



Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland Local Plan
Technical Background Paper

Assessment of Employment Sites

July 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Technical Paper explains how sites submitted as part of the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Study consultation (henceforward the SHELAA consultation) carried out early in 2018, were duly considered in the context of the necessity or otherwise for additional local plan employment land allocations.
- 1.1.2 This paper also acts as a 'bridge' between evidence base documents on employment land and proposals for land allocations in the Northumberland Local Plan.
- 1.1.3 The evidence base has informed decisions on whether, and which, existing employment areas (i.e. those that are monitored as part of the County's employment land portfolio), should be taken forward and safeguarded for continued employment use and, of these, which should be limited to the pure 'B-Class' employment uses¹ and which should be allowed to accommodate a wider range of employment generating uses.²
- 1.1.4 The evidence base has enabled consideration of the amount of land that should remain available within these existing employment areas and conclusions to be reached on where additional employment land allocations are needed in the settlement in question. These considerations and conclusions are set out below.

¹ The B-class uses are as follows:

- B1 Business - Offices (other than those that fall within A2), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.
- B2 General industrial - Use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste).
- B8 Storage or distribution - This class includes open air storage.

² What would be classified as a wider employment uses will depend on the nature of the use and the employment it generates and will be a matter of discretion. However, as a general rule:

- They would only include any of the A-Class or D2-Class town centre uses where the employment area is in a town centre or edge of centre location, with impact and sequential testing applying where the scale of the proposal dictates; (NB A1 retail use can sometimes form an ancillary part of an employment proposal - e.g. a factory shop - which may be acceptable subject to other considerations such as access and parking);
- They would not include any of the C-Class residential-type uses;
- They may include certain of the D1-Class '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. Examples might include training facilities of various sorts, creches that serve people working in the employment areas themselves or types of health clinics that provide for specialised needs and are only occasionally visited;
- They may include sui generis 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.

1.2 Evidence Base Documents

1.2.1 Two evidence base documents are of particular relevance:

- THE NORTHUMBERLAND EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW, January 2011, prepared for the County Council by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners and BNP Paribas Real Estate and partially updated in 2013.
- THE NORTHUMBERLAND EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PREMISES DEMAND STUDY, July 2015 Prepared for the County Council by ES Group.

The above documents can be found on the Council's website

1.2.2 The former document informed the latter but the approaches were different. The former considered the quantity distribution and quality of the employment land portfolio and made recommendations accordingly, while the later Study took a more market-based approach to reach realistic conclusions on demand for land in each of the Main Towns and Service Centre.

1.2.3 The two documents used various sources of information, which included information on available land contained in the Employment Land Schedule produced by the Council, as well as the pattern of past take up of employment land - also monitored by the Council. The latest versions of these two monitoring documents and accompanying mapping can also be found on the Council's website. It is not considered that patterns of land available on monitored sites or the rate and pattern of land take-up have altered significantly since 2015 so that their contribution to the Employment Land Review and the Land and Premises Demand Study remains relevant.

1.2.4 Clearly a number of other sources, such as property and marketing information, were also used in producing the Employment Land Review and the Demand Study, raising the question as to whether these sources also remain relevant today. In response to this, it can be stated that an independent review of the evidence base that had accompanied the (now withdrawn) Northumberland Core Strategy, has confirmed that the Northumberland Employment Land Review, January 2011 (partial update 2013) and the Northumberland Employment Land and Premises Demand Study, July 2015, both remain relevant evidence base studies.³

1.3 The Format of this Paper

1.3.1 The analysis below looks at each main town and service centre in Northumberland. The current development plan status of employment land within the settlement concerned is explained followed by a summary of whether new sites have been proposed through the SHELAA consultation.

³ This can be found on the Council's website as part of the Letter from Northumberland County Council (dated 31 January 2018) to the potential for Government intervention on the Local Plan – see Appendix 6 to that document, entitled: "Planning Advisory Service (PAS) report – Northumberland Local Plan: Review of evidence base and recommendations"

- 1.3.2 The evidence is then summarised in terms of its overall conclusions and recommendations for the settlement, with a commentary on which of these remain relevant.⁴
- 1.3.3 Final conclusions are reached on whether there is an adequate supply of employment land in the settlement and, if not, the deficit is identified as is how the additional land can be found and allocated. For settlements where additional allocations are needed, this Paper cross-refers to site by site analysis which has been prepared and published separately.
- 1.3.4 In all of the settlements, the document explains why particular employment areas are taken forward as allocations (or otherwise) and why particular areas are or are not safeguarded for the B-class land uses.

⁴ Reasons why not all of the conclusions will necessarily remain relevant include the 'making', in the intervening period, of a neighbourhood plan that allocates employment land; or a change in circumstances.

2. NORTH DELIVERY AREA

MAIN TOWNS

2.1 Alnwick

Development Plan position

2.1.1 The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2017 and replaced policies in the preceding Alnwick Local Plan vis-a-vis the town of Alnwick, although overarching policies in the Alnwick Core Strategy 2007 continue to apply. When pre-2004 Local Plan policies were saved in 2007, none of the former Alnwick District Local Plan 1997 employment land allocations were saved. However the County Council continued to monitor these formerly allocated areas as part of their portfolio of employment areas. The Neighbourhood Plan reallocated some of these and also allocated new areas - see below.

SHELAA Consultation

2.1.2 One site has been put forward in the SHELAA with a proposal for economic development related uses.

Evidence Base

2.1.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) proposed the allocation of a further 10 ha of general employment land over and above what was assessed as available at the time. This, it argued, would ensure sufficient land over the plan period.

2.1.4 Subsequently, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) found this figure to be too high due to an underestimate of available land but did see the need for a staged and flexible supply of new sites including the opportunity for an element of roadside service related use in the areas close to the A1. It recommended that the Council should fully explore the alternative options for ensuring that future allocations would best provide for need in Alnwick.

Conclusion

2.1.5 During the preparation of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, the Council worked closely with the Neighbourhood Plan Group and this led to the eventual allocation of around 10 hectares of new land through the Neighbourhood Plan. Given these significant additional allocations and the regeneration proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, together with the conclusions of the Land and Premises Demand Study, it is not considered that any further land will need to be brought forward for the period between the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period (2031) and that of the Northumberland Local Plan period (2036). The additional site proposal put forward as part of the SHELAA call for sites is therefore not taken forward.

2.1.6 On this basis, the Local Plan will not allocate any new areas of land. It will variously protect the different areas of employment land for either B-Class Uses or wider employment uses in a way that dovetails with policies in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. Some protection (for wider employment uses) will also be given to other existing employment areas in the town, which the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan has chosen not to allocate but which continue to be monitored as employment sites.

2.2 Berwick-upon-Tweed

Development Plan position

2.2.1 A number of employment land allocations remain saved in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan 1999.

SHELAA Consultation

2.2.2 No sites have been put forward in the SHELAA either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

2.2.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) recommended a considerable rationalisation of employment areas in the town of Berwick, as compared with those monitored as part of the portfolio of employment areas.

