



Northumberland  
County Council

# **Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

(SHLAA 2024 to 2039)

**May 2025**



Northumberland  
County Council

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Contents</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                 | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                                   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2. What is the SHLAA and what does it do?</b>         | <b>4</b>  |
| Purpose of the Report                                    | 4         |
| Schedule of Sites  | 5         |
| Online Interactive Map                                   | 5         |
| Baseline, Updates, and Outputs                           | 5         |
| Methodology  | 6         |
| <b>3. SHLAA Analysis 2024</b>                            | <b>7</b>  |
| Total Deliverable and Developable Supply (2024 to 2039)  | 7         |
| Sites with Planning Permission                           | 7         |
| Sites without Planning Permission                        | 8         |
| Analysis of Site-Specific Supply                         | 9         |
| Local Plan 'Delivery Area' Analysis (2024 to 2039)       | 10        |
| Smaller Geographies Analysis (2024 to 2039)              | 11        |
| Long-Term Delivery (2039 and beyond)                     | 13        |
| Discounted Sites   | 13        |
| Small Site Windfall Allowance (2024 to 2039)             | 13        |
| Total Delivery from All Potential Sources (2024 to 2039) | 14        |
| Housing Trajectory                                       | 14        |
| <b>4. Conclusions</b>                                    | <b>17</b> |
| <b>5. Appendices</b>                                     | <b>18</b> |
| Appendix A: Full Site Assessment Schedule                | 19        |
| Appendix B: Annual Site Delivery Schedule                | 20        |
| Appendix C: Site Assessment Methodology                  | 21        |

# Executive Summary

## SHLAA 2024

A total deliverable and developable supply of 15,093 net additional dwellings for the next 15 years (2024 to 2039), comprising:

- A deliverable supply of 6,519 net additional dwellings for the next five years (2024 to 2029).
- A developable supply of 8,574 net additional dwellings from year-6 to year-15 (2029 to 2039).

An additional 'small site windfall allowance' of 1,500 dwellings (100 dpa) for the next 15 years (2024 to 2039).

A further long-term supply of 4,567 net additional dwellings beyond 15 years (2039 onwards).

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The preparation of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a requirement of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF, December 2024\)](#). The supporting national [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\) on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#) provides the methodology for undertaking the assessment.
- 1.2. The Northumberland SHLAA sets out the potential future supply of land for housing across the county. It is a key part of the evidence base informing the Northumberland Local Plan and the ongoing monitoring of policies and proposals.
- 1.3. **Please note, the SHLAA does not represent policy and does not allocate sites for development. A positive assessment of a site in the SHLAA does not mean that a site would be granted planning permission. Any proposal is subject to the determination of a planning application.**

## 2. What is the SHLAA and what does it do?

- 2.1. The Northumberland SHLAA is a countywide study<sup>1</sup>. It identifies a site-specific supply of potential housing land for the next 15 years and beyond.
- 2.2. All sites that show capacity for five-or-more self-contained dwellings are included for assessment. The current update includes a total of 1,807 sites.
- 2.3. The SHLAA considers whether a site is potentially 'suitable', 'available', and 'achievable' for housing, either now or in the future. It then gives an indicative estimate of how many homes each site might be able to provide. Before forecasting the likely timescale over which development could realistically take place.
- 2.4. As a result of the assessment work, a range of 'deliverable' and 'developable' sites are identified. These sites can help meet the requirement for new homes across Northumberland over the next fifteen years and beyond.
- 2.5. The criteria for each of these definitions, and the assessment methodology used, is based on the requirements of NPPF and PPG. Further details of this methodology can be read in Appendix C.
- 2.6. The overall assessment comprises this report, a separate site schedule, and an online interactive map. The three components should be read together to get a full appreciation of the study.

### Purpose of the Report

- 2.7. This Northumberland SHLAA Report is a written summary of the conclusions from site-specific assessments. It provides an overall analysis of the identified sites and forecasts future housing delivery between 2024 and 2039.
- 2.8. This analysis is important for monitoring purposes. It links to the requirements of the [Monitoring and Implementation Framework<sup>2</sup>](#). Monitoring is vital to ensure that housing delivery aligns with the spatial strategy and housing policies. It can also help to inform a future review of the Plan, as and when applicable.

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<sup>1</sup> It excludes the Northumberland National Park area, which is a separate Local Planning Authority.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix I of the Northumberland Local Plan.

## Schedule of Sites

- 2.9. The overall site schedule contains details of every site considered through the process. Each record identifies the location of the site, some important planning information, and the potential for future housing development. Appendix A is a full site schedule. An annual delivery schedule available to view in Appendix B.

## Online Interactive Map

- 2.10. This report and site assessment schedule are supported by spatial GIS mapping. The interactive digital SHLAA map can be viewed on the [Council website](#).
- 2.11. The map shows the location, boundary, and some summary details for each site. The mapping should be read in conjunction with the site schedule. Again, it is important to remember that the SHLAA assessment represents the position of a site at a specific point. This is based upon the best information available when the assessment was undertaken.

