



Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland Local Plan
Draft Plan for Regulation 18 Consultation

Housing Distribution Technical Paper

July 2018

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1.0 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 for the distribution of housing across the County presented in the plan.

2.0 Factors that have informed the distribution

- 2.1 A number of factors have helped inform the level of housing across different parts of the County. Key factors are considered in turn.

Spatial strategy

- 2.2 The Local Plan's spatial strategy is the key factor in the distribution of housing. 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 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.
- 2.3 The Green Belt in Northumberland, has an important role in helping to direct development to the most sustainable locations. 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, 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.

Countywide Housing Requirement

- 2.4 The overall housing requirement in the plan has been informed by the standard methodology for calculating Local Housing Need as set out in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), together with a number of growth options prepared for the Council which take into consideration economic growth aspirations reflecting the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the North of Tyne Devolution Deal and the Borderlands Initiative. The overall housing requirement set out in the plan of 17,700 homes reflects the number of homes required to support an ambitious growth scenario, and

significantly exceeds the Local Housing Need figure of using the standard methodology alone, of 14,340 dwellings. However, both the Local Plan requirement and that derived from the standard methodology have informed the distribution.

Settlement hierarchy

- 2.5 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

- 2.6 While the Local Plan housing target of 17,700 homes supports an ambitious level of economic growth, there are in excess of 22,000 housing commitments already in place across the County, either completed in 2016-17 (the first year of the plan) with planning permission or minded to approve. While some settlements have a lot of housing commitments (in some cases more than may be expected locally), in other parts of the County there has been little development pressure. In some areas that benefit from a large number of commitments, there are known issues which may impact upon the ability of these commitments to deliver. Therefore this analysis considers deliverable commitments. The Local Plan proposes to allocate sites for housing in some settlements to support the delivery of housing. While the level of housing committed cannot be used to inform the overall housing requirement, it has informed the distribution of housing.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.7 Across the County, a large number of parishes, or groups of parishes are designated as neighbourhood areas. In these areas, Neighbourhood Plans have either been 'made' or are being prepared. Where housing requirement numbers have been set out in a neighbourhood plan, these have been considered in the Local Plan while distributing housing across the County.

3.0 Distribution by Delivery Area

- 3.1 A starting point for distributing housing across the County by Delivery Area was to apportion the number of homes to each area based on its size. In doing this, two options have been considered.

- 3.2 The Council's Housing and economic growth options report (PBA, 2018) distributes housing across Northumberland's four Delivery Areas by the number of dwellings. It presents this information for the ambitious growth scenario. The table below also considers the proportionate distribution by population, and sets out the distribution in the Local Plan.

Table 1: Proportionate distribution of housing by Delivery Area

	South East		Central		North		West	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Proportionate distribution by dwellings	7930	44.8%	4100	23.2%	3780	21.3%	1900	10.7%
Proportionate distribution by population	9146	51.7%	4425	25.0%	3007	17.0%	1133	6.4%
Local Plan housing distribution	9000	50.8%	4450	25.1%	3390	19.2%	860	4.9%

- 3.3 Distributing housing proportionately based on the number of dwellings identified in the 2011 Census would see significantly more development in the North and West Delivery Areas, and less in the South East and Central Delivery Areas, when compared with distributing development proportionately by population. While such an approach may support rural growth, it is not considered that distributing housing in this way would represent the most sustainable option, as it would likely result in a large number of homes being delivered remote from main employment centres and in settlements with a limited range of facilities. Distributing housing proportionately by population, will direct a larger proportion of development closer to the areas where there are jobs and services, and provide homes for those families who currently do not have their own dwelling.
- 3.4 While distributing housing by population is considered preferable to distributing it by the existing number of dwellings, such an approach does not take into account the the level of commitments across the County and the ability of the market to deliver housing. While the proportions proposed in the Local Plan for the Central and South East Delivery Areas are similar to those that would be expected if distribution housing by population, the Plan proposes less development in the West and more in the North. There are currently a large number of commitments in the North, while developer pressure in the West is limited. The plan is therefore responding the market signals.