2.2.4 This was further endorsed in the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015), which suggested that land needs could also be met if redundant factory space were to be demolished. It is of note that the Study concluded that the prospect of major inward investment would be remote particularly because of a more generous package of incentives available across the border in Scotland. It further concluded that the office market would be met through existing, small scale provision in Berwick town centre and that the market for industrial premises would be limited to local demand with public sector financial support being needed to enable development on a larger scale.

Conclusion

2.2.5 Given the conclusions of the Employment Land Review, largely endorsed and expanded upon in the Land and Premises Demand Study, certain of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan allocations should not be carried forward. Therefore certain sites that are saved allocations in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan will not remain as allocations in the new Local Plan, reflecting the study recommendations. It is clear from the conclusions that no additional allocations will be needed and that it will therefore not be necessary to investigate new land for possible allocation.

2.2.6 Also based on the Study conclusions, the sites that are taken forward for allocation in the Local Plan will be split between those limited to the key 'B-Class' employment uses and those where a wider range of employment uses will be permitted.

SERVICE CENTRES

2.3 Belford

Development Plan position

2.3.1 There are two employment land allocations in Belford that remain saved in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan 1999.

SHELAA Consultation

2.3.2 One additional site has been put forward in the SHELAA for mixed uses that would include employment use.

Evidence Base

2.3.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not propose additional employment land in the Belford area.

2.3.4 Subsequently, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) stated that low levels of demand and vacant units available meant that there would be little justification for further provision of employment land and premises within the area, with the amount of available land on allocated sites more than would be required for the plan period. It recommended a rationalisation of land to deallocate land to the west of the A1.

2.3.5 The Demand Study did, however, conclude that there should be qualitative improvements to the larger Belford Industrial Estate to the east of the A1. It speculated that proximity to the A1 could attract certain types of user, possibly incorporating more land being made accessible to the north of the existing occupied areas. However it pointed out that this would need to be balanced against the fact that there are similarly accessible sites at Alnwick to the south and Berwick to the north, both of which are towns with large pools of labour.

Conclusion

2.3.6 Notwithstanding the conclusion of the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study regarding the outside possibility that additional good quality and accessible land adjoining the A1 could be successful, the more general conclusion that there is currently a surplus of allocated land in the Belford area as a whole means that it is not considered appropriate to bring forward more employment land as allocations, but instead to take a more reactive approach - i.e. accommodate any future user wishing to locate in the area as a windfall.

2.3.8 Therefore, it is considered that the existing allocation to the west of the A1 should not be taken forward, while the area to the east should be.

2.3.9 The site put forward in the SHELAA is to the west of the A1 in a very prominent, exposed location that forms part of the approach to Belford Village from the A1. On

the basis of the quantitative and qualitative conclusions of the above studies, it is not considered that this site should be taken forward for employment use.

2.4 Rothbury

Development Plan position

2.4.1 Overarching policies in the Alnwick Core Strategy 2007 continue to apply and are supplemented by certain saved policies in the Alnwick District Local Plan 1997. When pre-2004 Local Plan policies were saved in 2007, none of the former Alnwick District Local Plan employment land allocations was saved. However the County Council continued to monitor these formerly allocated areas as part of their portfolio of employment areas, including Rothbury's single industrial estate.

SHELAA Consultation

2.4.2 One site has been put forward in the SHELAA with a proposal for economic development related uses.

Evidence Base

2.4.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not propose additional employment land but supported the allocation of the existing monitored employment area.

2.4.4 Subsequently, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) found low levels of demand and vacant units available at Rothbury Industrial Estate. It noted that, while this would suggest little justification for further provision of employment land and premises, there was evidence of that some past demand for industrial premises had not been capable of accommodation in Rothbury. The study concluded that the potential to create an additional 'development plateau' adjoining Rothbury Industrial Estate could be investigated, along with a planning policy approach to developing bespoke premises on unallocated sites and through conversion of existing buildings.

Conclusion

2.4.5 Notwithstanding the conclusion of the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study regarding the possibility of creating an extension to the Rothbury industrial estate, the Council does not have sufficient evidence that this could be delivered or that the land concerned is necessarily available. The site suggested in the SHELAA call for sites is in a different part of Rothbury.

2.4.6 Instead, it should be ensured that the Local Plan contains policy approaches that will allow for the expansion of the estate if required, and also for the other suggested policy approaches regarding non-allocated sites coming forward for employment uses and premises conversions where appropriate. The text of the plan should also make clear that an expansion of Rothbury's employment area would be supported if deliverable and justified.

- 2.4.7 Overall, it is considered that the previous allocation in Rothbury that has long been monitored as part of the portfolio of land should be allocated and continue to be protected for B-Class employment uses but that no further land should be allocated.
- 2.4.8 The site put forward in the SHELAA is in a different part of Rothbury and would be creating a new employment area which would be difficult to justify in terms of the evidence available and not necessarily in a good location in terms of the local environment. It is therefore not considered that this site should be taken forward.

2.5 Seahouses / North Sunderland

Development Plan position

- 2.5.1 The North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2018 and replaced policies in the preceding Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan 1999 in this area. The Neighbourhood Plan reallocated the single employment area allocated in the previous Local Plan.

SHELAA Consultation

- 2.5.2 One site has been put forward in the SHELAA with a proposal for mixed uses including retail, leisure and community, as well as residential. It is not clear whether the proponent would see employment uses as a possible element of the site's uses.

Evidence Base

- 2.5.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not propose additional employment land in this area but suggested retaining the existing employment zone (which had, and still has, available land) and protecting it from the development of incompatible uses which would compromise the use of the land for employment purposes.
- 2.5.4 Subsequently, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) endorsed this approach based on its own supplementary evidence.

Conclusion

- 2.5.5 It is noted that the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan sought to allocate additional employment land but that the Examiner into their plan concluded that there was insufficient evidence to justify this. On this basis, and given the conclusions of the Land and Premises Demand Study, it is not considered that it would be sufficiently justifiable for the Local Plan to bring forward further land to cover the period between the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period (2031) and that of the Northumberland Local Plan period (2036).
- 2.5.6 It is, however, accepted that further local demand may arise as the plan period progresses and, as such, it should be ensured that the Local Plan contains policy approaches regarding non-allocated sites coming forward for employment uses and premises conversions where appropriate.

2.5.7 The site put forward in the SHELAA is in a different part of Seahouses / North Sunderland and would be creating a new employment area which would be difficult to justify in light of conclusions reached in the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) and the fact that the Examiner of the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan also found no evidence to justify an additional allocation in the village. It is therefore not considered that this site should be taken forward.

2.6 Wooler

Development Plan position

2.6.1 The Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan 1999 contained a number of adjacent employment sites, all of which have continued to be monitored as part of the portfolio of employment sites but only part of which were saved as Local Plan allocations when some pre-2004 Local Plan policies were saved in 2007.

SHELAA Consultation

2.6.2 One site has been put forward in the SHELAA with a proposal for mixed uses including retail, leisure and community, as well as residential. It is not clear whether the proponent would see employment uses as a possible element of the site's uses.

Evidence Base

2.6.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not propose additional employment land in the Wooler area, but did propose that all of the currently monitored sites be kept in employment use.

2.6.4 The subsequent Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) suggested that despite past low levels of demand and the consequent apparent surplus of land supply, there was some evidence of demand for further industrial units with yard space in the town.

