



Northumberland  
County Council

Northumberland Local Plan  
Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19)

# Housing Distribution Technical Paper

December 2018

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Northumberland Local Plan identifies a housing requirement of at least 17,700 dwellings across the County over the plan period 2016-36. It also includes indicative housing numbers for four Delivery Areas, Main Towns, Service Centres and areas outside of the larger settlements. This paper provides the rationale, and the different factors which have influenced the distribution of housing across the County presented in the Plan.

## **2. Strategic factors which have informed the distribution**

- 2.1. A number of factors have helped inform the overall distribution of housing at a strategic level. Principally these are the Local Plan's Growth Strategy and its countywide housing requirement, and the Spatial Strategy. These are considered below.

### **Growth Strategy and the countywide housing requirement**

- 2.2. The Local Plan growth strategy sets out the number of jobs the Local Plan is proposing to support, the level of employment land and the overall quantum of housing. The overall level of economic growth, together with the sectors in which that growth is forecast to be delivered, is aligned with aspirations of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the North of Tyne (NoT) Devolution Deal and the Borderlands Initiative. The NoT vision document identifies much of Southeast Northumberland, including Morpeth, as an Industry Innovation Zone, and the rest of the County as a Rural Scale Up Area. The southeast contains many of the County's employment sites of strategic importance, and those which benefit from Enterprise Zone status. Given the importance of this area economically, and that many of the County's jobs are located here, and are likely to be focussed here in the future, it is appropriate that a significant proportion of the County's housing requirement is located here.
- 2.3. The overall housing requirement set out in the Local Plan, is for 17,700 net additional dwellings, or 885 per annum, to reflect the number of homes required to support an ambitious growth scenario. This number significantly exceeds the County's Local Housing Need of 11,160 or 558 per annum as identified by the Government's standard methodology, informed by the 2016-based sub-national household projections. In a recent consultation, the Government is proposing a short term change to the methodology to use the 2014-based projections. If adopted, this approach would revise Northumberland's Local Housing Need to 14,340 dwellings, or 717 per annum. Together with the spatial elements of the growth strategy, the distribution of housing has been informed by a proportional disaggregation

of the Local Plan requirement, and that derived from the standard methodology using the 2014-based projections.

### **Spatial Strategy**

- 2.4. The spatial strategy sets out the overall approach to the distribution of development across the County. The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal identifies that the preferred distribution option is one which distributes development proportionately within the constraints of the Green Belt, and considers that it performs well in terms of sustainability. The Council therefore considers it an appropriate strategic approach to development.
- 2.5. This approach focuses the majority of new development in Northumberland's key settlements with smaller scale development allowed elsewhere in order to support local services and the rural economy. It restricts the form of development in the open countryside. While focussing development in the most sustainable locations, this approach will leave existing Green Belt boundaries largely intact, ensure that the countryside in the Green Belt is safeguarded from encroachment, check unrestricted urban sprawl, prevent the merging of settlements, and preserve the character and setting of historic settlements.
- 2.6. National policy attaches great importance to Green Belts to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Given that Northumberland already has a significant amount of housing committed across the County compared to needs identified for the plan period, it is not considered that exceptional circumstances exist to justify the alteration of Green Belt boundaries for residential development. Therefore, while the Plan aims to direct most housing to the larger settlements, and villages with a number of key services, this is done so without delivering housing in the Green Belt.
- 2.7. Northumberland's largest settlements, and more than half of its population are in the southeast of the County. As identified above, this is also where most employment opportunities are located. This area also has better access to the employment opportunities in the Tyneside conurbation.
- 2.8. Therefore the Plan aims to focus most development in the more urban south east Northumberland, together with the County's market towns. However, it also proposes to encourage some development in rural areas to support the rural economy, maintain the vitality and sustainability of communities and the retention of services. The Plan proposes to direct development to locations where it can support, and benefit from the use of existing local infrastructure and facilities, and support economic growth, whilst protecting the countryside and character of settlements.

