



Northumberland Local Plan

Draft Plan for Regulation 18 Consultation

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or in another format or language please contact us:

(Telephone) 0345 600 6400

(Typetalk) 018001 0345 600 6400

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Foreword

Earlier this year we asked you to give us your opinions on the best places for future jobs and homes. We were very pleased with your responses. They have helped us understand how people picture Northumberland in fifteen or twenty years time.

As a result, I am now pleased to launch the consultation Draft Local Plan document and Policies Map. We encourage anyone who wants to – anyone who lives works, studies or has a stake in Northumberland – to take part in this consultation. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved. We are running drop-in sessions across the County and you will be able to respond to the Local Plan consultation online, (including in libraries) or otherwise by post or email.

The Local Plan will replace a lot of dated plans prepared by the former District and County Councils. This will bring clarity for businesses, communities and individuals on which environmental assets we need to protect and where we need to build in the coming years.

In the Draft Plan, we set out a vision and objectives, detailed policies and allocations of land, which will direct new workplaces, homes, services and facilities to where they are needed and wanted. Important infrastructure will be put in place in a timely manner and speculative applications for houses on unsuitable greenfield sites are expected to become a thing of the past. The plan will allow communities to grow and thrive in order to meet our economic ambitions, without the danger of uncharacteristic development spoiling Northumberland's unique environment.

There are a lot of detailed proposals in the plan affecting towns, villages and rural areas. So please do look at what is in the plan and on its maps and encourage your friends and neighbours to do so as well. Otherwise you might miss the chance to influence what happens in your local area. Please look inside the document for details on how to participate.

I look forward to seeing what people have to say and to the next stage of the Local Plan.



Councillor John Riddle
Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Resilience

1. Introduction

What is the Development Plan?

- 1.1** The Development Plan is a set of policies, proposals and allocations setting out how and where land is to be developed with new homes, places of employment, services and facilities. Development Plans consist of Local Plans prepared by Local Planning Authorities and neighbourhood plans prepared by local communities. Together they form the statutory framework for future development of land and buildings.
- 1.2** In Northumberland, the Development Plan is currently made up of numerous dated plans - adopted Core Strategies that were prepared by the old pre-2009 Northumberland Districts and even more aged Local Plans, which contain 'saved policies' that have never been replaced. More recently, in some parts of the County, the Development Plan has been renewed and refreshed through neighbourhood plans.

What is the Northumberland Local Plan?

- 1.3** The Northumberland Local Plan will be a single new Local Plan, covering the whole of Northumberland. It will replace all of the previous District and County Council Local Plan and Core Strategy documents but will not replace the more recent neighbourhood plans, which will continue and more will be made.
- 1.4** All local planning authorities are required to have an up to date Local Plan. The Northumberland Local Plan will, when adopted:
- Set the strategic planning policies of the Council, taking account of key factors like population trends, economic growth, climate change, resources and environmental character;
 - Set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;
 - Provide the planning principles, including detailed 'development management' policies to guide decisions on planning applications;
 - Show in detail where new homes, workplaces and facilities will be located through allocations of land; and
 - Show key environmental designations and include site specific proposals for the conservation and enhancement of historic and natural assets.
- 1.5** Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the policies within the Northumberland Local Plan, together with those in neighbourhood plans, will be the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications.
- 1.6** The Local Plan must reflect the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (or 'NPPF') and associated Government legislation. It also sits underneath frameworks and strategies produced regionally and sub-regionally, including the

Strategic Economic Plan for the North East prepared by the North East Local Economic Partnership (or 'NELEP'). Finally, the Council itself has its own strategies on the economy and community matters, to which the Plan will have full regard.

What is the area covered by the Northumberland Local Plan?

1.7 The Northumberland Local Plan covers the whole of Northumberland with the exception of the area of the Northumberland National Park, which is a separate local planning authority. Figure 1.1 illustrates the extent of the area covered by the Northumberland Local Plan.

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Local Plan Area



What exactly will the Northumberland Local Plan replace?

- 1.8** In Northumberland, the Development Plan that is being replaced by the new Northumberland Local Plan consists of the adopted Core Strategies and saved policies of Local Plans which were prepared prior to Local Government reorganisation in 2009. These are aged, and have become less relevant over time.
- 1.9** The Northumberland Local Plan, when adopted, will supersede:
- The saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration (February 2005);
 - The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Alnwick (2007), Blyth Valley (2007), and Tynedale (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
 - The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State's Direction) of the Northumberland Minerals Local Plan (2000), Northumberland Waste Local Plan (2001), Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997), Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan (1999), Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999), Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), Tynedale District Local Plan (2000), and Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).

What is the relationship with neighbourhood plans?

- 1.10** A number of communities across the County have prepared or are in the process of preparing neighbourhood plans. Once 'Made' (adopted) following independent examination, and agreed by the community following a referendum, these plans form part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 1.11** The scope of neighbourhood plans is determined by Town and Parish Councils in consultation with their communities. Neighbourhood plans may cover a wide range of topic areas and include land allocations; or they may be limited to selective topics or sites.
- 1.12** The County Council has a duty to support Town and Parish Councils engaged in neighbourhood planning. Currently there are 31 neighbourhood areas designated in Northumberland and, from those areas, five neighbourhood plans have either been made or have passed referendum. These are:
- Allendale Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan;
 - North Northumberland Coastal Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.13** The Northumberland Local Plan will only allocate sites for development in areas not covered by up-to-date neighbourhood plans, or where neighbourhood plans exist and the Town or Parish Council has chosen to make allocations through the neighbourhood plan.