Conclusion

2.6.5 On the above basis, it considered that the full portfolio of sites currently monitored should be allocated for employment purposes with the occupied areas limited to B-class uses but the large area of available land to its west being open to a wider range of employment uses. No additional land needs to be sought.

2.6.6 The site put forward in the SHELAA is in a different part of Wooler and would be creating a new employment area which would be difficult to justify in terms of the evidence available and not necessarily in a good location in relation to the rest of the town. It is therefore not considered that this site should be taken forward.

3. SOUTH EAST DELIVERY AREA

MAIN TOWNS

3.1 Amble

Development Plan position

- 3.1.1 Overarching policies in the Alnwick Core Strategy 2007 continue to apply and are supplemented by certain saved policies in the Alnwick District Local Plan 1997 . When pre-2004 Local Plan policies were saved in 2007, none of the former Alnwick District Local Plan employment land allocations was saved. However the County Council continued to monitor these formerly allocated areas as part of their portfolio of employment areas, including Amble's single industrial estate.

SHELAA Consultation

- 3.1.2 No sites have been put forward in the SHELAA either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

- 3.1.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) concluded that Coquet Enterprise Park (Amble's only dedicated industrial estate), had a large supply of employment land but stopped short of proposing that the area dedicated to employment uses should change.
- 3.1.4 The subsequent Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) suggested something of an oversupply, arguing that the town centre was a better location for any incoming office uses. It proposed a reduction in the area of the estate that would not, in its view, compromise its integrity.

Conclusion

- 3.1.5 On the above basis, it considered that the south east corner of the previously monitored employment area should not be taken forward as an allocation but that the remainder (around three-quarters of the total area) should. Given the apparent surplus of available sites within this area, a more flexible approach should be taken, with a wide range of employment-generating uses being permissible. No additional land needs to be sought.

3.2 Ashington

Development Plan position

- 3.2.1 Saved policies from the Wansbeck District Local Plan 2007 include a number of allocations including major areas of employment uses to the north and south of the

town's main built-up area. They tie in with the portfolio of sites that the County Council has continued to monitor.

SHELAA Consultation

- 3.2.2 No sites have been put forward in the SHELAA either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

- 3.2.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) proposed no new allocations.
- 3.2.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agreed with this, in fact suggesting that this argument had become even stronger with the servicing of Ashwood Business Park, including direct access to the A189 dual carriageway, providing a strategically important site - albeit that the layout may not suit larger single users. In addition, Wansbeck Business Park had capacity for further office and industrial development. The conclusion was therefore that the town 'has a ready supply of good quality employment land'.
- 3.2.5 However it did conclude that the availability of ready-made office and industrial premises would act as a drag on new development activity in the short term. It was clear, it stated, that rental yields and low land values would rule out speculative development with a reliance on public subsidy of future employment development on any scale. It did suggest that available investment needed to be directed to refurbishment of older, run-down industrial buildings.
- 3.2.6 The 2015 study noted that (at the time at least) some demand was coming from businesses needing to relocate from areas close to the town centre, having been displaced from there. The supply of land and premises was considered to be more than sufficient to absorb this.
- 3.2.7 With the supply of land being assessed as more than that required for the plan period and given that wider employment generating uses had a history of taking up land in the town, the 2015 study recommended that substantial areas of the employment land (notably at North Seaton) should be made available for the wider definition of employment-generating uses.

Conclusion

- 3.2.8 On the above basis, it is considered that parts of North Seaton and Ellington Road Ends should not be taken forward as employment land, while the rest of North Seaton the Jubilee estate and some smaller employment areas should be available for the wider (than just B-class) employment uses.
- 3.2.9 However the key areas of Ashwood and Wansbeck Business Parks should continue to be reserved for B-Class uses in line with their more strategic role within South-East Northumberland.
- 3.2.10 Notwithstanding that the recent SHELAA exercise has not brought forward any new sites, Wansbeck Business Park, with its much improved environment, good road

connections and close proximity to the town centre has been successful and, as a result a further land opportunity in the ownership of the Northumberland Development Company, badged as 'Wansbeck Business Park East', will be added to the portfolio and allocated for specific investment opportunities within the B-Class uses.

3.3 Bedlington

Development Plan position

3.3.1 Saved policies from the Wansbeck District Local Plan 2007 include a number of allocations. In Bedlington's case, these lie along the northern periphery of the town and further to the north-east towards Sleekburn and the Blyth estuary area. The saved allocations tie in with the portfolio of sites that the County Council has continued to monitor.

SHELAA Consultation

3.3.2 A small site (currently derelict / underused brownfield) to the north of Barrington Brickworks has been put forward in the SHELAA consultation for pure employment use.

3.3.3 Two larger sites in the near vicinity (around Bomarsund) have been put forward in the SHELAA with a proposal for mixed uses including retail, leisure and community, as well as residential. It is not clear whether employment uses are included in the possible uses that would occupy these sites.

Evidence Base

3.3.4 The Employment Land Review (2011) considered there to be a more than adequate supply of employment and proposed removing existing employment protection from the northern half of the Bedlington Station employment area.

3.3.5 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agreed. Its further analysis showed high vacancy rates amongst the town's industrial stock and found that (unsurprisingly) business parks at Blyth (to the south) and Ashington (to the north) offered much more marketable opportunities for employer wishing to locate in SE Northumberland. There would be, it found, no justification for the provision of more employment land at Bedlington.

Conclusion

3.3.6 Since the recommendation of the original Employment Land Review, relocation of occupiers from the Bedlington Station site means that this will not be taken forward as an allocation.

3.3.7 It would be sensible to add the small underused brownfield site (from the 2018 SHELAA consultation) to the area defined as the Barrington Brickworks employment site. This and the main Barrington area should be reserved for B-class uses. Their peripheral location and the nature of these estates (with a higher proportion of B2

uses than elsewhere) makes allowing a wider range of employment uses less appropriate.

- 3.3.8 The large sites at Bomarsund, put forward in the 2018 SHELAA consultation, would involve substantial building in open countryside gaps between the tight-knit settlement pattern of SE Northumberland. Overall, it is not considered that any of the suggested land in the Bomarsund location would be needed for employment purposes.

3.4 Blyth

Development Plan position

- 3.4.1 Saved policies from the Blyth Valley District Local Plan 1999 include a number of allocations. In Blyth's case, the vast majority of these lie along the northern and eastern periphery of the town adjoining the River Blyth and the Port of Blyth. Together, these sites form a continuous swathe of largely taken-up employment land, separating residential areas and the town centre from the river. The Local Plan saved policies allocate much of this for general employment but substantial areas are allocated for port-related uses. Much smaller employment zones lie within the town and at Bebside. These saved allocations tie in with the portfolio of sites that the County Council has continued to monitor.