## Baseline, Updates, and Outputs

- 2.12. **The latest Northumberland SHLAA Report updates the key data and the analysis to a base-date of 31 March 2024.** For example, this includes the planning status of a site and, where relevant, the number of homes that had been built at that date.
- 2.13. Since the publication of the last SHLAA Report a review of all sites identified in the previous version has been undertaken. Each record has therefore been updated. In addition, planning permission has been granted for several new sites, not previously included in the study, and these have been added to the schedule.
- 2.14. The analysis to follow sets out the delivery of new homes within distinct five-year periods. **It is important to note that this timeframe is the best estimate of when housing delivery is forecast to start on a site.** Some sites have a build-out programme that spans multiple time periods. This is reflected in the expected number of homes delivered over each period. Where applicable, the site schedule clearly shows this.
- 2.15. The first five-year period (2024 to 2029) identifies the deliverable sites. This mirrors exactly those in the current [Northumberland Five-Year Housing Land Supply of](#)

[Deliverable Sites \(2024-2029\)](#). Only sites with an outstanding residential planning permission for residential development are included in the first five years.

- 2.16. Developable sites provide evidence of potential delivery between 2029 to 2034 (6 to 10 years), and then 2034 to 2039 (11 to 15 years). Most developable sites do not have an extant planning permission at the present time.
- 2.17. Finally, there are also sites that are forecast to deliver new homes beyond 2039 (16+ years). This provides a large pool of potential capacity for the long-term future.
- 2.18. After planning permission is granted, the SHLAA tracks development progress through to completion. As a forward-looking study, once a site is complete then it is removed from the Site Schedule (Appendix A) and the online mapping and archived.

## Methodology

- 2.19. The identification and assessment of potential land for housing development across Northumberland is consistent with the PPG. The methodology broadly follows the [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#) guidance. This approach has been adapted to reflect specific local circumstances where appropriate. Appendix C provides further details.

### 3. SHLAA Analysis 2024

- 3.1. This section sets out the key findings and conclusions of the 2024 SHLAA. It should be read in conjunction with the full Site Schedule (Appendix A) and the GIS Mapping.
- 3.2. The 2024 Northumberland SHLAA schedule identifies a total of **1,807 specific sites**. They are divided into deliverable sites, developable sites, and discounted sites.

#### Total Deliverable and Developable Supply (2024 to 2039)

- 3.3. The assessment identifies a total of **484 sites** to contribute towards the supply of housing land over the next 15 years. They are either wholly or partly deliverable in the next five years (2024 to 2029), or developable in the longer-term (2029 onwards). This includes sites with an outstanding planning permission, and those without.
- 3.4. The total forecast supply from these sites for the next 15 years is a potential **15,093 dwellings**. There is capacity for a further **4,567 dwellings** beyond 2039.
- 3.5. **It should be noted that a positive conclusion in a SHLAA site assessment does not mean that planning permission would be granted. Rather, it is simply that the location may be appropriate for a theoretical housing scheme. To progress, a proposal must be determined acceptable through the development management process.**

#### Sites with Planning Permission

- 3.6. Many sites already have an extant planning permission for residential development. In total, **194 sites** have either a full or outline planning permission in place.
- 3.7. Following appraisal, **173 sites** are considered **deliverable**. These are sites where the first houses are anticipated to be built by 2029. This provides a site-specific 5-year housing land supply of **6,519 dwellings**.
- 3.8. The remaining 21 sites have been fully discounted. Despite an extant planning permission, they are not forecast to deliver new homes at any point in the future.



Normally this is because the landowner or developer has confirmed they no longer wish to pursue the permitted housing development.

- 3.9. Sites with an existing planning permission contribute a further **2,356 homes** from 2029 to 2039 (year-6 to year-15). Most of this supply is from large strategic sites that have an extended build-out programme due to the scale of development.
- 3.10. A summary of sites with planning permission can be read in the [Northumberland Five-Year Housing Land Supply of Deliverable Sites \(2024-2029\)](#) report.

## Sites without Planning Permission

- 3.11. The SHLAA then concludes that a further **311 sites** without planning permission are developable between 2029 and 2039. This selection encompasses several different categories, including:
- 31 sites allocated in the adopted [Local Plan](#);
  - 11 sites allocated in a 'made' [Neighbourhood Plans](#);
  - 51 sites on the [Brownfield Land Register](#); and finally,
  - 215 other potential sites, not captured in one of the above categories<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.12. **No site without planning permission is forecast to deliver new homes in the initial five years.** However, they do have potential in the medium- and longer-term. The '**developable**' supply from sites **without** permission totals a potential **6,218 homes** in the next 15 years (2024 to 2039). There is also a sizeable additional capacity beyond 2039.

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<sup>3</sup> Examples include those identified through a past 'call-for-sites' and sites where an earlier permission for housing has lapsed.

## Analysis of Site-Specific Supply

- 3.13. A total supply of 15,093 net additional dwellings is forecast for delivery in the next 15 years. Figure 1 breaks down forecast delivery into several different categories.

