported unless robust justification is submitted to demonstrate there is:

- a) no longer a need for that facility, or
- b) that suitable alternative provision of an equivalent or better quality can be made for the facility elsewhere in Wooler, in an equally accessible location.

The following recreational areas are identified on the Policies Map:

- Wooler Bowling Club Ground
- Wooler Cricket Club Ground
- Wooler Tennis Courts Ground

Policy 22: Community Facilities

3.136 Wooler has a wide range of community facilities to cater for all ages. Some of these are recreational facilities and they are protected through Policy 21. Other facilities have been identified through community questionnaires and surveys. Some of these facilities are expected to be proposed for registration as Assets of Community Value (ACV). The variety of shops, pubs, cafés and restaurants also contribute to the social and cultural fabric of the town. As these are local businesses, they are not listed as community facilities, but they are nevertheless important to the vibrancy of the town. The two Schools are also extremely important to the future of the area, but are owned by the Northumberland County Council and so are not listed in this Policy.

3.137 Extensive consultation shows that several other community facilities are highly valued in Wooler and are considered by residents as essential to the social fabric of the town and to the well-being of the local population. These are listed in Policy 22.

3.138 Wooler town centre has three pubs and a Co-op. There are also two bakeries and a number of cafes. The Co-op is one of two convenience food stores in the town and it is vital that at least this level of provision is retained for Wooler to remain an independent and sustainable market town.

Policy 22: Community Facilities

Proposals that will enhance the viability and/or the community value of community facilities and community assets in Wooler will be supported.

The following facilities are identified as having a strong community value in Wooler and are identified on the policies maps:

- CF1 Bridgend Community Room
- CF2 Cheviot Centre
- CF3 Glendale Hall
- CF4 St Mary's Parish Room
- CF5 Wooler Bowling Club
- CF6 Wooler Drop-In

The loss of valued community facilities identified above or the loss of the last convenience store or public house in Wooler Town will not be supported unless robust justification is provided that demonstrates there is no longer a need for that community facility or that the community facility is no longer economically viable, or appropriate alternative provision can be made.

Policy 23: New Community Facilities

3.139 Wooler has no leisure centre or adequate swimming pool and has recently lost its last bank. Policy 23 seeks to support the provision of new facilities should the opportunity arise.

3.140 Consultation revealed that a new cemetery is needed in Wooler. Policy 3.1 of the Plan supports the extension of the existing cemetery as part of a mixed use development on the former First School site.

Policy 23: New Community Facilities

Proposals for new community facilities and infrastructure including facilities for recreational, leisure, educational and community use which benefit the community as well as visitors to Wooler will be supported.

In all cases, proposals must demonstrate:

- a) that they will not cause a significant adverse impact on highway safety;
- b) that safe and accessible pedestrian access can be provided;
- c) that, where appropriate, signage to provide clear links to nearby amenities and the town centre has been incorporated;
- d) that sufficient parking to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse parking impacts on nearby streets, is available or will be provided before the development is first brought into use;
- e) that there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties;
- f) that the development is sensitive to its surroundings and that any unacceptable adverse effect on the environment, habitats and local amenity can be avoided through good design and siting of development or that those effects can be suitably compensated for or mitigated; and
- g) careful consideration has been given to the level of any harm arising to the significance of heritage assets. Where development proposals would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum use that is viable and justifiable.

Part VII: Accessibility



'Pit Stop' at the Milk Bar junction between the Peth and Brewery Road

Background

3.141 Wooler acts as a local hub for villages within Glendale and lies about 20 miles from each of the three larger towns of Berwick, Alnwick and Kelso that offer a wider range of facilities. Wooler is built on a hillside with the major A697 road running along the bottom where there is a significant residential area and a holiday/caravan site. Minor roads link this with the town centre and a network of residential roads run between and beyond, leading into the Cheviot Hills. There is accessible but limited parking space in the town. There is a regular but limited bus service linking Wooler to Berwick, Alnwick and Kelso and the residential areas above and below the town centre.

3.142 The location of Wooler as the gateway to the Cheviot Hills ensures that Wooler attracts walkers and cyclists to the area and it is a cycle hub for routes around the area. It hosts the Wooler Wheel cycle event twice a year, the annual Chevy Chase and is on the St Cuthbert's Way long distance walking route. It is therefore important to maintain and improve walking and cycling routes to continue to attract visitors.

3.143 If Wooler is to maintain a thriving town centre, residents and visitors need to be able to access the High Street easily. The beautiful countryside and the quiet cycle routes are major attractions for visitors to the area so attention needs to be given to how access to the town centre and the surrounding countryside can be improved through consideration of the needs of all users.