SHELAA Consultation

- 3.4.2 No sites have been put forward in the SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

- 3.4.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) considered there to be little value in continuing to pursue development at smaller, older sites within residential parts of the town but noted the town's limited supply of vacant employment land. It therefore proposed that some new land may need to be found. To supplement this, it also suggested that the redevelopment of older premises could create new opportunities within the largely occupied Blyth Riverside Business Park along the river to the north of Cowpen Road.
- 3.4.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) endorsed the Employment Land Review approach of not pursuing the older, smaller sites of Crofton Mill, New Delaval and Bebside.
- 3.4.5 The 2015 Study also summarised the land supply situation in Blyth as sufficient but limited. It noted that Blyth Industrial Estates along the river provide good quality opportunities but with a limited stock of unconstrained development plots.
- 3.4.6 However the 2015 Demand Study assessed the Employment Land Review (2011) recommendation regarding redevelopment of parts of the Blyth Industrial Estates along the river as being less viable and therefore unlikely to happen automatically

without subsidy, so limiting the likelihood of new development opportunities being achieved through this approach.

- 3.4.7 As for the need to look for new land allocations, the 2015 Demand Study also disagreed with the Employment Land Review (2011), stating that other locations nearby and further afield along the east coast ports would create an adequate supply of larger sites. Here, it was particularly referring to the strategic, specialised role of the Blyth Estuary sites, most of which lie across the river from the town of Blyth itself. More generally, it saw the strong relationship between Blyth and Ashington as particularly important. Agencies looking to increase energy and port related activities have since confirmed the important linkages with places such as Ashwood Business Park (in Ashington) and NW Cramlington, as well as the largely occupied Blyth Riverside Business Park area itself, in terms of industries and service functions relating to the key Blyth Estuary industrial sectors. Finally, the Study regards the reconstitution of the former Alcan site at Lynemouth as providing a further supply of land that could serve the wider needs of SE Northumberland including Blyth.
- 3.4.8 The 2015 Demand Study therefore concluded that new allocations are not needed to serve the town over the next plan period.

Conclusion

- 3.4.9 In conclusion, the limited supply of sites in the town of Blyth itself but the ready supply slightly further afield means that the majority of the former local plan allocations should be taken forward but no additional allocations should be sought.
- 3.4.10 Much of the Port of Blyth and former Bates land will form part of the key strategic Blyth Estuary allocation, incorporating large swathes of the Cambois area across the river from the town. The remaining riverside and quayside locations will be retained as allocations for general employment use, with areas closer to the A189 being limited to B-class uses but areas closer to the town centre and the Quayside allowing for a wider range of employment uses. A small area of this land that has become a retail park will no longer form an employment allocation. Meanwhile sites at Crofton Mill, New Delaval and Bebside, which have partly defaulted to non-employment use, will not be taken forward.
- 3.4.11. As no further areas of land have been suggested for employment use through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, and given the wider supply situation, there is no requirement to assess additional sites.

3.5 Cramlington

Development Plan position

- 3.5.1 Saved policies from the Blyth Valley District Local Plan 1999 include a number of allocations. In Cramlington's case, a whole quadrant of the town (the North-West Sector) is almost entirely allocated employment land. In addition, there is the allocated strategic employment site at West Hartford, the Northumberland Business Park at South Cramlington, land at Fisher Lane which, in the development plan to

date, has formed part of the South-West Sector Development Area and, finally, a small industrial estate at East Cramlington.

- 3.5.2 The Local Plan saved policies allocate all but West Hartford strategic site for general (B-class) employment uses. These saved allocations tie in with the portfolio of sites that the County Council has continued to monitor.

SHELAA Consultation

- 3.5.3 No sites have been put forward for pure employment use in the 2018 SHELAA consultation. A large area of open land south of the Cramlington emergency hospital is put forward for residential and mixed uses, although it is not entirely clear whether employment uses would form part of any proposal here.

Evidence Base

- 3.5.4 The Employment Land Review (2011) found no requirement for additional allocations.
- 3.5.5 The Review proposed the deallocation of two areas due to the substantial amount of readily available employment land elsewhere in Cramlington, and (variously) the need for large amounts of investment in onsite infrastructure and/or site-specific constraints. One is the Fisher Lane Site in the SW Sector and the other lies within the NW Sector area at South Nelson (East).
- 3.5.6 With regard to the West Hartford strategic site, the Employment Land Review recognised that there would be constraints and costs in terms of bringing the whole site onstream and proposed that some parts of the site could go for smaller scale general employment uses.
- 3.5.7 In relation to office accommodation, the prime location for this in the County (outwith town centres) was recognised (in the 2011 Review) to be Northumberland Business Park in South Cramlington. The Review maintained that this location needed to be considered alongside key office locations in North Tyneside like 'Cobalt' and 'Quorum'. It concluded that there would be more than sufficient opportunities for the plan period.
- 3.5.8 Turning to the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015), this largely endorsed the findings of the earlier Review. It agreed with the removal of the two areas referred to above and the retention of the West Hartford site in a strategic employment capacity so long as a master plan could be prepared for it and it could be properly weighed against other regionally important strategic sites, notably the 'IAMP' at Sunderland / South Tyneside.
- 3.5.9 The Study listed some uncertainties as to whether the town might benefit from additional allocations - e.g. the final mix of uses at West Hartford and Northumberland Business Park - whether some land in these areas might end up as general employment use. However, its overall conclusion was that no further employment land would need to be identified.

Conclusion

3.5.10 It is concluded that:

- The strategic site at West Hartford should be taken forward as a prestige employment site for large scale, single users but leaving open the possibility that some higher end smaller general employment users could locate there.
- Land at South Nelson (East), part of Bassington that is now a housing site and the large area at Fisher Lane should not be taken forward as allocations for employment but all other areas previously allocated for employment use should be local plan allocations. Based on evidence, they should be limited to B-class uses apart from the remainder of Bassington industrial estate and the East Cramlington employment area, which should be open to a wider range of employment generating uses.
- No additional land needs to be sought as the supply is sufficient. The land put forward, as a result of the 2018 SHELAA consultation, for mixed uses south of the emergency care hospital, therefore does not need to be pursued for employment purposes.

SERVICE CENTRES

3.6 Guide Post / Stakeford

Development Plan position

3.6.1 Saved policies from the Wansbeck District Local Plan 2007 do not include sites in or immediately adjoining the built-up area of Guide Post / Stakeford, although some allocated employment areas lie in the nearby areas of Bomarsund and West Sleekburn, sites which tie in with the portfolio of sites that the County Council has continued to monitor.

SHELAA Consultation

3.6.2 No sites have been put forward in the SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use, although large sites in the Bomarsund area put forward for mixed uses lie to the south.

Evidence Base

- 3.6.3 As stated, there is no allocated or monitored employment land within or immediately abutting Guide Post / Stakeford's built-up area.
- 3.6.4 Both the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) and the previous Employment Land Review (2011) consider the area as a whole including all the sites that comprise the northern part of the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area (around Cambois) and the West Sleekburn employment zone.

- 3.6.5 The recommendations mainly concern the strategic importance of the core area of what was allocated (in the Wansbeck Local Plan 2007) as the 'Cambois Zone of Economic Opportunity'. These recommendations also include the suggestion not to take forward some areas around the periphery of this Zone but press ahead with the remainder of the strategic allocation.
- 3.6.6 No particular recommendation is made with regard to the West Sleekburn employment area, the general employment area that lies closest to Guide Post / Stakeford. Some land remains available at this location.