**Figure 1: Site-Specific Delivery from 2024 to 2039**

| Site Category   | 0-5 Years    | 6-10 Years   | 11-15 Years  | Total in Next 15 Years |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| <b>Sites <u>with</u> Planning Permission</b>  |              |              |              |                        |
| Permitted site (deliverable)  | 6,519        | 1,915        | 441          | <b>8,875</b>           |
| Permitted site (developable)  | 0            | 0            | 0            | <b>0</b>               |
|   |              |              |              |                        |
| <b>Sites <u>without</u> Planning Permission</b>   |              |              |              |                        |
| Local Plan housing allocation   | 0            | 784          | 196          | <b>980</b>             |
| Neighbourhood Plan ('made') housing allocation  | 0            | 212          | 252          | <b>464</b>             |
| Pending applications 'minded-to-approve'  | 0            | 0            | 0            | <b>0</b>               |
| Brownfield Land Register sites  | 0            | 311          | 287          | <b>598</b>             |
| Other SHLAA sites (not included in any of the above categories)                                     | 0            | 1,231        | 2,945        | <b>4,176</b>           |
|   |              |              |              |                        |
| <b>Sites <u>with</u> Planning Permission</b>  | <b>6,519</b> | <b>1,915</b> | <b>441</b>   | <b>8,875</b>           |
| <b>Sites <u>without</u> Planning Permission</b>   | <b>0</b>     | <b>2,538</b> | <b>3,680</b> | <b>6,218</b>           |
| <b>Total Deliverable and Developable Sites (<u>with</u> and <u>without</u> planning permission)</b> | <b>6,519</b> | <b>4,453</b> | <b>4,121</b> | <b>15,093</b>          |

## Local Plan 'Delivery Area' Analysis (2024 to 2039)

- 3.14. The five-year housing land supply is calculated at a countywide level. However, smaller geographies can be used for more detailed analysis. The first ones are the 'Delivery Areas' outlined in the Local Plan<sup>4</sup>. Future delivery for the next 15 years from all deliverable and developable sites is set out in Figure 2 below. This includes both those with and those without a current planning permission,

**Figure 2: Site-Specific Future Housing Supply at Delivery Area Level (2024 to 2039)**

| Delivery Area        | 0-5 Years    | 6-10 Years   | 11-15 Years  | Total in Next 15 Years |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| South East           | 3,596        | 1,851        | 1,781        | <b>7,228</b>           |
| Central              | 1,488        | 934          | 628          | <b>3,050</b>           |
| North                | 1,256        | 1,326        | 1,291        | <b>3,873</b>           |
| West                 | 179          | 342          | 421          | <b>942</b>             |
| <b>Overall Total</b> | <b>6,519</b> | <b>4,453</b> | <b>4,121</b> | <b>15,093</b>          |

- 3.15. Almost half (48%) of the identified site-specific capacity for the coming 15 years is within the **South East** Delivery Area. This correlates with an overall strategy to focus development in the more urbanised parts of the county, close to the Tyneside conurbation, and with easy access to key transport routes. It also reflects that there are several large sites with planning permission in South East Northumberland. This includes sites in the main towns of Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington.
- 3.16. The **Central** delivery area accounts for a fifth (20%) of the potential capacity. This area includes Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe. Again, this proportion reflects proximity to the Tyneside conurbation and important transport infrastructure.
- 3.17. The largely rural **North** Delivery Area provides a quarter (26%) of the remaining potential capacity, with Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed providing a focus for development. However, sites are also identified across the many smaller

<sup>4</sup> The Delivery Areas are smaller geographies used for monitoring the Local Plan. For further information please see Figure 2.1 in the Northumberland Local Plan.

settlements in the north of the county. These towns and villages perform an important function at a local level.

- 3.18. The rural **West** Delivery Area provides a small, but proportionate, share of the capacity (6%). Haltwhistle is the only main town in this delivery area, but Allendale, Bellingham and Haydon Bridge also provide scope for potential future development.

### Smaller Geographies Analysis (2024 to 2039)

- 3.19. Table 7.1 in the Local Plan sub-divides the four Delivery Areas into smaller geographic areas. The geographies based on parishes and neighbourhood areas<sup>5</sup>.
- 3.20. Figures 3 to 6 to follow outline the distribution of the potential 'deliverable' and 'developable' housing capacity across the parish-based areas.

**Figure 3: Site-Specific Future Housing Supply within the South East Delivery Area (2024 to 2039)**

| Local Plan Smaller Geography       | 0-5 Years    | 6-10 Years   | 11-15 Years  | Total in Next 15 Years |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Amble                              | 464          | 396          | 100          | 960                    |
| Ashington                          | 548          | 134          | 81           | 763                    |
| Bedlington                         | 336          | 239          | 290          | 865                    |
| Blyth                              | 150          | 112          | 242          | 504                    |
| Cramlington                        | 1,260        | 328          | 267          | 1,855                  |
| Choppington                        | 156          | 169          | 130          | 455                    |
| Newbiggin-by-the-Sea               | 23           | 299          | 270          | 592                    |
| Seaton Valley                      | 216          | 108          | 5            | 329                    |
| South East - rest of delivery area | 443          | 66           | 396          | 905                    |
| <b>South East Delivery Area</b>    | <b>3,596</b> | <b>1,851</b> | <b>1,781</b> | <b>7,228</b>           |

<sup>5</sup> For further details please see Table 7.1 in the [Northumberland Local Plan](#).