3.144 In the future, as the population of Wooler and the tourist industry grows, there will be increasing pressure on the road network, footpaths and parking. Traditional means of transport are likely to change as policies to replace petrol and diesel engines by electric, possibly driverless, vehicles are implemented. The transport needs of all those without cars must also be considered

3.145 Most of the issues identified cannot be addressed through planning policies and will therefore be taken forward by Wooler Parish Council as community actions.

Policy 24: Footpaths and Cycleways



The path to Waud House, the Pinwell and the Kettles

3.146 There are many pedestrian routes that link places in the Town and that link the Town to the areas around. These are important for residents and visitors alike. Some of these footpaths could provide better access and links and could in some cases be upgraded to cycle routes. Footpath improvements and additions along the A697 in the Haugh Head area are also needed.

3.147 Where development affects these important links, proposals must ensure that these links are either incorporated within the site or are replaced by a more attractive and convenient route.

Policy 24: Footpaths and Cycleways

Proposals to improve the cycle and pedestrian network in Wooler will be supported.

Proposals for development should not result in the loss of off-road pedestrian access routes. Where this is unavoidable, an alternative link of similar distance and safety should be provided.

Policy 25: The Wooler Railway Line



Old railway track north of the Auction Mart

3.148 Wooler station closed in 1965. Currently, most of the line of the railway is not open to the public and is in private ownership.

3.149 There is an opportunity to support future pedestrian and cycle access along the railway line, which would provide convenient and safe off-road access from current and proposed housing sites to the north and east of the A697 to walk to/from school, avoiding the busy A697 road, which is the only route currently available to pedestrians. A footpath on the railway line towards Haugh Head would also be a helpful complement to the path beside the A697.

3.150 With the agreement of landowners, there is the potential to create a circular route which could be used by pedestrians and cyclists and provide links to areas outside the Parish.

3.151 Although at the present time this is not feasible due to land ownership issues, the railway line should be protected with a view to being used when the opportunity arises.

Policy 25: The Wooler Railway Line

Proposals which would prevent future use of the Wooler Railway Line as shown on the Policies Map as a pedestrian route will not be supported.

The upgrading and use of the Wooler Railway Line for cycling and walking will be supported.

4.0 Monitoring and Review

4.1 Effective monitoring is essential to ensure the Plan is achieving sustainable development in the Plan area. It also provides information to establish whether policies are effective and whether there are changes needed to policies in the longer term.

4.2 The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan sets out the long term spatial vision for the area with objectives and policies to deliver that vision for the next fifteen years, i.e. to 2036.

4.3 Decision making on planning applications still rests with both Northumberland County Council and Northumberland National Park Authority who have their own monitoring procedures in place. Wooler Parish Council will, however, undertake their own monitoring from time to time to evaluate the level of progress being made towards delivering the vision of the Plan.

4.4 The Wooler Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be formally 'made' before new Local Plans for Northumberland County and the Northumberland National Park have been adopted. It may therefore be necessary to review the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan in the light of any significant policy shifts. However, the Plan has been developed in close partnership with Northumberland County Council and Northumberland National Park Authority, giving careful attention to emerging new Local Plans. As a result, these emerging Plans are likely to be well-aligned with the Wooler Plan.

4.5 Wooler Parish Council will keep under review the Community Actions identified in Annex B, and monitor progress in implementing them.

Annex A: Glossary

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.

Affordable Housing: This is defined in NPPF as: Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
- b) For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- c) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- d) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- e) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

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.

Brownfield Site: See 'Previously Developed Land'

Brownfield land registers: Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

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

Conservation Area: The statutory definition of a Conservation Area is, 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Community-led housing: The Community-led housing sector bodies have agreed a definition of Community-Led Housing that is based on the following core principles:

1. A requirement that meaningful community engagement and consent occurs throughout the process. The community does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes themselves, though some may do.
2. The local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes and in a manner of their choosing.
3. A requirement that the benefits of the scheme to the local area and/or specified community group are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity e.g. through an asset lock.

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

Countryside: those parts of the Parish that are beyond the built up area of the main town of Wooler.

Custom-built housing: This refers to a single one-off home commissioned by an individual and built by a developer, through to a group of homes, built by a developer, but with the offer of bespoke design for the individual.

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

Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Development: Defined under the 1990 Planning 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 made neighbourhood plans.

Discount Market Value (DMV) Housing: Discount Market Value housing is housing that is sold on the open market, at a discounted rate (normally 30%) to allow people who are

unable to access the open market an opportunity to buy their own home. The discount is maintained in perpetuity, through a S106 agreement.

Entry-level exception site: A site that provides entry-level homes suitable for first time buyers (or equivalent, for those looking to rent), in line with the NPPF.

Extra-care Housing: This is housing designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self contained homes, their own front doors and a legal right to occupy the property (www.housingcare.org).