Conclusion

- 3.6.7 Given the land supply situation at West Sleekburn and further afield across this part of South-East Northumberland, and the absence of any clear recommendation relating to Guide Post / Stakeford itself, there will be no justification for seeking to allocate further employment land here. Nearby proposals in the SHELAA 2018 therefore need not be pursued for employment allocations in the Northumberland Local Plan.

3.7 Newbiggin by the Sea

Development Plan position

- 3.7.1 Saved policies from the Wansbeck District Local Plan 2007 include just one small employment allocation in Newbiggin by the Sea, at Woodhorn Road, part of the portfolio of sites that the County Council has continued to monitor.

SHELAA Consultation

- 3.7.2 No sites in Newbiggin have been put forward as a result of the SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

- 3.7.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) proposed removing the single employment site at Woodhorn Road from allocations due to the length of time it had been available and low demand.
- 3.7.4 In terms of where a local supply of land to serve the town's needs, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) noted that the closure of the Alcan Aluminium Smelter and the consequent newly created employment park on (recycled land) is only a mile to the north west of the Woodhorn Road site.

Conclusion

- 3.7.5 It is clear that there is a very healthy employment land supply situation in the wider area - not only at the former Alcan site, but also at the Wansbeck and Ashwood Business Parks and other employment opportunities in Ashington and the Blyth Estuary strategic site. There is also an absence of new suggestions for employment

land within Newbiggin itself. Overall, therefore, there is not considered to be any justification for seeking additional employment land in Newbiggin by the Sea.

3.8 Seaton Delaval

Development Plan position

3.8.1 In terms of employment land, the Double Row employment area lies at the northern end of Seaton Delaval and the former Procter and Gamble (latterly HFC Prestige Manufacturing - Coty) factory has now been vacated and occupies a large site at the western edge of the village. Both remain saved allocations in the Blyth Valley District Local Plan, 1999. Close by, in Seghill, the former Brickworks remains allocated as does an adjoining small group of existing employment uses (largely occupying former pithead buildings). The County Council has continued to monitor all of these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

3.8.2 The HFC Prestige Manufacturing plant plus a strip of land alongside to the south, which is part 'white land' within the Seaton Delaval inset boundary and part Green Belt, has been put forward in the 2018 SHELAA consultation for mixed uses that would include residential. It is not clear the degree to which the proponent would be intending land to continue to be set aside for employment purposes.

Evidence Base

- 3.8.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not propose additional employment land in this area, and recommend that the vacant (former brickworks) land at Seghill should not be taken forward as a development plan allocation, partly because new housing and a school have been built in close proximity and partly due to a lack of interest in the site.
- 3.8.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agrees with the Seghill conclusion recommending that only the existing cluster of employment uses ought to be safeguarded for those uses.
- 3.8.5 Both studies noted that Double Row had effectively reached capacity. The 2015 Study recorded an element of demand for low cost land and premises but that the estate had become somewhat hemmed in by recent housing development. It recommended that options for expansion should nevertheless be explored.
- 3.8.6 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) also found that demand for office floorspace in this locality is very weak and suggested that this could be accommodated through conversions of existing buildings
- 3.8.7 It is important to note that neither Study anticipated that the HFC Prestige Manufacturing plant would be vacated but, based on the above conclusions, it seems appropriate that any future redesignation of the land ought to be considered in the

context of their possible contribution to additional local demand for road frontage employment land.

Conclusions

3.8.8 Based on the above study recommendations and the uncertainties regarding the future of the former HFC Prestige Manufacturing site the following the recommendations are made:

- That the HFC Prestige Manufacturing plant remains allocated for B-Class employment use following the existing boundary of the former plant.
- That the Double Row area (apart from a small backland) site remain allocated for employment but that a wider range of employment-generating uses is allowed.
- That, in Seghill, only the area of the existing employment uses, and not the vacant land, should be taken forward as an allocation and that this should be for the wider range of possible uses.

4. CENTRAL DELIVERY AREA

MAIN TOWNS

4.1 Hexham

Development Plan position

4.1.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. These allocations are entirely in the northern part of the town, at Haugh Lane / Burn Lane / former Bunker site close to the town centre and, further afield, at Tyne Mills and across the River Tyne at Bridge End area that includes the large Egger chipboard manufacturing plant. The County Council has continued to monitor all of these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

4.1.2 The 2018 SHELAA consultation has seen four sites in Hexham put forward for mixed uses. Given the absence of suggestions of sites purely immediate employment use, this makes these sites eligible to be considered for employment use, should a need be identified. The sites are:

- Land east of the Bridge End Industrial Estate (east of the Egger factory), (put forward for mineral extraction followed by employment);
- Land at the Hermitage, close to the main access junction on the A69;
- Land east of Hexham and south of the A695, which would effectively extend the town further east along the Corbridge Road;
- The Beales store in the town centre;

(NB the latter three sites are put forward for residential and a variety of mixed uses, although it is unclear the extent to which employment could be integrated into the proposed mix of uses).

Evidence Base

4.1.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) proposed that the boundaries of two sites be amended to reflect reduced employment allocations - the former Bunker and the Goods Yard adjoining the station.

4.1.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agreed with the conclusion on the Goods yard, as much had gone over to retail use. The Study also considered the Bunker an expensive site to develop but acknowledged that its proximity to the town centre could be appealing for an office park type of use.

- 4.1.5 Both reports were clear that there is a severe shortage of employment land remaining available in the town, even if land at nearby Acomb is counted. Not surprisingly the recommendation was to retain remaining employment areas in that use.
- 4.1.6 In terms of securing an adequate future supply of employment land, the 2011 Employment Land Review (2011) recommended the allocation of 10-15 ha of further office and industrial land but acknowledged the difficulty of finding suitable sites given the constraints of topography and Green Belt. It made a number of suggestions regarding which areas surrounding the town could be explored, should it be decided that there was no option but to release land from the Green Belt.
- 4.1.7 Subsequently, the 2015 Employment Land and Premises Demand Study, looked more closely at market-based and past take-up evidence. This confirmed that the market had been suppressed by a lack of available opportunities and confirmed the 10-15 hectare figure as being reasonable. It acknowledged also that Green Belt adjustment would be necessary to achieve this. Even where exceptional circumstances for the release of Green Belt land could be justified, the 2015 Study pointed out that other barriers would need to be overcome, whether it be flood risk, accessibility from the main road system or marketability issues, meaning that upfront investment would be required, whichever area of land was settled upon.