- 1.14** The Council will continue to support Town and Parish Councils engaged in neighbourhood planning and will encourage all other parishes to consider using neighbourhood planning to shape development and influence decisions taken on planning applications in their areas.
- 1.15** The Local Plan has a key role to play in supporting neighbourhood planning. In seeking to meet the Basic Conditions all neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for their area. To facilitate this, in accordance with national policy and guidance, the Northumberland Local Plan will set out clearly the strategic policies for the County. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and should plan positively to support them. Specifically, neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan and must not look to undermine its strategic policies.

What has been done so far to prepare this Local Plan?

- 1.16** This consultation document follows a consultation in Spring of 2018 which asked people to show the Council where, in their opinion, development should go and to flag up some key issues. The results of that consultation have fed into this Draft Local Plan.
- 1.17** The Council has also collected a substantial volume of evidence and worked with partner organisations such as statutory providers, the utilities, Town and Parish Councils and business community, to ensure that the content of the Plan is sound.

What is the purpose and scope of this consultation?

- 1.18** This is a consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It is the stage in the process where people can probably have the most influence in shaping the future of the County. Every community and area of the County will potentially be affected by what is proposed in the Local Plan. As well as setting out the strategy for future building and environmental matters, it shows in detail which sites the Council has identified as places for future economic or residential development and also, in many areas, sets out details on where Green Belt and settlement boundaries will be drawn. So it is very important that as many people as possible take part in the consultation and give their opinions on what is being proposed. This will allow us to complete the preparation of the formal ('Publication') version of the Plan⁽¹⁾, which will then be submitted to the Government and its contents examined by an independent Inspector including in a series of Hearings prior to the Plan's adoption.

1 Under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Duty to cooperate

- 1.19** A ‘Duty to Cooperate’ was introduced through the 2011 Localism Act and it is incorporated into the NPPF. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities and public bodies to cooperate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the Independent Examination of their Local Plans. The Duty requires the Council to:
- Work with neighbouring authorities on a joint approach to sustainable development or use of land, where there would be a significant impact on both / all of the local planning areas concerned;
 - Set out planning policies to address such issues;
 - Work with a range of public bodies to set out agreements on how strategic issues will be dealt with through the plans of each;
 - Consider joint approaches to plan making.
- 1.20** The Council works closely with neighbouring planning authorities. An agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in June 2014 between the seven local authorities of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to co-operate in their plan making. Following the recent agreements on the North of Tyne Devolution Deal (with Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council) and the Borderlands Growth Deal (with local authorities either side of the England/Scotland border), the Council will be working increasingly closely with these neighbouring authorities.
- 1.21** The Duty also covers key statutory or representative bodies such as Homes England, the Water Authority, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 1.22** From time to time ‘position statements’ and/or ‘statements of common ground’ will be prepared and agreed between the Council and these various parties as necessary.

How to get involved

- 1.23** Consultation on the current document is taking place over a six week period between 4 July 2018 and 15 August 2018.
- 1.24** The consultation document and the Policies Map showing the proposed land allocations and area-based designations can be viewed on our website at: <http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/localplan/reg18>. Hard copies of the consultation document and Policies Map can also be viewed at libraries and at County Hall.
- 1.25** During the consultation period, a number of drop-in sessions have been arranged across Northumberland to allow people to find out more about the Local Plan and how to respond to the consultation. Details of the dates, times and venues for these sessions are available to view on our website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan.

1.26 Comments in response to the consultation document can be submitted online or by returning a response form by email or by post. The Council is encouraging people to submit their comments online but you may wish to submit comments by completing a response form, which is available from libraries and County Hall or can be downloaded from our website at www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan. Details of how to respond to the consultation using these methods is provided below:

- Online: Comments can be submitted via the consultation website at <http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/localplan/reg18>;
- Email: planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk
- Post: Planning Policy, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.

1.27 All comments must be received by **5pm on Wednesday 15 August 2018**.

Next Steps - Timetable

1.28 The timetable for the preparation of the Northumberland Local Plan is set out in the Local Development Scheme 2018-2021 (April 2018)⁽²⁾. The key stages, informed by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 are set out below, together with engagement opportunities.

Table 1.1 Local Plan Timetable

Key Stages	Date
Regulation 18 - Preparation of Local Plan Consultation on draft Local Plan	July to August 2018
Regulation 19 - Publication of Local Plan Consultation on Pre-Submission Draft (limited to 'Tests of Soundness')	January 2019
Regulation 22 - Submission to Secretary of State	May 2019
Regulation 24 - Independent Examination Hearings	September 2019
Regulation 26 - Adoption of Local Plan	March 2020

² The Local Development Scheme is available to view at: www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan

2. Spatial Portrait

- 2.1** Northumberland is England's northernmost County, stretching from the Scottish Border in the north and west to Tyneside and County Durham in the south. The County is flanked by Cumbria, the Cheviots and North Pennines to the west and by the North Sea to the east.
- 2.2** The County, the largest unitary authority by geographic coverage with the greatest area of Green Belt of any Local Planning Authority, is also the most sparsely populated in England with only 63 people per square kilometre. Home to around 316,000 people, Northumberland remains mostly rural, with its largest settlements having no more than 40,000 residents. It is nonetheless diverse and different parts of the County have distinct characteristics, functions and needs contrasting from urban to rural, coastal to upland and well connected to remote.
- 2.3** The south east of the County is the most densely populated, with the three largest towns, Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington. These act as main employment centres, drawing from a wider area than just south-east Northumberland. They also provide a significant range of services in their respective centres and offer assets such as Northumberland College and large scale leisure facilities that have a wider reach. Beyond the south east, the County's main settlements are located along the Tyne Valley corridor, and on a north-south axis across the lowland coastal strip; both areas incorporate main roads and rail lines. Morpeth, Hexham, Prudhoe, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have significant rural hinterlands. The predominantly rural areas of the County are interspersed with smaller towns, some with their own hinterlands, as well as numerous villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads.
- 2.4** Areas in the south of the County have the strongest relationship with the Tyne and Wear conurbation. Tyneside attracts people from Northumberland, who reach into the area for work, education, cultural activity and shopping. To a lesser extent areas in the north and west of the County have relationships with the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and the Lothians and Carlisle.
- 2.5** Northumberland's rural villages are still closely linked to agriculture, which is the lifeblood of much of the County. Many have been sustained by tourism, although the needs of this industry have created development pressures. Part of their attractiveness is the organic way in which they have grown within their landscape settings. The forestry sector is very important to the economy of the North of England and Northumberland, which has a very large timber industry from harvesting to production. Kielder Forest, for example, is the largest man made forest in Europe and the largest working forest in England.

Natural, historic and built environment

- 2.6** Northumberland's environment is distinctive in terms of its natural beauty and historic significance. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond.

2.7 Superimposed on Northumberland's internationally recognised natural assets is a rich cultural heritage - a legacy of archaeological sites and structures and historic buildings, settlements and landscapes. The relatively undeveloped nature of the County has allowed often exceptional levels of preservation for some parts of the historic environment.

2.8 There are numerous designated areas and sites, many of which are recognised internationally and nationally, for their nature conservation, geological, landscape or built heritage value. Most notable are:

- Northumberland National Park (a separate local planning authority area);
- Northumberland Coast and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Historic landscapes, reflective of past forms of habitation and cultivation;
- Areas of international biodiversity and geo-diversity importance, mostly concentrated along the coast and in more remote upland areas;
- Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS);
- Northumberland Dark Sky Park;
- Northumberlandia human landform sculpture;
- Several Registered Historic Parks and Gardens surrounding some of the County's castles and stately homes;
- Numerous Registered Battlefields;
- 69 conservation areas marking out historic villages, town centres and other unique built environments;
- Well over 5000 nationally Listed Buildings and Structures - approaching half of all those in the North-East - including many of great significance, including Norman castles, country houses, fortified farmhouses, and buildings associated with the County's diverse economic, social, religious and cultural legacy; and
- Around a thousand Scheduled Monuments, (approximately half of which are within the boundary of the National Park).

2.9 There are also highly important assets that are less easy to attribute to an exact location, such as some of the protected species. The County's many environmental assets do not all receive statutory protection. It is important to consider the County's biodiversity, historic environment and ecosystems as a whole in terms of the threats that they face and the opportunities they present. Many natural and built assets are vulnerable to development and human activity and some heritage assets remain 'at risk'; all of these need careful protection, enhancement and/or management, including through planning decisions. Northumberland's natural historic and built environment presents many opportunities to raise people's awareness and understanding of, and attachment to, their environment. This ranges from outdoor learning for children and young people through communities being empowered to protect the environments that are important to them to tourists and day visitors appreciating Northumberland's unique assets.

Economy and employment

- 2.10** Northumberland makes a major contribution to regional and national prosperity. It is home to major globally competitive and connected companies, niche producers and providers of excellent products and services. Northumberland is at the heart of the northern economy, sitting between the competitive city economies of Newcastle and Edinburgh, with good links to national and international markets via Newcastle Airport, the strategic road and rail network and the Port of Blyth and the region's other sea ports. There is increasingly good digital connectivity, which includes rural parts of the County.
- 2.11** The Northumberland economy has grown steadily in recent years. However, Gross Value Added (GVA), which is an economic measure of the value of goods and services in an area, is lower than both the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area and national rate of growth. This can be explained by low productivity which points to the need to improve the quality of jobs and skills in Northumberland, and attract new business in higher value sectors.
- 2.12** The structure of the County's economy has undergone substantial change over the past 30 years. There has been a downsizing of the agricultural workforce and the complete departure of deep coal mining. The economy now has a broader base which incorporates manufacturing and certain service sectors. There is particular reliance on the public sector although as elsewhere, this sector has been reducing. Significantly there has been a decline in manufacturing employment, including some of the newer sectors that replaced mining and heavy industry, reflecting national trends. Unlike past periods of change, there has not been a parallel growth in high value service sector employment although there is potential for strong growth.
- 2.13** Northumberland has relatively healthy levels of economic activity and employment with both being greater than the regional rate, (although slightly below the national rate) in 2017. The Northumberland unemployment rate in 2017 was also lower than the regional average, at 5.0% and this has continued to fall.
- 2.14** However, these levels vary significantly across the County. The Plan therefore needs to support a quantitative increase in the number of jobs in the County, in order to provide suitable job opportunities for people to move into employment, alongside support for skills initiatives to enable the County's current labour force to meet the requirements of businesses. The spatial distribution of areas of high unemployment and economic inactivity shows that whilst there are rural pockets, the issues are most acute in the south east, pointing to the need to provide opportunities accessible to this population.
- 2.15** There are a number of key positive features of the Northumberland economy:
- Small businesses dominate the economy with 89% of enterprises employing fewer than ten people in 2017;
 - Many small businesses are leading edge in their sectors and are a vital part of the economy;
 - A number of the larger companies are high tech and operate globally;