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.

Heritage asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

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

Historic environment record: Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

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

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

Listed Buildings: A listed building, or listed structure, is one that has been placed on one of the four statutory lists maintained by Historic England

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.

Main Town Centre Uses: Retail development (including factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, health and fitness centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and hotels).

Major Housing Development outside the National Park: For dwellings, a major development is one where the number of residential units to be constructed is 10 or more. Where the number of residential units to be constructed is not given in the application, a site area of 0.5 hectares or more should be used as a definition of a major development. For all

other uses, a major development is one where the floor space to be built is 1000 square metres or more, or where the site area is 1 hectare or more.

Major Development in the National Park: Development is classed as major when its characteristics and specific impacts are likely to have a significant impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

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 NPPG supplements national policy set out in the NPPF providing further guidance from the Government on land use planning matters.

Neighbourhood Plan: A land use plan, prepared by a 'qualifying body' (usually a parish council), forming part of the statutory development plan setting out planning policies for a neighbourhood area.

Net Gain for Biodiversity: Development that adopts a biodiversity net gain approach seeks to make its impact on the environment positive, delivering improvements through habitat creation or enhancement after avoiding or mitigating harm as far as possible.

Northumberland County Council: since 1st April 2009 the unitary authority for Northumberland and the Local Planning Authority for the Wooler area.

Outlying settlements: The outlying settlements are listed in Policy 8.

Pre-application advice: Pre-application advice can provide guidance on whether planning permission is required, if proposals would be acceptable and flag any potential issues that may arise.

Previously developed 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 was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as 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.

Rural exception sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a

setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

Sheltered Housing: This term is used in several different ways. AgeUK's definition is: "Sheltered housing or sheltered accommodation is designed to help older people to live independently, knowing help is at hand", usually on-site. There is some overlap with 'extra-care housing'.

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

Small-scale housing development: Residential schemes of 9 units or less.

small scale renewable and low carbon energy developments: Small-scale renewable energy developments comprise sources of energy and technologies for the generation of electricity or the production of heat, which would cut emissions of greenhouse gases and whose capacity to generate electricity is no more than 50 kilowatts; and to produce heat is no more than 45 kilowatts thermal.

Special Areas of Conservation: Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

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.

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'. The NPPF states 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.

Wider employment-generating uses: Land uses generating permanent on-site employment, which may include:

- a) 'Non-residential institution' uses, where the scale or nature of the operation, or lack of the need for regular public access would make a location in a town centre or central to where people live less necessary - e.g. training facilities of various sorts, crèches that serve people working in the employment areas themselves or

types of health clinics that provide for specialised needs and are only occasionally visited;

- b) They may include other uses which typically operate from employment sites such as car garages, taxi firms, home recycling centres and trade counter retail operations, as well as some leisure businesses which may not be suited to town centres;
- c) They would only include any of main town centre uses where the proposal is small scale and the employment area is centrally located in a main town or service centre;
- d) They would not include any residential-type uses.

Windfall Sites: Sites not specifically identified in the development plan

Wooler Parish: The whole area of the Parish

Wooler Town: The built up area of the settlement of Wooler.

Annex B: Community Actions

Many of the issues identified by residents during the consultation have been issues that cannot be 'land use' planning policies. A series of Community Actions are therefore proposed to be taken forward. Partners have been identified, and it is anticipated that these projects will be carried forward by Wooler Parish Council in partnership with others. Wooler Parish Council will periodically review and modify this list.

| Issue | Who could do this? | Comments | WPC Comments (as of 2018) |
|---|--|--|---|
| <i>Landscape Community Actions</i> | | | |
| 1. <u>Review</u> locations of seats and suggest additional locations, to create more sitting places around the town. | PC | Perhaps in collaboration with community groups or NCC to find funding | WPC have already initiated action on this. |
| 2. <u>Action</u> on improving the appearance of the town along the A697 | PC and volunteer groups | | WPC have asked NCC to improve the pathway along the A697 into Wooler. |
| 3. <u>Review</u> and manage existing open spaces (esp. Bryson's Park and Scott's Park) to provide more variety; and maybe create new managed public open spaces. | PC | Consultation comments suggest a greater variety of activities and design to accommodate different age groups might be appreciated. | WPC has taken action to seek funding to make improvements, including disabled play equipment. |
| 4. <u>Keep up work</u> to maintain and clean up streets, paths and public spaces, to promote a 'well cared for' town and surrounding area that is sensitive to wildlife. | PC and volunteer groups | | This is already underway. The PC have put extra funds in their 2018/19 precept to allow the caretaker to maintain public spaces |
| 5. <u>Keep a watching eye</u> on the condition of all historic buildings in our area | PC, NCC, Appropriate local organisations | Possibly ask the History Society to do an annual review | The Glendale Local History Society have been approached to see if they could help with this |