Conclusion

- 4.1.8 On the basis of the evidence, it is concluded that Hexham has a shortage of land and that an additional 10 hectares should be allocated to cover the plan period. It is further concluded that the additional land can only be achieved if the Green Belt inset boundary is adjusted to accommodate it and that exceptional circumstances therefore justify the Local Plan bringing forward an allocation that involves such an adjustment.
- 4.1.9 In order to assess which area should be brought forward a number of sites, including sites newly put forward through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, have been assessed and scored against a number of criteria in a **separate technical background document entitled 'Northumberland Local Plan - Employment Land Site Option Appraisal: Hexham Site Option Appraisal'**. The appraisal includes a number of sites that have been suggested and assessed previously. The new sites have been added to these. The assessment has been endorsed in the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the Local Plan.
- 4.1.10 This appraisal concludes that Land east of the Bridge End Industrial Estate (east of the Egger factory) is the best site to take forward as an employment allocation. It is concluded that the site (totalling almost ten hectares) should be allocated and the land concerned removed from the Green Belt. It is acknowledged that gravel extraction from this haugh land would be a sensible approach to stabilising the land prior to development and addressing the floodplain issue and that, therefore, it would be a few years into the plan period before the land could be made available for employment use. Constraints on the road system close to Bridge End will also need to be addressed.
- 4.1.11 In terms of the existing employment areas, all should be taken forward as future allocations apart from those that have changed from employment use over the years

(including around Tesco, housing areas at Tyne Green Road and parts of Tyne Mills). It is clear that remaining employment areas closer to the town centre (Haugh Lane / Burn Lane / Tyne Mills) have been attractive to a wide range of employment generating uses that serve the functioning of the town and its centre well. As such, these areas will be allocated for the wider range of employment generating uses. The more distant employment areas north of the River Tyne, including the new allocation, will be reserved for the main 'B-class' employment uses.

4.2 Morpeth

Development Plan position

- 4.2.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are contained in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan which was 'made' and became part of the development plan in 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan includes the following allocations:
- Land to the south of Fairmoor - around 8 hectares
 - Land to the south of Northgate Hospital - around 2 hectares
 - The Coopies Lane Business Park
 - The County Hall and Fire Station site
 - The pharmaceutical factory site at Whalton Road
 - Pegswood Industrial Estate
- 4.2.2 The County Council has monitored most but not all of these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas and will add newer allocations, as appropriate, for future monitoring purposes.
- 4.2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan also allocates 'Key Development Opportunity Sites' within the Town Centre but the policy does not envisage these sites as absorbing any of the B-class use employment demand.

SHELAA Consultation

- 4.2.4 The 2018 SHELAA consultation has resulted in two submissions for full employment use - land south of Coopies Lane Business Park and land north of Coningsby House (a short distance north of Coopies Lane Business Park). Neither site is in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan allocations and both lie beyond that Plan's settlement boundary for the town.
- 4.2.5 In addition, other sites are proposed for mixed use including residential. Some are excluded from any new consideration by virtue of being allocations for specific uses in the Neighbourhood Plan. The others that may be regarded as offering at least an element of employment and therefore requiring assessment, are an area of land north of Springhill Walk and an area of land north of Lancaster Park that hasn't previously been assessed for employment purposes. Neither site is in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan allocations and the latter site sits beyond that Plan's settlement boundary for the town.

Evidence Base

- 4.2.6 Much of what emerged as recommendations in the Employment Land Review (2011) and the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) has been superseded by the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan has since been made.
- 4.2.7 Both studies noted a constrained supply and considered that this has, in turn suppressed demand, especially for small units. Interestingly, the Demand Study (2015) considered that Morpeth would be unlikely to attract major distribution requirements unless the A1 could be dualled all the way through to Edinburgh - for which no current plans exist.
- 4.2.8 More specifically, the 2011 Review proposed the deallocation of the Railway Yards on grounds of its quality. While the 2015 Study saw the merits of retaining it for the time being, the Neighbourhood Plan went along with the 2011 recommendation and did not include it within the Coopies Lane allocation, placing it beyond the defined settlement boundary.
- 4.2.9 The two studies also included positive recommendations regarding the Fairmoor / Northgate sites, not least because of the implementation of the Morpeth Northern Bypass. These sites were subsequently allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2.10 The Demand Study saw the potential for increased office demand but this was currently suppressed by the high level of availability at places such as 'Quorum' which benefit from Enterprise Zone status in North Tyneside. The recommendation vis-a-vis the Fairmoor sites was therefore not to seek to limit the range of uses to office.
- 4.2.11 The Demand Study saw the most likely locations for meeting the limited office market would be within town centre schemes and in the vicinity of the office cluster at County Hall (also now an extended employment allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan). This reflected the fact that local office demand was limited to small units between 50m² and 150m².
- 4.2.12 A further recommendation was to encourage an enhanced land supply at the successful Coopies Lane through investigate options for opening up and servicing adjacent land to the south of the A196.
- 4.2.13 Finally, the recommendation in relation to nearby areas was to reduce the allocation at St. Mary's Hospital site to encompass only the developed office area.

Conclusions

- 4.2.14 The Local Plan can take forward the allocations as shown in the made Neighbourhood Plan. This amounts to sufficient land for the Neighbourhood Plan period and, based on the levels of demand recorded in the evidence base work, it should generally be sufficient for the new plan period to 2016. Notwithstanding this conclusion, an area of land south of Fairmoor that is earmarked for a service and enterprise centre will be allocated as this was omitted from the Neighbourhood Plan and should be retained in employment use.

- 4.2.15 The recommendation in the evidence base regarding Coopies Lane is also noted. It is therefore proposed to leave out of the Green Belt the land that would form a possible extension of the Coopies Lane estate southwards. However, it is not considered that there is a need to bring the site forward as a firm allocation yet and, instead, to safeguard the land for future employment use.
- 4.2.16 Given that additional safeguarding is being considered, it is important to take account of the fact that other sites, which have newly emerged through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, need to be assessed. These have therefore been assessed and scored against a number of criteria in a **separate technical background document entitled 'Northumberland Local Plan - Employment Land Site Option Appraisal: Morpeth Site Option Appraisal'**. The appraisal includes several sites that have been suggested and assessed previously, including the Coopies Lane southward extension. The new sites have been added to these. The assessment has been endorsed in the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the Local Plan.
- 4.2.17 This appraisal scores some other sites slightly better than Coopies Lane but this must be weighed against the option to build on the success of Coopies Lane in future. So this continues to be regarded as the best and most suitable site to retain within the inset boundary and safeguard for future employment use.

4.3 Ponteland

Development Plan position

- 4.3.1 The saved policies of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan 2003 do not contain any allocations of employment land but a number of office zones are defined close to the centre of the settlement, where changes of use to offices are favoured. This policy remains extant despite the fact that the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in 2017.
- 4.3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan supports employment uses generally and includes an aspiration (not part of a policy) to relocate industrial uses from the modestly sized Meadowfield employment area (near the centre of Ponteland) to an outlying location, preferably land near the Airport. As the land concerned is Green Belt, the Neighbourhood Plan states that this would be a matter for the County Council to address. It is of note that the County Council monitors the Meadowfield area within its portfolio of employment sites. It has a low level of vacancy and no available land.

SHELAA Consultation

- 4.3.3 The 2018 SHELAA consultation has led to three submissions for full employment use in the vicinity of Ponteland - land at Prestwick Park office park, and two different sites lying to the west of the Airport in the area known as Prestwick Pit. In addition, land at Birney Hill, a large swathe of land alongside the southern edge of Darras Hall, which was the subject of a dismissed housing appeal some years ago, is now put forward for mixed uses, although it is unclear the extent to which those proposing the site

would intend it to include B-class employment uses. All four sites are part of the longstanding Green Belt.