### **3.0 Local factors which have informed the distribution**

3.1. The local housing numbers are informed by bottom-up analysis of need, and taking into consideration the status of settlements in the settlement hierarchy, and the level of commitments locally, and the quantum of development in recent years. Other factors which affect the distribution are the ability of settlements to accommodate development, taking into account physical constraints (e.g. topography) and policy constraints (e.g. Green Belt). The ability of settlements with a high number of commitments to meet the needs of neighbouring areas is also considered.

#### **Proportionate need analysis**

3.2. The bottom up need analysis took an approach of proportionately distributing the countywide housing requirement of 17,700 dwellings, across Northumberland's parishes, based on each area's population in the 2011 Census. It also used the Local Housing Need number (using the 2014-based sub-national household projections) (14,340) as a baseline.

3.3. In accordance with the spatial strategy, but subject to other considerations set out below, if a parish contains a Main Town or Service Centre, or a Service Village as a starting point, the analysis has assumed that the parish will receive 'at least' its share of housing based on the Local Housing Need standard methodology. While the Plan supports small scale development in other settlements, where parishes contain no Main Towns, Service Centres or Service Villages, there is no expectation that they will accommodate development.

#### **Settlement hierarchy**

3.4. The Local Plan sets out a settlement hierarchy, which identifies Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages. The strategy is to support growth in the larger settlements to support the range of services and facilities on offer (including jobs, health, leisure, retail etc), and to enable the more efficient provision of new services. Therefore, the status of settlements has informed the level of development proposed in the Plan, with a greater level of homes being directed to the Main Towns and Service Centres, and with a lesser amount to Service Villages.

#### **Existing commitments**

3.5. While the Local Plan housing target of 17,700 homes supports an ambitious level of economic growth, as at 30 September 2018 there are some 23,195 housing commitments already in place across the County -

2,907 new homes completed during the first two years of the Plan (2016-18) plus an outstanding 14,287 dwellings with planning permission and a further 6,001 as part of minded to approve applications.

- 3.6. However, while some settlements have a lot of housing commitments (in some cases more than may be expected locally if the overall requirement is disaggregated proportionately), in other parts of the County there has been little development pressure. The Local Plan allocates a number of sites for housing in some settlements to support the delivery of housing for local needs in these areas.
- 3.7. While the level of housing already committed cannot be used to inform the overall housing requirement, or dictate how housing should be distributed, it is a factor which has been considered when apportioning housing to different areas.

#### **Past housing delivery**

- 3.8. The amount of housing that has been delivered in recent years has also informed the quantum of development proposed in different locations in the future. The level of past delivery is an indicator of market demand, which the Local Plan is required to respond to. In some locations housing is directed to these locations, but in others, in order to deliver the Growth and Spatial strategies, the plan directs a level of development to settlements which have seen little development in recent years but have a local need.

#### **Constraints**

- 3.9. After considering the above factors, the appropriate level of development for each area also takes account of constraints in the local area, both physical and policy constraints. In some locations, the scale of development that can appropriately be accommodated without affecting its character is limited by topography, and geographical features, while in others significant infrastructure constraints exist, including in relation to the road network.
- 3.10. As identified above, the Spatial Strategy gives great importance to the Green Belt, and considers that no Green Belt deletion for housing is justified. Therefore, where settlements are constrained by the Green Belt, the amount of housing that they have been allocated is less than may be expected, with local housing needs met in other nearby settlements where possible.

#### **Neighbourhood Plans**

- 3.11. Across the County, a large number of parishes, or groups of parishes are designated as neighbourhood areas. Where Neighbourhood Plans have

been 'made', the housing requirement numbers in them have informed the amount of housing proposed there in the Local Plan. Given that the Plan periods of neighbourhood plans may differ from the Northumberland Local Plan, housing numbers have not necessarily been replicated however.