**Figure 4: Site-Specific Future Housing Supply within the Central Delivery Area (2024 to 2039)**

| Local Plan Smaller Geography    | 0-5 Years    | 6-10 Years | 11-15 Years | Total in Next 15 Years |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Hexham                          | 120          | 167        | 25          | 312                    |
| Morpeth                         | 690          | 708        | 557         | 1,955                  |
| Ponteland                       | 56           | 0          | 10          | 66                     |
| Prudhoe                         | 354          | 25         | 25          | 404                    |
| Corbridge                       | 18           | 0          | 0           | 18                     |
| Central - rest of delivery area | 250          | 34         | 11          | 295                    |
| <b>Central Delivery Area</b>    | <b>1,488</b> | <b>934</b> | <b>628</b>  | <b>3,050</b>           |

**Figure 5: Site-Specific Future Housing Supply within the North Delivery Area (2024 to 2039)**

| Local Plan Smaller Geography  | 0-5 Years    | 6-10 Years   | 11-15 Years  | Total in Next 15 Years |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Alnwick                       | 211          | 173          | 99           | 483                    |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed            | 535          | 562          | 222          | 1,319                  |
| Belford                       | 68           | 8            | 40           | 116                    |
| Rothbury                      | 128          | 19           | 92           | 239                    |
| Seahouses                     | 0            | 50           | 100          | 150                    |
| Wooler                        | 33           | 78           | 57           | 168                    |
| North - rest of delivery area | 281          | 436          | 681          | 1,398                  |
| <b>North Delivery Area</b>    | <b>1,256</b> | <b>1,326</b> | <b>1,291</b> | <b>3,873</b>           |

**Figure 6: Site-Specific Future Housing Supply within the West Delivery Area (2024 to 2039)**

| Local Plan Smaller Geography | 0-5 Years  | 6-10 Years | 11-15 Years | Total in Next 15 Years |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Haltwhistle                  | 65         | 175        | 78          | 318                    |
| Allendale                    | 5          | 17         | 45          | 67                     |
| Bellingham                   | 63         | 31         | 65          | 159                    |
| Haydon Bridge                | 0          | 60         | 59          | 119                    |
| West - rest of delivery area | 46         | 59         | 174         | 279                    |
| <b>West Delivery Area</b>    | <b>179</b> | <b>342</b> | <b>421</b>  | <b>942</b>             |

## Long-Term Delivery (2039 and beyond)

- 3.21. The main purpose of the SHLAA is to forecast a deliverable and developable housing supply for the next 15 years, but it also outlines additional longer-term delivery, forecast for beyond 2039. This represents a significant potential supply, totalling **4,567 dwellings**.
- 3.22. Some of this supply comes from very large, strategic developments that will have a long-term build-out programme. In such cases, despite development being forecast to begin in the next 15 years, it will continue beyond 2039. Other examples are sites assessed as suitable, but which are not available for development at the current time, and for which there is no set timescale within which this position will change. The latter are identified as having a '16+ years' timeframe in the SHLAA Schedule, and total **62 sites**. If new evidence is available in the future, forecast housebuilding from long-term sites could be moved forward to an earlier period.

## Discounted Sites

- 3.23. Almost 3,000 sites have been considered in the SHLAA, but a significant number have been ruled out. This recognises the highly rural nature of much of Northumberland. A total of 1,223 sites are fully discounted and are not considered suitable and/or achievable for housing at the current time. Further details of why such a site might be discounted can be read in the Methodology section (Appendix C).

## Small Site Windfall Allowance (2024 to 2039)

- 3.24. The SHLAA does not assess 'small sites' with capacity of fewer than five dwellings. However, small sites make a valuable contribution to overall housing completions in Northumberland. As a result, an allowance is made for future delivery from this source as part of future projections.
- 3.25. Analysis of past data has been undertaken to determine an appropriate figure for this future allowance. It concludes that an additional 100 dwellings per annum (dpa) can be forecast over the next fifteen years<sup>6</sup>. This total of 1,500 dwellings is over and above the site-specific supply.

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<sup>6</sup> See the [Northumberland Five-Year Housing Land Supply of Deliverable Sites \(2024-2029\)](#) report.

## Total Delivery from All Potential Sources (2024 to 2039)

- 3.26. Taking account of all potential sources, a total of **16,593 dwellings** are concluded to be deliverable and developable for the next 15 years (2024 to 2039). This includes the site-specific supply and the small site windfall allowance.