Evidence Base

- 4.3.4 The Employment Land Review (2011) proposed the allocation of around 5 ha of further land at Ponteland to accommodate a small, high quality, B1 development.
- 4.3.5 Subsequently, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) also identified capacity in the market for further office provision over the plan period. However, in addition, it found there to be a shortage of industrial premises. It therefore recommended that the allocation of additional land at Ponteland should be a priority for both uses. New sites, it concluded, should be close to the A696 dual carriageway, so as to give easy access to Newcastle and not accentuate local traffic issues within central parts of Ponteland. The Demand Study also referred to the possibility that businesses would wish to relocate from Meadowfield Industrial Estate, as this was at capacity and was gradually being taken over by non-employment uses. The Study did, however, acknowledge full relocation of all businesses from this industrial estate would not be viable.
- 4.3.6 The other significant recommendation coming from the two reports was that the Local Plan should make clear that the Airport expansion land is just that and not part of the employment land supply.

Conclusion

- 4.3.7 There are clear indications in the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015), As well as in evidence gathered during the Neighbourhood Plan preparation, that a solution is needed to allow for latent demand for offices, the establishment of new B-Class industrial businesses and possible relocation / expansion of existing businesses.
- 4.3.8 It is also clear that land at the Airport itself has to remain as Airport expansion land, rather than general employment.
- 4.3.9 As such, it is concluded that sufficient justification exists for exceptional circumstances to apply and for additional land to be released from the Green Belt to accommodate this. This should include scope for office park expansion and more general industrial uses. Ideally the area or areas should be close to the A696 dual carriageway to allow easy access to the Tyneside conurbation and the Airport, without adding to congestion within Ponteland itself.
- 4.3.10 In selecting the site(s), it is important to take account of all sites that have been suggested for employment development, including those newly emerged as a result of the 2018 SHELAA consultation. Sites have been assessed and scored against a number of criteria in a **separate technical background document entitled 'Northumberland Local Plan - Employment Land Site Option Appraisal: Ponteland Site Option Appraisal'**. The appraisal includes all sites that have been suggested and assessed previously plus the new sites suggested through the 2018

SHELAA. The assessment has been endorsed in the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the Local Plan.

- 4.3.11 From this, it is concluded that two areas should be removed from the Green Belt and added to the area covered by the Newcastle International Airport Green Belt inset. The first is the 'Prestwick Pit' area, opposite the Airport entrance, where there is already access from the roundabout junction (albeit that this may need some improvements to meet Airport needs). The site is partly derelict land. This would accommodate new industrial-type development but could also house office uses if suitable.
- 4.3.12 The other area would be exclusively for offices and would be an extension to the existing office park close to Prestwick village.
- 4.3.13 Both Green Belt deletions would incorporate an allocation of 2 to 3 hectares and an area safeguarded for future employment use beyond the Plan period.
- 4.3.14 Regarding the Meadowfield Industrial Estate, even though this is not an existing employment allocation, (either saved in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan or in the recent Neighbourhood Plan), it is considered that the estate should be allocated for B-class uses to try and preserve remaining B-Class premises for these uses.

4.4 Prudhoe

Development Plan position

- 4.4.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. These allocations are entirely in the northern part of the town, at Low Prudhoe and Eltringham. The County Council has continued to monitor these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

- 4.4.2 No sites in Prudhoe have been put forward via the 2018 SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

- 4.4.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) identified a clear shortfall in employment land availability, looked at over the plan period as a whole. It proposed further provision of office and industrial land in Prudhoe in the order of 10- 15ha. At the time Prudhoe Hospital site still offered the possibility of some employment land as part of mixed use development, such that it estimated that around half of the needed provision could be there. The remaining site would need to be found through amending the boundary of Low Prudhoe and in the vicinity of the Eltringham site, possibly also on land currently in the Green Belt.
- 4.4.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) took account of the fact that the Prudhoe Hospital site was now going to be entirely residential. Added to this, it found that the development of some of the remaining available land at Low Prudhoe

could be prohibitive without 'significant public sector support' or 'a wider range of commercial uses'.

- 4.4.5 The 2015 Study reexamined the 10-15Ha figure that had previously been proposed against past take-up and knowledge of market demand. The conclusion was that a figure of 10 ha would be more appropriate. Drilling down into the types of uses that may wish to locate there, the Report pointed out that office demand was likely to be greater north of the Tyne, where the main (A69) east-west road artery runs. Locally, it stated, office uses could form part of mixed schemes and/or be rurally based - e.g. involving farm building conversions.
- 4.4.6 Looking further afield, both studies agreed that village-based employment sites currently allocated - e.g. around Mickley and Stocksfield - should not be taken forward as allocations in future.

Conclusion

- 4.4.7 It is concluded that a shortfall in Prudhoe's employment land supply is likely to occur within the plan period unless additional allocations can be identified within the town. There is no reason to disagree with the figure of 10 hectares identified in the evidence bearing in mind also that the new plan period runs for a further five years over and above that which the evidence was considering.
- 4.4.8 However, the topography of the town is such that, even if Green Belt deletions are considered, it is very difficult to identify this level of suitable land to allocate.
- 4.4.9 In selecting the site(s), it is important to take account of all sites that have been suggested for employment development. While no new sites have emerged through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, other sites have been put forward in the past. These have been assessed and scored against a number of criteria in a **separate technical background document entitled 'Northumberland Local Plan - Employment Land Site Option Appraisal: Prudhoe Site Option Appraisal'**. The assessment has been endorsed in the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the Local Plan.
- 4.4.10 The conclusion is that land adjoining the former Eltringham paint works should be identified. While the area of this land falls well short of the 10 hectares needed, it is well contained with ready access from the A695 Prudhoe Bypass. It is in the Green Belt but it is considered that exceptional circumstances for its removal from this status are strongly justified by the evidence. The site offers the opportunity to establish a new and firm Green Belt inset boundary.
- 4.4.11 Shortfalls may still occur, placing reliance on supplies elsewhere and policies which encourage opportunities for employment uses to establish as windfalls within the built-up areas of towns and villages.
- 4.4.12 As far as the existing employment areas are concerned, given the position on land supply, it is considered important to adhere to B-class employment uses throughout.

SERVICE CENTRES

4.5 Corbridge

Development Plan position

4.5.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. In Corbridge, the only allocation is a small site adjacent to Corbridge railway station, to the South of the River Tyne, a short distance from the village itself. The County Council has continued to monitor the site as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

4.5.2 The 2018 SHELAA consultation has brought forward a proposal for economic use, located in a Green Belt area to the east of the village at Howden Dene.

Evidence Base

4.5.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) noted the constrained nature of the site at the Station Yard in terms of road access and the land itself. Despite this, the Review recommended no further allocations because of Green Belt and other policy constraints and because “the area is in relatively close proximity to the larger settlements of Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe which arguably have greater potential for employment land provision.”

4.5.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agreed with this analysis but noted that the nearby large settlements also had land supply shortfalls. It considered that whether land needed to be found within Corbridge itself would depend on whether the supply constraints in the larger towns could be overcome.