#### **4. How housing numbers are presented at the local level**

- 4.1. In presenting the housing numbers an element of the countywide housing requirement is apportioned to each of Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres, and the remainder of each Delivery Area. The apportionment is however parish based. For many settlements, a single parish broadly reflects the built up area (e.g. Blyth), and the parish name reflects the main settlement. For others, the built up form, or areas of growth comprise a number of parishes (e.g. Morpeth), or the parish name does not reflect that of the main settlement located within it (e.g. Choppington). In some areas where neighbourhood plans, covering a number of parishes have been made, the housing number is provided for the neighbourhood area.
- 4.2. As required by the NPPF, the Local Plan sets out minimum housing numbers for designated neighbourhood areas. Where the geographies are aligned, these numbers reflect the indicative numbers for settlements/parishes presented in the plan.
- 4.3. In each parish however, it is expected that the majority of development will be delivered in the main settlements, rather than the smaller villages and countryside. Where defined, settlement boundaries provide a steer as to where housing development would be supported in principle.
- 4.4. Appendix 1 sets out for each of the Main Towns, Service Centres and Rest of Delivery Areas, the factors which have informed the housing number locally and the rationale for the housing number proposed.

#### **5. Distribution across Delivery Areas**

- 5.1. As set out above, a number of strategic and local factors have informed the distribution of housing in the Local Plan. Once these factors have been applied, the distribution across the four Local Plan Delivery Areas is as set out in Table 1. This distribution broadly reflects what may be expected if the level of housing was distributed based on population, and can therefore be considered to reflect the plans distribution option as set out in the sustainability appraisal.

5.2. The distribution as set out will also help to deliver the Growth Strategy, with more than half of the housing going to the South East Delivery Area, which also contains many of the County’s key employment sites. The Central Area as a whole, receives the proportion of housing that may be expected, but it does so without deleting land for housing in the Green Belt. The proportion of housing going to the more rural parts of the County is slightly more than may be expected. Delivering housing in these locations will support the rural economy. The Plan proposes less development in the west than may be expected, and more in the north however. This in part reflects development pressure. Therefore the Plan is responding to market signals.

**Table 1: Proportionate distribution of housing by Delivery Area**

	South East		Central		North		West	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Proportionate distribution by population	9,146	51.7%	4,425	25.0%	3,007	17.0%	1,133	6.4%
Local Plan housing distribution	<b>9,000</b>	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>4,450</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>4.9%</b>

## 6. Conclusion

6.1. The distribution of housing in the Local Plan will support the Growth Strategy, is in line with the Spatial Strategy, and will help to deliver sustainable development across Northumberland. The proportionate approach to housing distribution has been informed by the population distribution as set out in the 2011 Census, and the settlement hierarchy to ensure that a greater proportion of housing is apportioned to the larger settlements, and less to rural areas. Adjustments have also been made to take into account the level of commitments, past delivery, and physical and policy constraints, to ensure that housing is delivered in sustainable locations over the plan period.