- New business start-ups are generally resilient, with failure rates below the regional and national average; and
 - Although the number of new business ventures established is proportionately lower than elsewhere in the UK, in certain settlements, such as Hexham, Morpeth, and Ponteland, it has been relatively healthy.
- 2.16** In contrast, the number of large firms is comparatively low, with only 0.2% of the total number of businesses employing over 250 people in 2017, compared to an average of 0.4% across the North-East. The wider benefits large firms bring such as supply chain growth and skills development are desirable and it is important therefore that Northumberland is as flexible as possible to accommodate major inward investment and the growth of indigenous businesses.
- 2.17** Northumberland's economy, is intrinsically linked to the economies of neighbouring areas, Tyneside in particular. The 2011 Census showed a net outflow of commuters from Northumberland of over 23,000 people – mostly between Northumberland and Tyneside.
- 2.18** Northumberland is operating in a global market and has been successful in focussing on sectors in which it has competitive advantage. The County's economy has core strengths and opportunities in key sectors such as energy, low carbon industries, certain manufacturing and process industries such as pharmaceuticals and engineering, ports, and tourism. Expansion of production and research and development operations within these sectors has the potential to offer higher value, knowledge based jobs to Northumberland residents, commuters and in-migrants.
- 2.19** The growth of high quality service jobs can be strongly influenced by lifestyle factors, given the ability to attract highly skilled workers. Improving telecommunications will allow for remote operation of such businesses. Northumberland's beautiful and historic market towns and its attractive rural landscapes provide key opportunities to attract mobile, highly skilled migrants likely to bring or establish such businesses, and to be a focus for business start-ups in creative and knowledge based service industries. Continued improvement in the quality of telecommunications is vital to achieving this. The County offers the scope to attract the higher value service jobs, serving wider markets and growth in the service sector is forecast to be strong whilst there are key opportunities for certain creative and tourist related industries.
- 2.20** However, the geography of Northumberland means that the locations where sites and infrastructure are available, are not always where businesses want to locate, and in particular where the site characteristics complement growth sectors; but the County offers significant opportunity to improve on this position.

Education and skills

- 2.21** The Northumberland labour market in terms of educational attainment, skills, earnings, and forms of employment is geographically and socio-economically split. In 2017 the average weekly earnings of Northumberland residents in full time employment was 8.6% higher than the average weekly earnings of people working in full-time Northumberland based jobs. Looking at average hourly earnings

(excluding overtime) the differential is nearer 11%. This illustrates the fact that the County's higher earning and more skilled residents commute out of the County for work.

- 2.22** Northumberland's residents achieve higher qualifications than the north east average, but this is still low when compared to the national figure. This, combined with the lack of appropriate training, could limit the County's ability to grow and diversify in relation to the national economy⁽³⁾. However, the proportion of residents with no qualifications is lower than both the regional and national average.
- 2.23** In terms of school level attainment there has been a steady increase in the percentage of young people in Northumberland attaining 5 or more GCSEs (at A* to C or an equivalent) – reaching 77% of those aged 16 to 64 years old by 2017, compared to 73% in the North East. Attainment of 2 or more A levels (or equivalent) by young people aged 19 in Northumberland has also increased steadily since 2005. By 2017 54% of those aged 16 to 64 years old had this level of qualification, compared to a North East figure of 52%⁽⁴⁾.
- 2.24** Turning to Higher Education, looking at the adult population as a whole, (aged 16 to 64) 35% have one or more high level qualifications⁽⁵⁾ in 2017– higher than the regional average, but lower than the national average. However, there are geographical variations within the County: there is evidence that the proportion of young people in the south east entering higher education, equates to only half the proportion doing so from the rest of the County. The North East of England's universities were by far the most popular destinations for undergraduate and postgraduate students, aiding the likelihood of retaining local graduates. As Northumberland does not have a university many people in the 15 to 24 age group leave the County, predominantly for further and higher education and do not return at the same rate. However, Northumberland College, which is the largest training provider in the County, has made and continues to make significant investments in upgrading facilities, and has a strong reputation.

Health

- 2.25** Northumberland presents a mixed picture in terms of the health of its citizens and consequent health and social care needs. Both men and women in the County have a higher healthy life expectancy in the North Eastern LEP area, (only slightly lower than the England average). However, the ageing population and its dispersed nature, mean that calls on adult social care are greater than for more urban parts of the North-East. There are hotspots of deprivation in older households in the south-east of the County and, here, life expectancy is lower than in the rest of Northumberland.

3 This is reaffirmed through the Economic Land Review (ELR) business survey, where 20% of respondents stated that skills shortages were an obstacle to growth.

4 www.northumberland.gov.uk/Campaigns/Knowledge/State-of-Northumberland.aspx

5 A higher level qualification means a Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher Degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree (NI) or professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)

- 2.26** Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has invested significantly to enhance healthcare provision across Northumberland and in North Tyneside. This investment includes a new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) at Cramlington to serve Northumberland and North Tyneside that opened in 2015; improving and refurbishing Hexham and Wansbeck General Hospitals, and replacing Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital with a new purpose-built facility to form an integrated health and social care scheme. In Berwick, the NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is currently working with partners at Northumbria Health Care Trust and Northumberland County Council to consider alternative healthcare arrangements.
- 2.27** Despite these improvements in facilities around the County and the presence of a range of more local healthcare facilities in other towns and villages, access to healthcare remains a challenging issue, especially in deprived and more remote rural communities.