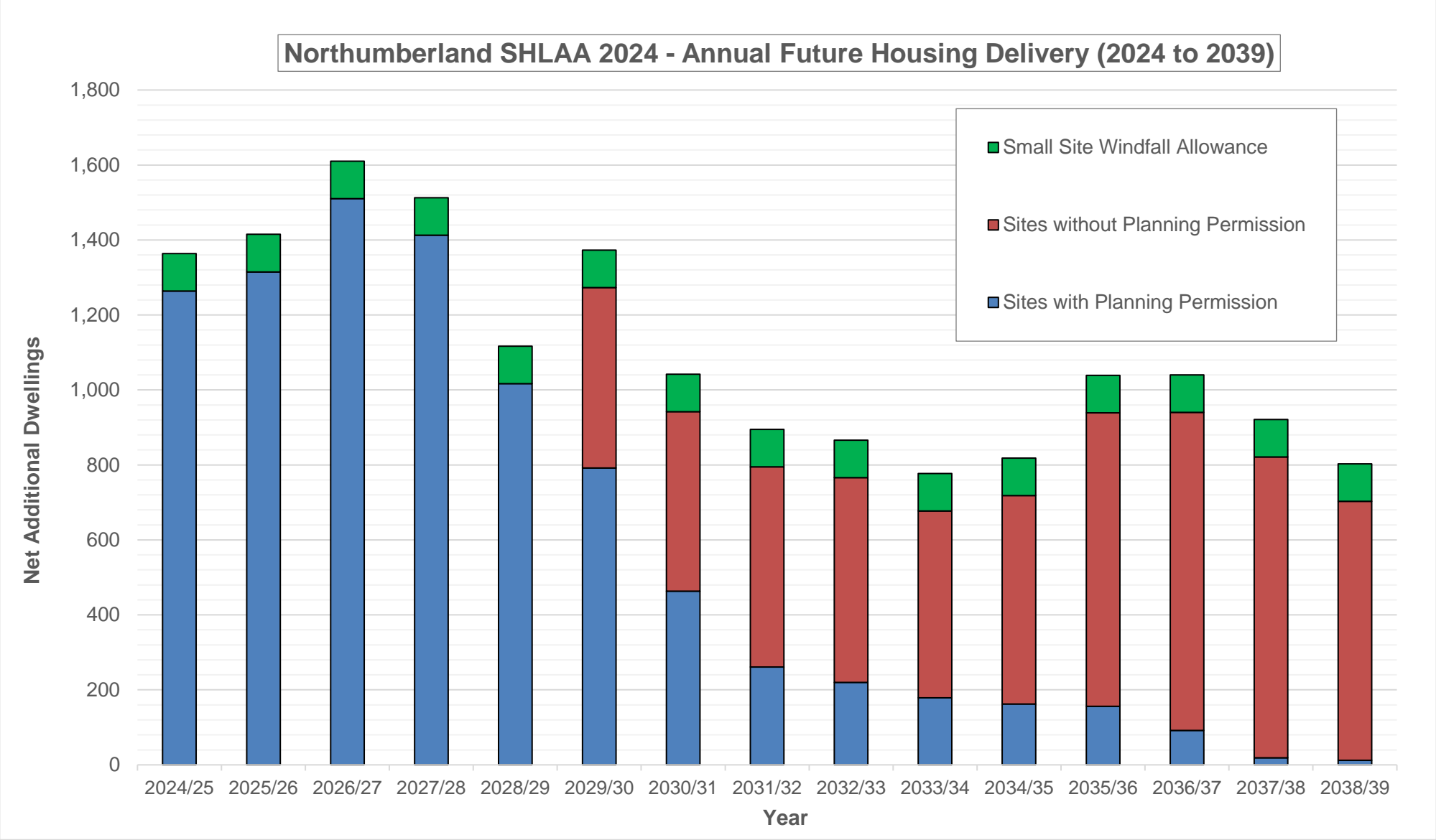
**Figure 7: Delivery from All Potential Sources (2024 to 2039)**

| Delivery Area                 | 0-5 Years    | 6-10 Years   | 11-15 Years  | Total in Next 15 Years |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| South East                    | 3,596        | 1,851        | 1,781        | <b>7,228</b>           |
| Central                       | 1,488        | 934          | 628          | <b>3,050</b>           |
| North                         | 1,256        | 1,326        | 1,291        | <b>3,873</b>           |
| West                          | 179          | 342          | 421          | <b>942</b>             |
| <b>Site-Specific Supply</b>   | <b>6,519</b> | <b>4,453</b> | <b>4,121</b> | <b>15,093</b>          |
| Small Site Windfall Allowance | 500          | 500          | 500          | <b>1,500</b>           |
| <b>Overall Total</b>          | <b>7,019</b> | <b>4,953</b> | <b>4,621</b> | <b>16,593</b>          |