Housing Distribution Technical Paper: Appendix 1

Parishes	Main Town, Service Centre and Service Villages included	Baseline Proportionate Distribution of CLG 2014-based LHN number*** by population	Proportionate Distribution of Local Plan Housing Number**** by population	Pre-Plan Period Past Delivery 2011-16	Completions 2016-18	Outstanding dwellings on permitted and minded to approve applications (30 Sept 2018)	Housing commitments total (30 Sept 2018)*	Publication Draft for Reg 19 Local Plan Housing Distribution	Rationale
Amble	Amble	273	338	114	119	1306	1425	540	Until the last couple of years, there has been little delivery in Amble. Housing number reflects the need to boost delivery beyond that which may be expected if the County housing number was distributed proportionately, but not to the level of commitments, which are expected to build out beyond the plan period.
Ashington	Ashington	1261	1557	410	281	1529	1810	1600	Strong delivery in recent years means that the Local Plan number is not significantly increased above what may be expected if the number was distributed proportionately. If market demand continues there are sufficient commitments to exceed the number.
East Bedlington, West Bedlington	Bedlington, Bedlington Station	838	1035	118	79	1106	1185	840	Modest level of delivery in recent years though some evidence of increased market pressure. It is considered that any additional need could be met in Cambois through committed developments.
Blyth	Blyth	1694	2092	975	505	1340	1845	1800	Very strong delivery in recent years. It is considered that this met some of the need in Cramlington in previous years where delivery has not been so strong. Significant highways constraints to further large scale development. It is considered some of Blyth's need can be met by Cramlington as large schemes come on stream. Modest allocations are proposed to boost supply however.
Cramlington	Cramlington	1335	1648	216	127	3035	3162	2500	Modest delivery in preceding years but a key settlement for housing delivery over the plan period. Three major schemes now on site in this new town. It is considered that Cramlington can meet some of the need from Blyth and other areas in SE Northumberland.
Choppington	Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington	444	548	3	4	343	347	340	Very little housing development in recent years and little evidence of strong market demand. The level of housing proposed is less than may be expected based on proportionate distribution but is realistic.
Newbiggin	Newbiggin	286	353	6	44	177	221	360	Housing number increased from Reg 18 plan to reflect Town Council aspirations for growth. Given that there has been little development in recent years, or strong market demand, the proportional allocation to Newbiggin is considered realistic. Allocations have been made to boost delivery.
Seaton Valley	Seaton Delaval/Holywell, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, Seghill	700	864	353	144	329	473	540	Housing number reduced from Reg 18 plan to accommodate development without Green Belt deletion. Very strong delivery in recent years. Modest allocations have been made to boost supply. Any shortfall can be absorbed by Cramlington.



Other parishes in SE	Rest of SE	576	711	96	35	869	904	480	Given a primary focus on Main Towns and Service Centres, less development is apportioned to the more rural areas of the south east. Commitments indicate this number could be exceeded, though allocations are proposed in Lynemouth to help to regenerate the village.
South East Delivery Area		7407	9146	2291	1338	10034	11372	9000	
Hexham**	Hexham	537	663	84	95	262	357	530	The housing number is constrained by the availability of developable land without Green Belt deletion. A number of modest housing allocations are proposed to boost delivery - these largely reflect those proposed in the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan. A proportion of Hexham's need may be met in Corbridge, on committed developments.
Morpeth, Mitford, Hepscoth, Hebron, Pegswood	Morpeth, Pegswood	873	1078	214	503	2400	2903	1700	Strong delivery in recent years, and with the number of commitments, Morpeth will continue to be a key settlement for housing delivery over the plan period. It is considered that Morpeth can meet some of the demand from a wide rural area to the north and west, and to a degree demand in parts of SE Northumberland, if required.
Ponteland**	Ponteland	496	612	168	35	2509	2544	530	The housing number is constrained by the availability of developable land without Green Belt deletion. However, the number exceeds the baseline requirement.
Prudhoe	Prudhoe	530	654	113	36	520	556	600	The housing number is constrained by the availability of developable land without Green Belt deletion. A modest allocation is proposed to boost delivery, but the housing number has been reduced from the Reg 18 plan due to one planning permission lapsing and some doubt about the deliverability of the site.
Corbridge	Corbridge	167	206	26	48	271	319	200	The housing number represents a proportionate allocation which can be accommodated without Green Belt deletion. The number has been increased from the Reg 18 plan, in part to meet the demand for housing in neighbouring Hexham, but the number can be delivered by commitments.
Rest of Central	Rest of Central	982	1213	253	225	733	958	890	Given a primary focus on Main Towns and Service Centres, less development is apportioned to the more rural areas of the Central Delivery Area, much of which is constrained by Green Belt.
Central Delivery Area		3585	4426	858	942	6695	7637	4450	
Alnwick, Denwick	Alnwick	380	470	156	184	574	758	950	The housing number for Alnwick reflects the growth aspirations of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and significantly exceed what may be expected with proportionate growth. Housing allocations in the ADNP will enable delivery. The housing number is reduced however to reflect that the Local Plan has a different plan period to the neighbourhood plan. Given the ambitious levels of growth forecast up to 2031, it has been considered unnecessary to actively plan for growth beyond 2031.