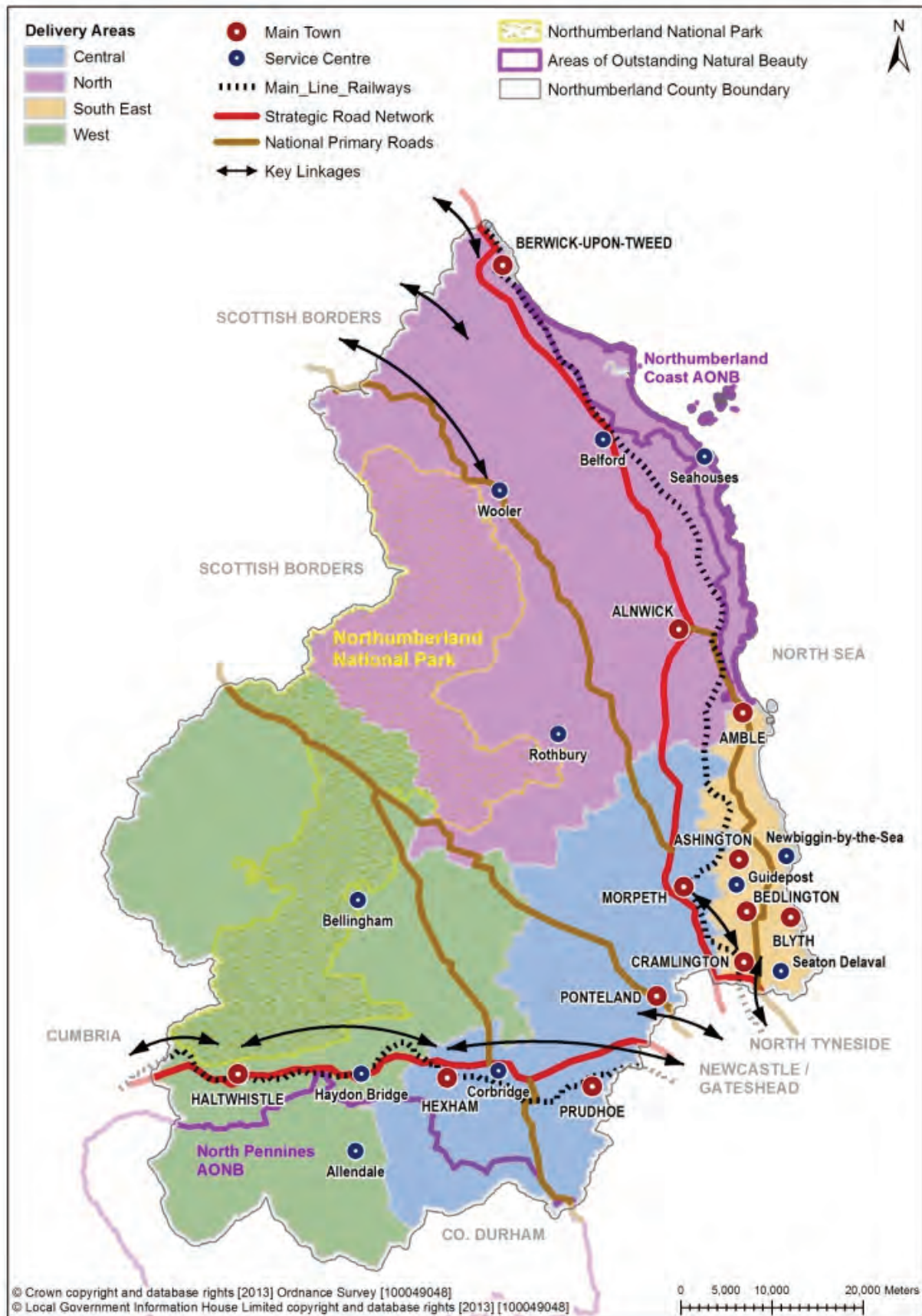
Population of Northumberland

- 2.28** The population of Northumberland is ageing and the significance of this demographic change makes it a major policy issue for the prosperity and resilience of Northumberland Communities: Between 2016 and 2036 there is projected to be a significant increase in those over 65 (by almost half), with those over 80 years of age doubling in number. Conversely, the core working age population of 20 to 64 year olds is projected to decrease by over 12%.
- 2.29** Due to these demographic patterns and the Office for National Statistics forecasts it is predicted that without positive policy intervention the County's population will increase by only 1.8%. By contrast, the UK population is projected to increase by 5.5% in just the first ten years of this period.
- 2.30** If this does occur, projections show that it would result in a significant reduction in working age population and a subsequent reduction in the number of working people in Northumberland. As a result, there could be a consequent reduction in the ability of Northumberland to provide a labour force to existing or potential employers who want to locate in the County. In addition, the ageing population profile will place a steadily increasing strain on already stretched healthcare services. All of this has significant potential to impact on the future sustainability and resilience of Northumberland's communities. The projected make up of the population, without policy intervention, forms probably the most important aspect of the context of this Local Plan.

Delivery Areas

- 2.31** Northumberland is large and diverse and different parts of the County have distinct characteristics, functions and needs. The Delivery Areas are shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Delivery Areas in Northumberland



2.32 The four Delivery Areas:

- Are defined in terms of their social, economic, and cultural characteristics;
- Take account of the roles and relationship between towns and villages across Northumberland; and
- Take account of the interaction of places with adjoining areas, particularly Tyneside and Scotland.