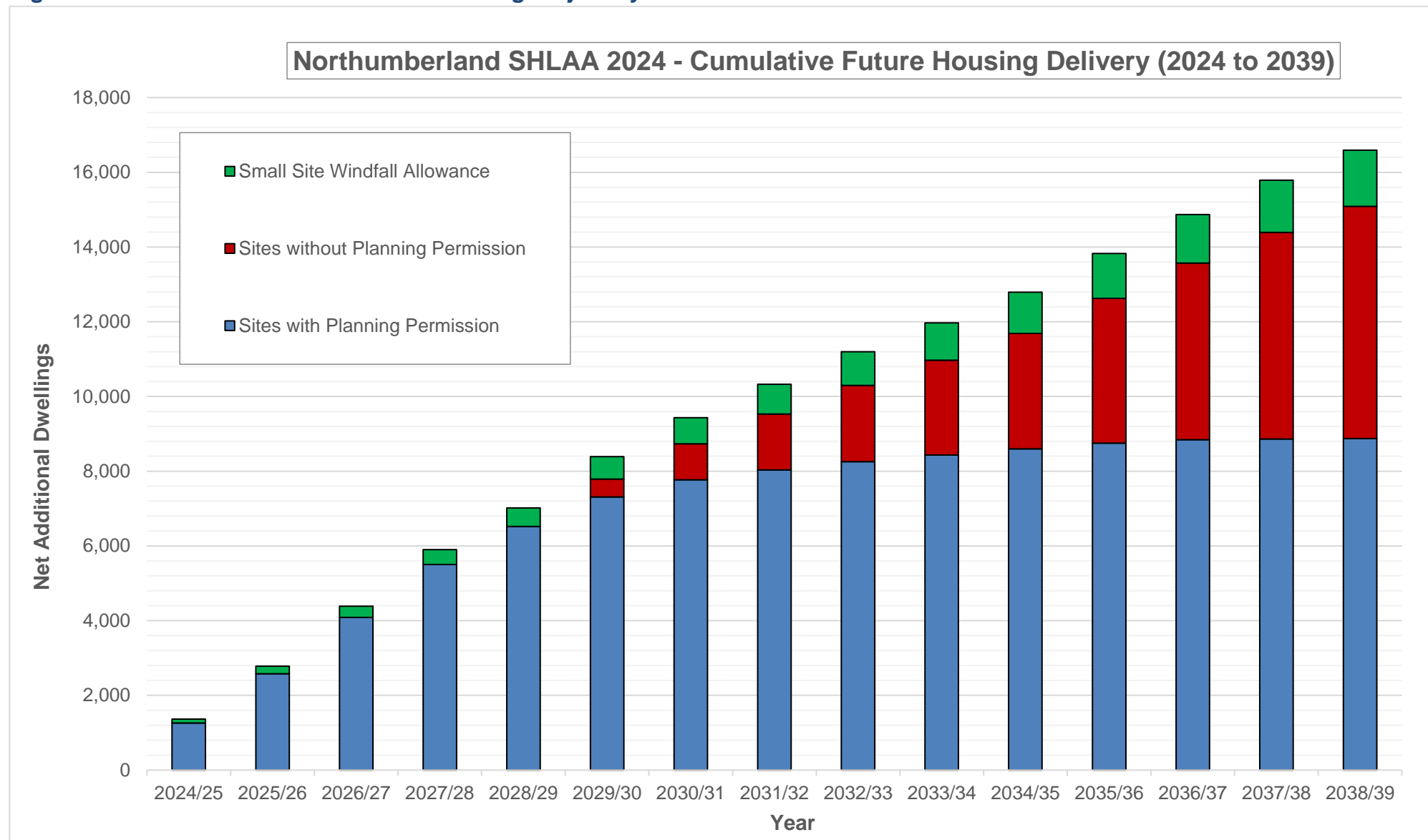
## Housing Trajectory

- 3.27. Figures 8 and 9 summarises the conclusion from the SHLAA into a housing trajectory. Figure 8 shows annual delivery between 2024 and 2039. Figure 9 expresses the same information in a cumulative manner.

Figure 8: Northumberland Annual Housing Trajectory 2024 to 2039





**Figure 9: Northumberland Cumulative Housing Trajectory 2024 to 2039**

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1. The 2024 Northumberland SHLAA identifies a supply of specific 'deliverable' and 'developable' housing sites that have the potential to provide **15,093 net additional homes** over the next 15 years. The supply comes from **484 specific sites** across the county. When the 'small site windfall allowance' of 1,500 homes is added, this gives an overall potential supply of **16,593 dwellings** from 2024 to 2039.
- 4.2. A further **4,567 dwellings** are forecast for delivery beyond 2039 (16+ years). This long-term supply could be moved forward on review of the SHLAA, if new evidence becomes available regarding deliverability and/or developability.
- 4.3. The SHLAA clearly shows that there is a significant source of potential supply to help meet the future housing requirement for Northumberland.

## 5. Appendices

Appendix A – Full Site Assessment Schedule (see separate document)

Appendix B – Annual Site Delivery Schedule (see separate document)

Appendix C – Site Assessment Methodology

**Appendix A: Full Site Assessment Schedule**

See separate document.

**Appendix B: Annual Site Delivery Schedule**

See separate document.

## Appendix C: Site Assessment Methodology

- 5.1. The identification and assessment of land for potential housing development across Northumberland is broadly consistent with the methodology identified in the Government's national [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#) on [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#). This methodology has been adapted where appropriate.
- 5.2. This section gives a broad overview of the approach taken but only provides detail where the national guidance has been adapted or amended to suit local circumstances.

### Site Threshold

- 5.3. The SHLAA identifies all specific sites capable of delivering five-or-more dwellings. The PPG gives scope for an alternative threshold if appropriate. Due to the geographical scale of the county, and the number of potential sites, small sites with capacity for fewer than five dwellings are not included in the Northumberland SHLAA.
- 5.4. However, planning permissions for small sites are monitored, and an allowance for future delivery has been made through a 'small site windfall allowance'. This is based on analysis of past delivery and equates to 100 dwellings per annum<sup>7</sup>.
- 5.5. There is also scope for local authorities to identify broad locations for development, over-and-above the supply of specific suitable sites. This is unnecessary due to the number of sites that can be identified and significant total of potential new homes they can yield.

### Identification of Sites

- 5.6. The sites in the SHLAA have been identified from a wide variety of source. This includes those submitted through a formal 'call-for-sites' and others identified outwith this process. Over many years, submissions have been received from a variety of stakeholders, including landowners, developers, agents, and members of

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<sup>7</sup> For further details please see [Northumberland Five-Year Housing Land Supply of Deliverable Sites \(2024-2029\)](#) report.

the public. The identification of Council-owned land, and other public sector land, has also been prioritised, and this resource is refreshed periodically.

### Initial Desktop Survey

- 5.7. The initial assessment of sites takes the form of a desktop survey. This considers the context of a range of national policies, environmental designations, and physical characteristics that may impact potential for residential development.
- 5.8. At an early stage, any relevant constraints are identified. These are split into 'Category-1' and 'Category-2' designations. 'Category-1' designations are significant, and the presence of one would generally make a site totally unsuitable for housing development, leading to it being discounted. 'Category-2' constraints are normally less restrictive but may affect the potential scale and type of development that could be realised. Figure C1 sets out a list of the constraints against which sites are assessed.