Berwick, Ord	Berwick upon Tweed, East Ord	609	752	176	41	1006	1047	800	The housing number for Berwick has been increased to reflect the growth aspirations of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, and recognising a greater level of market interest in the area. While the number of planning permissions exceeds the requirement, there are concerns about a number of permissions with respect to their deliverability. Allocations are proposed to boost delivery.
Belford	Belford	57	70	22	13	91	104	120	A modest increase to the housing number reflects growth aspirations of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, though moderated to reflect a modest level of market pressure reflecting a low level of delivery in recent years. The housing number can largely be met by existing commitments. A settlement boundary is proposed in the emerging neighbourhood plan to allow for additional growth.
Rothbury, Cartington, Whitton and Tosson	Rothbury	96	118	48	7	129	136	140	Housing number reflects a proportional level of growth. Recent delivery has been strong, but while Rothbury is constrained by topography, existing commitments will deliver the number.
North Sunderland	Seahouses/North Sunderland	89	110	64	3	44	47	110	Housing number reflects a proportional level of growth. While delivery was strong in the years prior to the plan period, an allocation has been made to support delivery here rather than in smaller settlements. The number has been increased from the Reg 18 Plan to reflect the allocation.
Wooler	Wooler	90	111	31	17	152	169	170	The housing number exceeds that which may be expected by proportional growth, to reflect the growth aspirations of the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan. There has been a modest level of development in recent years. While existing commitments will deliver the requirements, it is understood that the neighbourhood plan may allocate additional sites for housing.
Rest of North	Rest of North	1111	1371	367	252	1141	1393	1100	Given a primary focus on Main Towns and Service Centres, less development is apportioned to the more rural areas of the North Delivery Area. While commitments exceed this number, a modest allocation is made in Norham to support delivery in this location.
North Delivery Area		2432	3002	864	517	3137	3654	3390	
Haltwhistle	Haltwhistle	172	212	20	27	31	58	230	A proportionate level of development is directed to Haltwhistle. However, the amount is constrained by a lack of developable sites due to topography and highways constraints. While located on the primary transport routes, there has been little development in recent years, and little evidence of market pressure, in part as a result of the distance from the Tyneside conurbation. Allocations are proposed to boost delivery in this key settlement located in the west of the county.

Allendale	Allendale	92	113	38	3	17	20	100	A proportionate level of development is directed to Allendale. In accordance with the made Allendale NP, it is anticipated that much of the housing will come forward in small scale development across the parish. Given that little development has come forward in recent years, modest allocations are proposed to boost delivery.
Bellingham	Bellingham	61	75	17	15	49	64	140	An increased level of development is directed to Bellingham from that in the Reg 18 plan, recognising that the village can meet, at least in part, the needs of a wide rural hinterland. While there are a reasonable number of dwellings committed, two allocations are proposed to boost delivery.
Haydon	Haydon Bridge	99	122	9	30	93	123	160	An increased level of development is directed to Haydon Bridge from the Reg 18 plan, recognising its location on primary transport routes, and that it is one of the few settlements in the west which shows evidence of market demand.
Rest of West	Rest of West	495	611	79	35	232	267	230	Given a primary focus on Main Towns and Service Centres, less development is apportioned to the more rural areas of the West Delivery Area. However, allocations are proposed in two villages to boost delivery, and meet local needs.
West Delivery		919	1133	163	110	422	532	860	
Northumberland		14340	17700	4176	2907	20288	23195	17700	

\* Includes completions 2016-18, outstanding dwellings on planning permissions and applications minded to approve.

\*\* Commitments include units minded to approve in the Green Belt

\*\*\* 14,340 dwellings

\*\*\*\* 17,700 dwellings



**Planning Policy**

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