2.33 Defining Delivery Areas has helped the Council to:

- Better distribute and in future to monitor the delivery of development according to local needs;
- Define the scale and function of individual Main Towns and Service Centres' capacity to accommodate additional development; and
- Explain the functional relationships between settlements and connections with their hinterlands.

2.34 However, a Countywide policy approach remains appropriate in some instances.

2.35 The remainder of this section provides some context to each of the areas of Northumberland.

South East Northumberland Delivery Area

2.36 The South East Northumberland Delivery Area extends inland from the coast, from its southern boundary with North Tyneside and Newcastle upon Tyne, to Amble in the north. The Area includes:

- The Main Towns of Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington;
- The Service Centres of Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval; and
- Some other sizeable villages including Choppington, Ellington, Lynemouth, Hadston, Holywell, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice, Seghill and Widdrington Station, as well as numerous smaller villages.

2.37 The Green Belt extends across parts of the area to prevent coalescence with the Tyneside conurbation to the south. There are important green infrastructure links along the coast, many of which are protected by nature conservation designations. The landscape of the area was historically dominated by coal mining. While examples of this mining heritage are retained, notably at Woodhorn, the majority of mining sites in the area have now been restored and provide important ecological and recreational resources. Surface coal mining is still present and makes a valuable contribution to the local economy. There is one coal producing site at Shotton, which overlaps into the Central Delivery Area. A further site, at Ferneybeds near Widdrington Station, has been granted planning permission but has yet to commence. Potland Burn and Butterwell are currently being restored and former workings at Steadsburn and Stobswood are now largely restored.

Population

- Most densely populated part of Northumberland at 737 people per km², with 163,200 people in 71,600 households;
- Although its towns and villages are large no settlement exceeds 40,000 residents;
- While the population is ageing, the proportion aged over 65 is smaller than in the other Delivery Areas and it has the largest proportion of younger residents.

Roles of the Main Towns and Service Centres

- 2.38** Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington provide the largest concentrations of housing, employment, retailing and services within the area.
- 2.39** **Amble** is a key centre in the northern part of the Delivery Area. It is Northumberland's most important fishing centre and has an important tourism role as a result of its location at the southern approach to the Northumberland Coast AONB and the establishment of a marina. It has a small catchment area that stretches across into the North Delivery Area, taking in villages such as Warkworth.
- 2.40** **Ashington** was once a centre of the coal mining industry. The town now plays an important strategic employment role in the County and includes the strategically important Ashwood Business Park. Northumberland College and Wansbeck Hospital are also located in the town.
- 2.41** **Bedlington**, together with the linked settlement of Bedlington Station provides housing for those working in the neighbouring towns and commuting to Tyneside. Given the close proximity of larger towns, services provided predominantly serve the local market.
- 2.42** **Blyth** has a strategically important employment function. There is significant economic growth potential around the Blyth Estuary, which includes sites with Enterprise Zone status. Opportunities exist that build on existing assets including the National Renewable Energy Centre (Narec), and the Port of Blyth which is a sizeable commercial port with a deep-water harbour and warehousing facilities. Specific sectors being targeted include offshore oil and gas, renewables and advanced manufacturing. The town is on the edge of the Green Belt which lies to its south.
- 2.43** **Cramlington** has a sub-regional role as a centre for industry and houses the largest concentration of manufacturing businesses in Northumberland, including a cluster of pharmaceuticals companies. It is a prime location for inward investment because of the quality of its environment and road network. The redevelopment of the town centre, including a cinema, and a new specialist emergency care hospital to the east of Cramlington has strengthened the role of the Town. The town is on the edge of the Green Belt which lies to its south and west.
- 2.44** The Service Centres of Guidepost/ Stakeford, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval provide important services for both residents and communities within neighbouring areas. Given the close proximity of the larger towns, the sphere of

influence of these settlements is limited. Other smaller settlements within the area also provide local services to their resident communities. Seaton Delaval, New Hartley, Seghill, Holywell and Seaton Sluice are surrounded by Green Belt.

Housing – development pressure and delivery

2.45 The South East of the County has experienced consistent under delivery of housing in recent years compared to the housing allocations in existing Local Plans. Some large housing sites have stalled and sites on previously developed land have proven unviable, as a result of the recession. However, since 2014/15 housing completions have increased significantly. The close proximity, and good road links, mean that the South East housing market area is closely linked with the Tyneside conurbation to the south.

Transport

- The A189/A19 corridor provides important sub-regional road links to Tyneside for jobs, learning, shopping and leisure;
- There are some issues with localised traffic congestion in Blyth and at key highway junctions, such as Moor Farm roundabout, at peak times;
- Cramlington benefits from passenger services on the East Coast Main Line;
- There is a Northern Rail service which calls at Widdrington Station Monday to Saturday and links to stations such as Alnmouth and Chathill in North Northumberland and south and west to Newcastle and to the Metrocentre (on the Carlisle line);
- There are opportunities from the proposed reintroduction of passenger rail services to the Northumberland Line (formerly referred to as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line).

Employment

2.46 This area faces particular challenges; social and environmental deprivation arising from unemployment and poverty continue to frustrate the ability of communities to emerge from the post-industrial, coal mining legacy into sustained and sustainable growth. The recent closures of the RioTinto Alcan smelter at Lynemouth, and Northumberland Foods in Amble have also had an impact upon the communities and supply chains locally. However the area has been successful in attracting inward investment, most recently the establishment of a high-tech paint manufacturing plant at Ashington.