4.5.5 The Demand Study also pointed to the success of smaller semi-rural business centres in this vicinity.

Conclusion

4.5.6 It is considered that the provision of additional employment land opportunities in Hexham, Prudhoe and Ponteland, proposed in this paper, based on evidence, will help avoid the need for a new allocation in Corbridge. Balanced against the considerable constraints in the village - not just Green Belt but also heritage-based, it is concluded that no additional allocation should be made. Certainly it is not considered that the supply situation would justify exceptional circumstances for a Green Belt deletion, meaning that the Howden Dene suggestion, following the recent SHELAA consultation, should not be pursued.

4.5.7 Turning to the existing Station Yard area, this should remain an allocation but the diverse nature of uses there mean that it should be made available for the wider employment generating categories of land use.

5. WEST DELIVERY AREA

MAIN TOWNS

5.1 Haltwhistle

Development Plan position

5.1.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. In Haltwhistle there are four areas strung out along the southern side of the town at Hadrian Enterprise Park, at the small Station Court site, at the West End employment area and an allocation west of Park Road. In addition a small employment area exists at nearby Plenmeller. The County Council has continued to monitor all of these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

5.1.2 The 2018 SHELAA consultation has resulted in two proposals.

5.1.3 One of these looks to change the western part of Hadrian Enterprise Park to a range of mixed uses including residential and various commercial and community uses. It is unclear the extent to which employment use would be part of the envisaged uses.

5.1.4 The second proposal is a mixed use proposal at Crossbank Field, adjacent to the junction from the A69 bypass at the western end of the town. Again, it is not entirely apparent the degree to which employment could be one of the uses within the site. It adjoins the existing West End employment area and its access may have to come from there, should it be developed.

Evidence Base

5.1.5 The Employment Land Review (2011) considered there to be a surplus of supply of land in the town, considering the size of the town and the capacity on the existing, operating employment areas. As such, it proposed that undeveloped land at West of Park Road should not be taken forward as an allocation.

5.1.6 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agreed with this conclusion and noted the substantial up-front infrastructure and site preparation costs associated with the West of Park Road site that would almost certainly 'prevent this site ever coming forward for employment use'.

5.1.7 The 2015 Study saw any additional land availability being achieved through redevelopment, or refurbishment and reoccupation, of redundant buildings in the Hadrian area and possibly at Plenmeller. It considered that the latter area could, if need be, expand onto adjacent agricultural land.

Conclusion

- 5.1.8 Based on these conclusions and the relative isolation of Haltwhistle, it is considered important to retain a good supply of employment land but it is clear that there would be no purpose in taking the West of Park Road site forward as an allocation. Even with this deletion from the portfolio, it would not be sufficiently justified to add new land to replace it.
- 5.1.9 However it would be justified to seek to retain the large Hadrian Enterprise Park, with its remaining accessible land supply and scope for redevelopment, in B-class employment uses. Plenmeller is also regarded (in the evidence) as accommodating a key employer, (the plastic products manufacturer RPC Containers), which would justify B-class uses limitation.
- 5.1.10 The remaining two employment areas, which are more within the built-up areas of Haltwhistle, could accommodate the wider range of possible employment generating uses.
- 5.1.11 Other than this, it is considered that the proposed windfall employment land policy in the Local Plan would cater for the possibility of unforeseen land requirements.

SERVICE CENTRES

5.2 Allendale

Development Plan position

- 5.2.1 Certain allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. In terms of employment land, it is necessary to consider Allendale itself together with the nearby village of Catton. The saved allocation of around a hectare each, the first being at Ridley's Yard (Catton) and the second a site midway between the two villages. The County Council has continued to monitor these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

- 5.2.2 No sites have been put forward through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

- 5.2.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not propose additional employment land in this area, but nor did it find a surplus of allocated land or propose the deallocation of current sites.
- 5.2.4 Subsequently, the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) noted that around half of the land within the allocated areas remained to be taken up; it also considered that the Allen valley area would lend itself to the delivery of employment floorspace through the conversion of existing buildings and small scale new build. On this basis, the Demand Study recommended that not all of the (roughly) 1 hectare of

land remaining available across the two allocated areas should be taken forward as future allocations.

Conclusion

5.2.5 Noting the conclusions of the two reports (above) and the lack of proposed sites resulting from the SHELAA 2018 consultation, it is proposed not to allocate any new land. However, notwithstanding the 'deallocation' recommendation and given the relative isolation of the area and to provide flexibility, it is concluded all of the current Tynedale District Local Plan allocations should be taken forward as future allocations, albeit that both areas should allow for the wider range of employment generating uses to locate there.

5.3 Bellingham

Development Plan position

5.3.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. The two saved allocations are the largely developed area at Foundry Road and a small area of around one eighth of a hectare south of Demesne Farm close to the village centre. The County Council has continued to monitor these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

5.3.2 No sites have been put forward through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use.

Evidence Base

5.3.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) considered there to be more than an adequate supply of land and that the remaining land at Foundry Road would suffice by way of a future supply. It consequently proposed that the allocated land to the South of Demesne Farm should not be taken forward and also rejected from further consideration a site that had been suggested through the 'call for sites' at the time.

5.3.4 The Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) agreed with these conclusions.

Conclusion

5.3.5 The conclusion, based on the above, and bearing in mind that the relative isolation of Bellingham and its catchment will serve a local market, is to take forward, as the only employment land allocation in Bellingham, the entirety of the Foundry Road area, allowing for the wider range of employment generating uses.

5.4 Haydon Bridge

Development Plan position

5.4.1 In terms of employment land, allocations are saved in The Tynedale District Local Plan 2000. In Haydon Bridge there are two small areas of employment land - close to the centre of the village (off Church Street) in the NE corner of the village (north of Station Road). The County Council has continued to monitor these sites as part of the portfolio of general employment areas.

SHELAA Consultation

5.4.2 No sites have been put forward in Haydon Bridge through the 2018 SHELAA consultation, either for pure employment or for mixed uses that include employment use. A site has been put forward for employment use, which is some distance outside the village, at Fourstones substation. The land is Green Belt in the open countryside.

Evidence Base

5.4.3 The Employment Land Review (2011) did not find the need for additional employment land here, but nor did it find a surplus. The only site that it proposed not to carry forward (part of the area north of Station Road) had been taken up for a non-employment use.

5.4.4 The subsequent Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) considered that this particular area would lend itself to the delivery of floorspace through conversion of existing buildings rather than new buildings. It also saw a role for small windfall new developments to meet specific requirements. It concluded that, having regard to the limited and infrequent demand, a specific site allocation would be unnecessary.

Conclusion

5.4.5 It is noted that Haydon Bridge does not possess a surplus of land for employment but that the take-up history and the nature of the local market means that an allowance for local new build windfalls and/or building conversions would form a more appropriate solution for this area. It is also noted that dedicated employment land is available at Haltwhistle.

5.4.6 For the above reasons, and bearing in mind that the only site to have come forward through the SHELAA consultation is Green Belt / open countryside and poorly related to centres of population, it is concluded that no additional employment land needs to be sought at Haydon Bridge.

5.4.7 The nature of a service centre such as Haydon Bridge, is that a mixture of uses will occupy the employment areas, providing a range of essential local services. Therefore, the existing areas being taken forward, (the area on Church Street and the remainder of the area north of Station Road that remains in employment use), will be allocated for the wider range of employment generating uses.