| Issue | Who could do this? | Comments | WPC Comments (as of 2018) |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>Economy Community Actions</i> | | | |
| 6. Promote better early years childcare to support young families | PC giving support to Health Services and local initiatives | | PC will attempt to reinstate 0-2 year old care if their bid to take over the First School site is successful |
| 7. Fully support existing shops in town, maybe consider a promotional theme, e.g. books/ antiques | PC, Shop owners | | WPC supports the reinstatement of the Shopkeepers' Association. |
| 8. Develop a resource centre to help small businesses, promote remote learning etc. | PC, GGT and others | | The GGT already do this. |
| 9. Promote the tourism economy through better use and publicity for all the area has to offer: dark skies, walking, cycling, history, wildlife and natural environment. Consider walking tours/special events/street markets to encourage those on the Caravan sites and other visitors to use facilities and spend time and money in the town. | PC, NCC, NNPA, GGT | | This is already underway through these groups |
| <i>Housing Community actions</i> | | | |
| 10. Promote a small scale housing project for young people leaving home | PC, GGT, CAN | Identify and use available grants to explore feasibility studies | WPC will look at these options. |
| 11. Promote a small scale extra-care housing complex | PC, GGT, CAN | Identify and use available grants to explore feasibility studies | As above |

| Issue | Who could do this? | Comments | WPC Comments (as of 2018) |
|--|---|----------|--|
| <i>'Community' Community Actions</i> | | | |
| 12. Promote a community transport system | ??? | | This is already underway |
| 13. Investigate ways to provide indoor leisure facilities for residents and visitors. | PC, Community groups, Businesses | | This is already underway |
| <i>Accessibility Community Actions</i> | | | |
| 14. Review parking areas and policies to enable residents', visitors' and commercial users' use of the High Street Consider the location of parking for motor homes whilst using town facilities. | PC, NCC | | WPC has already asked NCC to consider undertaking a parking review, and consider extending the parking time on High Street from 45mins. to 2 hrs. However, this is thought to be costly. |
| 15. Review the cycle and footpath network within and beyond the area to maximise access and use, including signage, maps and maintenance. | PC, Appropriate volunteer groups and volunteers | | WPC will look at options. |
| 16. Improve safety measures on A697 and road junctions to support pedestrians and road users including drop curbs, speed limits and Chatton Road bridge | PC, NCC | | Suggested improvements can be passed to NCC for consideration. A pedestrian crossing next to Riverside Park looks to be going ahead. |
| 17. Improve the road signing to Wooler over a wide area of North Northumberland to support visitors travelling by cycle, coach and car | PC, NCC | | WPC felt that the road signage to Wooler was already adequate but have passed the comment on to NCC |

Annex C: Reports and Studies used in the Preparation of the Plan

National

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
- Building for Life 12 (Third Edition, 2015)
<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>
- Locality Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans (no date)
http://www.communityplanning.net/neighbourhoodplanning/pdfs/quick_guide.pdf

Northumberland County Council/Berwick Borough Council

Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Policies.aspx>

- Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan (1999)
- Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015)
- Northumberland Planning Core Strategy (Pre-submission version February 2017; withdrawn July 2017)
- Northumberland Local Plan Consultation Draft July 2018
- Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment 2010
- NCC Key Land Use Impact Study 2010 (Part A): Landscape Sensitivity at settlement edges. 2010

Local Studies (for Wooler and also Glendale area)

Available at: www.northumberlandparishes.uk/wooler/documents/neighbourhood-plan

- Wooler Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2005 and Map
- Village Design Statement 2000
- Census 2011 Fact Sheets: Wooler Parish; Wooler Ward; Glendale.
- Glendale Community Plan 2011
- Listed Buildings in Wooler Parish January 2018
- Wooler Town Centre Health Check Report August 2009
- Glendale Housing Needs Assessment 2012
- Rural Growth Network Evaluation of Wooler Growth Hub 2015
- “Stayin’ Alive” in Glendale: young people’s experiences of living in Glendale and How to enhance it 2013

Studies undertaken specifically for WNP

Available at: www.northumberlandparishes.uk/wooler/documents/neighbourhood-plan

- Site Selection Approach Report January 2019
- Local Economy Background Report March 18
- Housing Background Report September 18
- Local Green Space Assessment December 2018
- CAN Housing Needs Assessment 2018
- AECOM Housing Sites Assessment 2018
- AECOM Housing Needs Assessment 2018
- AECOM Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report 2018
- AECOM Strategic Environmental Assessment (2019)

(See also the Housing and Business Surveys carried out by WNP SG members with the help of Wooler U3A and Wooler Drop-In)

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