2.47 Key opportunities for future economic growth:

- Blyth estuary area - is being actively promoted to the renewable and low carbon energy, advanced manufacturing and offshore sectors;
- Cramlington continues to be recognised as a prime location for inward investment due to the quality of its environment and road network;
- Development of the visitor economy through major attractors, key examples being the continued development of harbour-related attractions at Amble, a leisure destination based around the former Stobswood, Maidens Hall and Steadsburn surface coal mining sites in the northern part of the Area; the Woodhorn Museum near Ashington; and Seaton Delaval Hall, now a National Trust property in the south of the area.

Relationship with other areas

2.48 The close proximity, and good road links, mean that the Delivery Area is closely linked with the Tyneside conurbation to the south. While links are not so strong with the wider Central and North Northumberland Delivery Areas, the market towns of Morpeth and Alnwick both provide employment and housing opportunities and also provide a workforce for major employers in Cramlington and Blyth. These links have been strengthened with the opening of the Morpeth Northern bypass. The town of Amble, on the northern edge of the Delivery Area, has strong links with Alnwick and intervening villages, such as Warkworth, which lie in the North Northumberland Delivery Area.

Central Northumberland Delivery Area

2.49 Central Northumberland Delivery Area extends north and west from the boundary with Tyne and Wear. The area includes:

- The Main Towns of Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe;
- The Service Centre of Corbridge; and
- Numerous villages of varying sizes and functions, including some sizeable commuter villages, such as Stocksfield and Stannington, as well as many smaller rural settlements.

2.50 Much of the area is covered by Green Belt to protect the countryside from encroachment from the Tyne and Wear conurbation. The south west of the area includes part of the North Pennines AONB.

Population

- The population density is 83 per km², with 79,000 people in 33,700 households;
- The proportion of the population aged over 65 is relatively high at 22.1%, as is the proportion aged up to 15 years at 16.8%.

Roles of the main towns and service centres

2.51 Morpeth, Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services.

2.52 **Morpeth** is a historic market town, serving a wide rural hinterland that extends into the North Northumberland Delivery Area. It has a commuter housing role due to good transport links and the close proximity of the Tyneside conurbation, although significant numbers also work and use services within Morpeth. It also has a strong relationship with the South East of the County, particularly Cramlington. This has been strengthened through the construction of the Morpeth Northern bypass, which will facilitate development to the North of the town and remove some through traffic from the ancient market town centre.

2.53 **Hexham** is located in the Tyne Valley and serves a wide rural hinterland that extends into the West Northumberland Delivery Area. Its auction mart is regionally and nationally significant. It also has an important role as a gateway to Northumberland

National Park and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The town accommodates commuters to the Tyneside conurbation. Future growth of the town is constrained by the Green Belt.

2.54 Ponteland is a town that provides services to a wider rural area, although not to the same extent as Morpeth and Hexham. Ponteland looks to Newcastle upon Tyne for its main employment, retailing and services and provides an executive housing offer for those commuting to Tyneside and the wider region. While the vacating of the Police Headquarters complex has provided some expansion opportunity on brownfield land, the settlement's further growth is constrained by the Green Belt.

2.55 Prudhoe is located on a hillside, overlooking the Tyne Valley, close to the Tyneside conurbation. Within the influence of Tyneside, it has a commuter housing role but also has a longstanding local employment, housing and service centre role. Future growth of the town is constrained by the Green Belt.

2.56 Corbridge is a village of great historic and architectural significance. It has a commuter housing role but also is an important service centre, which provides services to a wider rural area. It looks to Hexham for its higher services. The village is surrounded by the Green Belt.

Housing – development pressure and past delivery

2.57 Much of the Central area of the County is covered by Green Belt; this has sought to protect the countryside from encroachment from the Tyne and Wear conurbation and maintain the separation of settlements. This area has some of the highest levels of development pressure within Northumberland, largely due to the ease of commuting into Tyneside. House prices are high, resulting in affordability pressures across the area. Past planning policies, including the former Regional Spatial Strategy, have constrained development across the Central area, through Green Belt designations, low housing targets and policies to restrict development in the countryside. In the former Castle Morpeth area, despite Morpeth and Ponteland being identified as the focus for new housing development in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan, in accordance with regional planning policy at that time, the majority of housing development has taken place in the Morpeth hinterland and former coalfield areas and not the main settlements.

Transport

2.58 The area is crossed by the A1 and East Coast Main Line (ECML) corridor, and the A69 and Newcastle to Carlisle rail line. These routes link with north-south routes on the east and west coasts respectively, as well as further west to the port of Cairnryan. While Hexham, Prudhoe and Corbridge and other villages are served by regular train services on the Tyne Valley line, only Morpeth benefits from relatively regular services to Tyneside on the ECML. The Main Towns and Service Centres, and settlements along the main transport corridors are well served by buses while, in the wider rural hinterlands, services are less frequent. Newcastle International Airport is located on the southern edge of the Delivery Area.

Employment

2.59 Within the Delivery Area, many jobs are in the public sector, particularly within Local Government and health services. In the Tyne Valley, at Hexham and Prudhoe wood processing industries are major employers. The towns of Hexham, Morpeth, Prudhoe and Ponteland contain successful industrial estates, many of which have limited land for new businesses. The area is increasingly a focus for knowledge based and creative businesses. Much of the area encompasses productive agricultural land, while tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy particularly in the west.