4.0 Distribution by settlement

- 4.1 While the Local Plan provides indicative housing numbers for Delivery Areas, these numbers are derived from the housing numbers proposed for settlements and other areas, informed by bottom up analysis of need, and taking into consideration the status of settlements and the level of commitments locally. 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.
- 4.2 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.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The distribution of housing in the Local Plan has used as its starting point, the population distribution as set out in the 2011 Census. Therefore the level of development going to different locations is considered proportionate. For each Main Town, Service Centre and Rest of Delivery Area, the proportion of housing has been adjusted to ensure that housing is delivered in a sustainable way, with a greater proportion going to the larger settlements, and less to rural areas. The adjustments include those made to take into account the level of commitments across the county and physical and policy constraints. The distribution is considered to accord with the Local Plan spatial strategy of supported growth across the County, while protecting the Green Belt from housing development.

Northumberland Local Plan - Housing Distribution Technical Paper - Appendix 1							
	Parishes included	Distribution of 'baseline' CLG number 14,340 (717pa) by population	Distribution of Local Plan Requirement of 17,700 by population	Deliverable Commitments*	Past delivery - 2011-16	Local Plan Distribution	Local Plan Rationale
South East							
Amble	Amble	273	338	1183	114	540	Exceeds proportionate distribution recognising the level of commitments in the town. Does not match number of commitments as it is considered that they will continue to build out beyond the plan period.
Ashington	Ashington	1261	1557	1835	410	1600	Largely reflects proportional distribution of overall Local Plan housing number. Not raised to the level of commitments as most of these are in the control of one developer. Ashington has seen significant development in recent years.
Bedlington/Bedlington Station	East Bedlington, West Bedlington	838	1035	837	118	840	Largely reflects the proportionate 'baseline' requirement. Given the level of commitments elsewhere in South East Northumberland, it is considered that any additional need can be accommodated within nearby settlements.
Blyth	Blyth	1694	2092	1876	975	1800	Largely reflects the number of commitments. The number is less than may be expected by distributing the county housing number, recognising that the town has already seen a large number of completions in recent years
Cramlington	Cramlington	1335	1648	3393	216	2500	Significantly exceeds the Local Plan proportional distribution level recognising long term aspirations to 'complete' the town. Number is less than commitments as it is expected that some will build out beyond the plan period. A large number of commitments are also in the control of the same developers.
Guidepost/Stakeford	Choppington	444	548	341	3	340	Reflects the level of commitments. While this is less than may be expected by the proportional distribution of the Local Plan number it is considered more realistic given there has been hardly any development in recent years.
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	286	353	129	6	300	Exceeds 'baseline' proportional requirement but falls short of proportion of Local Plan housing number. Given that there has been little development in recent years this is considered realistic.
Seaton Valley	Seaton Valley	700	864	450	353	600	Significantly less than may be expected based on proportionate distribution. However, there has been a lot of development in recent years, and future development is constrained by the Green Belt.

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	Parishes included	Distribution of 'baseline' CLG number 14,340 (717pa) by population	Distribution of Local Plan Requirement of 17,700 by population	Deliverable Commitments*	Past delivery - 2011-16	Local Plan Distribution	Local Plan Rationale
Rest of SE		576	711	679	96	480	Less than the 'baseline' proportionate requirement, reflecting the fact that development is directed to the larger settlements, and that given the relative scale of South East Northumberland, the needs of people in smaller settlements can adequately be met in the towns and larger villages. Number is less than the level of deliverable commitments as many of these are on one site only.
Central							
Hexham	Hexham	537	663	286	84	530	Reflects the 'baseline' requirement, but falls short of its proportionate share of the Local Plan housing requirement. The number reflects the fact that the capacity to accommodate additional housing is constrained by the Green Belt.
Morpeth (NP area)	Morpeth, Hebon, Hepscoth, Mitford, Pegswood	873	1078	2679	214	1700	Reflects the housing number in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. This exceeds what may be expected if the Local Plan number was distributed proportionally but reflects the large number of commitments in the town. It is expected that these commitments will continue to build out beyond the plan period.
Ponteland	Ponteland	496	612	530	168	530	Reflects the number of deliverable commitments in the area, which is less than may be expected if the Local Plan number was distributed proportionally. However, the scale of development is constrained by the Green Belt.
Prudhoe	Prudhoe	530	654	624	113	630	Largely reflects the number of deliverable commitments in the area, which is less than may be expected if the Local Plan number was distributed proportionally. However, the scale of development is constrained by the Green Belt.
Corbridge	Corbridge	167	206	317	26	170	Largely reflects the proportionate 'baseline' requirement, albeit, this is less than the level of commitments. This is due to the commitments largely being in the control of one developer. If the commitments build out in full over the plan period, this would meet the need of other nearby settlements constrained by the Green Belt.