**Figure C1: Site Constraints**

| <b>Category-1 Designations</b>   | <b>Category-2 Designations</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>Natural Environment</b>   | <b>Natural Environment</b>  |
| Ramsar Convention Wetlands Sites<br>Special Protection Areas (SPA)<br>Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)<br>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)<br>National Nature Reserves (LNR) | Local Nature Reserves (LNR)<br>Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGS)<br>Protected Species or Habitats  |
| <b>Landscape</b>   | <b>Landscape</b>  |
| Ancient Woodland   | National Park<br>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)<br>Heritage Coast<br>Historic Landscape  |
| <b>Historic Environment</b>  | <b>Historic Environment</b>   |
| Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)  | World Heritage Site (WHS)<br>Grade I Listed Buildings/Structures<br>Grade II* Listed Buildings/Structures<br>Conservation Areas<br>Archaeological Sites |

| Open Space   | Open Space   |
|--|--|
| Historic Parks and Gardens                               | Designated Open Spaces<br>Non-designated Open Spaces<br>Allotments<br>Existing Car Parks |
| Hydrology  | Hydrology  |
| Flood Risk Zones 3b (Functional Floodplain)              | Flood Risk Zones 3a (High Vulnerability)<br>Flood Risk Zone 2 (Medium Vulnerability)     |
| Natural Resources and Hazards                            | Natural Resources and Hazards  |
| Health & Safety Executive (HSE) COMAH Inner Zones        | HSE COMAH Middle and Outer Zones<br>Minerals Safeguarding Areas                          |
| Policy Constraints                                       | Policy Constraints   |
| Green Belt<br>Open countryside detached from settlements | Allocated employment sites   |
|  |  |

- 5.9. Any planning history for a site is also considered at this stage. If relevant, this can help to gain a better understanding of the site context and background. This may include past proposals for the site, intentions of landowner(s), or gaining a more detailed understanding of any barriers to development and how obstacles may be overcome.
- 5.10. The desktop study will then consider physical characteristics to a site. This includes topography, access, and the presence of key landscape features such as watercourses or trees, which could all restrict or limit the scope of development.
- 5.11. Once the desktop tasks are completed, a site visit may be undertaken to confirm some of the details identified during the initial assessment. This is particularly relevant regarding appreciation of the physical characteristics and landscape setting of a site.

### Policy Considerations

- 5.12. The SHLAA site assessment process does not directly reflect planning policy. The study is part of the evidence base that supports the plan-making process and site



assessments are generally not led by policy considerations. This means that a site can still represent a broadly suitable location for housing development but may not conform to certain policy criteria. The assessment process will take note of the most important planning policies, but a minor misalignment with a policy does not necessarily mean that a site will be automatically discounted. Examples can include settlement boundaries or designation of land as open space.

- 5.13. There are two important exceptions to this rule: sites in the Green Belt and sites within the open countryside. These matters will be discussed further in the section to follow.
- 5.14. At this point, it again should be noted that the SHLAA does not represent planning policy and that a positive site assessment does not automatically mean that a site will be looked upon favourably on submission of a planning application.

### Developable Sites and Planning Policy

- 5.15. Reflecting the above, the future housing supply of developable sites identified in the main SHLAA Report (Part 3) forecast for year-6 and beyond, includes two different broad groups of sites. These are referred to as 'Pot-A' and 'Pot-B' respectively and are differentiated by policy issues.
- 5.16. **'Pot-A' comprises sites in general conformity with the spatial policies of the Local Plan.** This includes the following groups of sites: Local Plan housing allocations; Neighbourhood Plan ('made') housing allocations; pending applications that are 'minded-to-approve'; and sites on the Brownfield Land Register. There is also a group of sites which do not fit into any of the above categories but are considered in general conformity with policy, known as 'Pot-A' sites. These can be forecast as developable from year-6 onwards.
- 5.17. The first criteria which must be met for inclusion in Pot-A is that a site must be free from a 'Category-1' constraint, the most notable 'showstopper' obstacles to development. Table C1 sets out the full range of examples, but relatively common examples include the presence of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) within the site boundary, or if the site is impacted by Flood Zone 3b designation (the most significant level of flood risk).

- 5.18. The second consideration is a spatial one. A 'Pot-A' site must be within a settlement boundary where one is defined in either the Local Plan or a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. Alternatively, if there is not a defined boundary, the site should be within or immediately adjacent to a settlement named in Local Plan Policy STP 1, or the table of 'small villages' set out in Appendix A. In making this decision, officer discretion will be used to take a view as to whether the site is within or adjacent to the existing built form of the town or village.
- 5.19. In addition, sites that fall within designated protected open space as defined in Local Plan Policy INF 5, or within Employment Land allocations in accordance with Policy ECN 6 are not included within 'Pot-A'.
- 5.20. **'Pot-B' consists of sites that are not in general conformity with the Local Plan.** Similarly, these sites must also be free from any 'Category-1' constraint, or other 'showstopper' issues, and in a broadly suitable location for new housing. The earliest that a site in 'Pot-B' can be forecast to deliver new homes is from year-11 (2034 onwards).
- 5.21. However, 'Pot-B' sites are differentiated because other issues would be relevant in the context of site development once planning policy is applied. This means that, when taken beyond the initial SHLAA assessment, such as when applying for planning permission through the development management process, or when considering the appropriateness for allocation through a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, issues have been identified that need further exploration. The most notable examples of this are sites that lie immediately adjacent to a settlement boundary, rather than within it. In such instances, the site will not be physically detached from the settlement, rather that it will lie on the fringe. Most 'Pot-B' sites fall into this category. Other examples include sites allocated or designated for other land uses at present, such as employment land or open space, or land within or adjacent to a settlement not named in the Local Plan.
- 5.22. As the core remit of the SHLAA is to identify a potential housing land supply for the next 15 years, without directly mirroring planning policy, no differentiation is made between 'Pot-A' and 'Pot-B' sites in the analysis in the SHLAA. However, when assessing delivery against the Local Plan housing requirement (2016 to 2036), further distinction has been made to evaluate whether the overall housing need can be met.

- 5.23. It is important to note that a positive site assessment in the SHLAA is not a ‘green light’ to development. Following the adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan in March 2022 there is a framework for determination of planning applications and any proposal for new housing must be found acceptable through the development management process. Each application will be determined on individual merit.

### Policy ‘Showstoppers’

- 5.24. Two specific areas where planning policy has had a direct influence on the Northumberland SHLAA is the Green Belt and sites located in the open countryside. These two matters are ‘showstoppers’ in the site assessment process, being ‘Category-1’ constraints. This approach recognises the distinct local circumstances evident in the county.
- 5.25. At a national level, the objective of the Green Belt is set out in the NPPF. Generally, the development of housing in the Green Belt is inappropriate, although the NPPF does set out some exceptions. However, for the purpose of the SHLAA, all sites in the Northumberland Green Belt are concluded to be ‘unsuitable’ for housing development and are discounted.

### Assessment of Potential

- 5.26. A series of guiding methodological principles and assumptions for assessing sites in the SHLAA have been established to help ensure a consistent approach. Again, this is based on [Planning Practice Guidance](#), adapted to local circumstances where necessary.
- 5.27. Sites are assessed for suitability, availability, and achievability (including economic viability) in line with PPG. A conclusion is then reached as to whether the sites are potentially deliverable or developable. Deliverable sites provide supply for the next five years (2024 to 2029). Developable sites provide longer-term supply (2029 onwards). Definitions of these terms are set out in the NPPF Glossary<sup>8</sup>.
- 5.28. If a site does not meet the criteria, the conclusion is that it is **not currently developable**. Normally, this is because it is unsuitable for housing or that

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that in June 2020, the Secretary of State confirmed<sup>8</sup> that the NPPF’s definition of ‘deliverable’ sites is not a ‘closed list’, and that the examples given in NPPF are not exhaustive.

development would not be achievable. All such sites have been totally discounted. A common reason for unsuitability is due to the significance or severity of the impact of potential development on environmental designations. Other examples include that site constraints would, either in isolation or in combination, prohibit development, or due to the location of the site. Viability concerns are the most prominent reason for a site not being considered achievable.

- 5.29. For further information of the matters that are looked at when considering 'suitability' 'availability, and 'achievability' please refer to PPG.

### Estimating Capacity

- 5.30. The assessment of the capacity that a parcel of land has for new homes also follows a standard approach. Again, this follows a method used in other local authorities, adapted for the specific context of Northumberland.
- 5.31. In cases where a site already has planning permission, the number of dwellings in the permitted scheme is utilised. If a permission lapses without implementation, then the capacity will be reappraised on review of the study.
- 5.32. For other sites, a standard methodology has been used to identify an indicative capacity. Whilst a certain amount of direction is taken from stakeholders – including evidence from landowners, agents, and developers – the calculation consists of two elements: the 'net developable area' of a site, and an appropriate 'density' of development.
- 5.33. The use of a 'net developable area' recognises that some of the overall land area in a housing development will be taken up by supporting uses. This includes provision of key infrastructure and open space. The larger the site, the greater the proportion of space will be required for the supporting infrastructure, such as roads. The following parameters provide the guide for most sites:
- Small sites of less than 0.4 hectare (ha) – 100% net developable area.
  - Medium-sized sites of between 0.4 and 2ha – 90% net developable area.
  - Large sites of over 2ha - 50 to 75% net developable area.
- 5.34. The second part of the calculation relates to the density of development. This is the number of dwellings per hectare (dph) that would be appropriate in the proposed

setting. Due to the scale and variety of Northumberland this figure can vary quite markedly across the county. The following criteria are used as a broad guide:

- General development – 30 dph.
- Urban infill and brownfield redevelopment sites – 40 dph.
- Rural towns and villages – 15 to 20 dph.
- Outside settlements and in isolated locations – 5 to 10 dph.

- 5.35. These parameters provide the general framework for estimating capacity. Where circumstances indicate that a lower net developable area would be more appropriate than that assumed by the methodology, then a lower figure will be applied for net developable area. This could be due to a wide range of factors, such as topographical constraints, flood risk, or restricted access. Similarly, density can be increased or decreased depending on the setting or surrounding context. Such matters are considered on a site-specific basis.

### Considering Cumulative Development Capacity

- 5.36. When assessing each site on an individual basis, it is also important to understand the cumulative scale of development that could potentially be delivered across a particular area. Although, in isolation, a site may be concluded to be potentially 'deliverable' or 'developable' within a specific timeframe, the overall cumulative level of development that can be delivered and marketed in a particular location at any one time may be constrained. This is particularly relevant in more rural areas of the county where the capacity of the market to absorb new development may be limited.
- 5.37. It is not the role of the SHLAA to select and determine which might be the most appropriate 'deliverable' and 'developable' sites to come forward, or to give any kind of ranking in terms of preference or order of delivery. However, a very basic approach has been taken to the forecast of developable sites. This ensures that sites in settlements are phased to avoid unrealistic overall delivery in individual years. This in no way affects how a subsequent planning application would be considered.

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