Northumberland Local Plan - Housing Distribution Technical Paper - Appendix 1

	Parishes included	Distribution of 'baseline' CLG number 14,340 (717pa) by population	Distribution of Local Plan Requirement of 17,700 by population	Deliverable Commitments*	Past delivery - 2011-16	Local Plan Distribution	Local Plan Rationale
Rest of Central		982	1213	882	253	890	Broadly reflects the number of deliverable commitments, which is significantly less than may be expected if the Local Plan requirement was distributed proportionally. The ability to deliver the higher number is constrained by the Green Belt, and directing development to the larger settlements is considered more sustainable.
North							
Alnwick	Alnwick, Denwick	380	470	489	156	1100	Reflects the housing number in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. This exceeds the town's expected housing requirement if the Local Plan number is distributed proportionally, but reflects aspirations for growth in the town.
Berwick-upon-Tweed	Berwick-upon-Tweed, Ord	609	752	443	176	610	Exceeds the 'baseline' proportionate requirement but falls short of what may be expected if the Local Plan housing requirement was distributed proportionally. The number reflects that while Berwick benefits from a large number of permissions, there are known issues regarding the deliverability of some of these. If all the permitted schemes build out delivery could exceed the requirement.
Belford	Belford	57	70	78	22	80	Reflects the number of commitments and exceeds the Local Plan proportionate requirement.
Rothbury	Rothbury, Cartington	96	118	135	48	140	Exceeds the Local Plan proportionate requirement, but largely reflects the number of commitments. Rothbury has seen significant housing development in recent years and is constrained by topography.
Seahouses/North Sunderland	North Sunderland	89	110	20	64	90	Reflects the 'baseline' proportionate requirement. Seahouses has seen significant housing development in recent years and is constrained by the AONB.
Wooler	Wooler	90	111	166	31	170	Reflects the number of commitments and exceeds the Local Plan proportionate requirement.
Rest of North		1111	1371	1154	367	1200	Local Plan requirement falls between the proportionate 'baseline' and Local Plan requirements and broadly reflects the level of commitments. In the southern and eastern parts of the Delivery Area, market pressure is high so it can be expected that committed schemes will be delivered.

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	Parishes included	Distribution of 'baseline' CLG number 14,340 (717pa) by population	Distribution of Local Plan Requirement of 17,700 by population	Deliverable Commitments*	Past delivery - 2011-16	Local Plan Distribution	Local Plan Rationale
West							
Haltwhistle	Haltwhistle	172	212	94	20	290	Significantly exceeds the Local Plan proportionate requirement, to help deliver growth to this part of Northumberland that has seen little development in recent years. The housing number proposed will also accommodate the needs of those in nearby small rural settlements.
Allendale	Allendale	92	113	13	38	100	Reflects the number of dwellings indicated in the Allendale Neighbourhood plan which proposes to deliver small scale developments across the parish. This level is broadly reflective of what may be expected if the Local Plan housing number was distributed proportionally.
Bellingham	Bellingham	61	75	57	17	100	Exceeds the Local Plan proportionate requirement, to help deliver growth to this part of Northumberland that has seen little development in recent years. The housing number proposed will also accommodate the needs of those in nearby small rural settlements.
Haydon Bridge	Haydon	99	122	109	9	140	Exceeds the Local Plan proportionate requirement, to help deliver growth in the west of the county. The housing number proposed will also accommodate the needs of those in nearby small rural settlements, and support the decision to retain Haydon Bridge High School.
Rest of West		495	611	218	79	230	Housing number largely reflects the number of commitments, and is significantly less than may be expected if the 'baseline' requirement was distributed proportionately. This reflects that a greater proportion of development is being directed to larger settlements, and that given the very rural nature of this part of the county, it is not considered sustainable to direct development to small settlements.
Northumberland		14342	17709	19017	4176	17700	

* Deliverable commitments include completions 2016-17, together with outstanding units on planning permissions and applications minded to approve.



Planning Policy

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