Relationships with other areas

- The close proximity of the Main Towns and Service Centres to Tyneside means they have a strong relationship with the conurbation and they provide popular locations for commuters;
- The influence of Hexham and Morpeth extends into the West and North Northumberland Delivery Areas respectively, with the towns providing employment and services for wide hinterlands;
- Morpeth also has a strong relationship with Cramlington and the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, which has been further strengthened following completion of the Morpeth Northern Bypass.

North Northumberland Delivery Area

2.60 The North Northumberland Delivery Area is bounded to the north by the Scottish Border, to the west by the Cheviot Hills of the Northumberland National Park and to the south by the Simonside Hills and the Coquet Valley. The coast, which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty forms the eastern boundary. The delivery area includes:

- The Main Towns of Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed;
- The Service Centres of Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses and Wooler; and
- Numerous villages along the coastal strip including large villages such as Warkworth and Longhoughton, as well as settlements lying further inland.

Population

- Much of the Area is sparsely populated, with an overall density of 26.3 people per km², and a population of 53,600 in 24,250 households;
- With almost 24% of its resident population aged over 65 it has the largest proportion of older residents, and the lowest proportion of younger residents, up to 15 years (15.4% of the population), in Northumberland;
- The numbers of children in rural schools are falling.

Roles of main towns and service centres

2.61 The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the key locations for housing, employment, retailing and services within the area.

- 2.62 Berwick-upon-Tweed** is the northernmost market town in Northumberland, one of England's outstanding historic towns and a key hub between the conurbations of Edinburgh and Tyneside. Its history and geography give the town a unique sense of place and it is a popular tourist destination.
- 2.63 Alnwick** is another of Northumberland's important historic market towns, providing services for a wide rural hinterland; the centre is dominated by the 11th century castle. The castle and its gardens are popular tourist attractions.
- 2.64 Belford and Seahouses** provide a range of services to support the local communities and the tourism industry. Seahouses is a key hub for visitors to the North Northumberland coast and the Farne Islands.
- 2.65 Rothbury** is the largest settlement in western Coquetdale with its services supporting its resident population and those people who live in the more remote villages, including those in the Northumberland National Park. The village acts as a gateway to the Park for visitors and has important relationships with Alnwick and Morpeth.
- 2.66 Wooler** has an important relationship with both Berwick and Alnwick and is a local hub for services for its satellite communities. It is also a gateway for visitors to the northern part of the National Park. It has a working mart and is also the location for an important cluster of agricultural engineering and construction companies.

Housing – development pressure and past delivery

- 2.67** Large parts of the North of the County are subject to high house prices; by contrast the area has the lowest average gross incomes across the County primarily because of a higher than average reliance on employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Access to affordable housing, particularly within the rented sector, is an issue across the area. High house prices are a particularly acute problem in the Northumberland Coast AONB and its coastal villages, where there are especially high levels of second home and holiday accommodation. Development pressure in the AONB poses a threat to the conservation of its natural beauty but the sustainability of local communities by providing housing and employment opportunities is also considered to be integral to its protection and enhancement.
- 2.68** In terms of past housing delivery across the North of the County, the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed has under provided in recent years despite an abundance of housing sites with planning permission. Delivery elsewhere in the former Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough has exceeded past policy, particularly in the coastal zone. Delivery in Alnwick reflects the current planning policy but Rothbury has experienced higher levels of delivery.

Transport

- The A1/East Coast road and rail corridor connects the Area with the Tyneside conurbation and Edinburgh, with the A697 providing an additional link between these locations; much of the A1 remains as single carriageway, although, in late 2014, the Government announced proposals to dual part of this (as far north as Ellingham);

- The A698 provides a route south-west to Hawick, the A7 and, eventually, the M6 and routes west to Cairnryan and Ireland;
- Berwick-upon-Tweed is well served by the East Coast Main Line, while the station at Alnmouth (for Alnwick) provides more limited but important access to the strategic rail network;
- There are limited bus services operating outside the A1 corridor, the Northumberland coastal route and the axes of the A697 and A698.

Employment

- The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick have large industrial estates, with smaller ones in settlements such as Wooler, Rothbury and Belford;
- The port of Berwick-upon-Tweed is important to the wider area; it is capable of handling larger freight vessels and is considered to have an important role in increasing exports and catering to the visitor industry;
- There are a number of small harbours in the area, at Beadnell, Craster, Holy Island and Seahouses, which primarily support the local fishing industry. Seahouses provides access by boat for visitors to the Farne Islands, and this function is important to the visitor economy;
- Further inland, there remains a reliance on the traditional rural industries but tourism is becoming increasingly important.

Relationship with other areas

- The Area is influenced by the Tyne and Wear conurbation in terms of travel to work, but not to the same extent as the Central and South East Areas;
- The north of the Area, in particular Berwick-upon-Tweed, is influenced by the Edinburgh City-Region, which extends across the Scottish Borders and which is the focus of a strategic growth strategy. Proposals for expansion in the central Scottish Borders and the re-opening of the Waverley line could also have implications for the social and economic well-being of the north section of the Area;
- There are strong links with the town of Amble in the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, especially from Alnwick and intervening villages such as Warkworth.

West Northumberland Delivery Area

2.69 The West Northumberland Delivery Area straddles the southern part of the Northumberland National Park. It includes the Kielder area to the north-west of the National Park, the North Tyne Valley, the South Tyne Valley and parts of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the North Pennines AONB. The Delivery Area includes:

- The Main Town of Haltwhistle; and
- The Service Centres of Haydon Bridge, Allendale and Bellingham; and
- Numerous small settlements, which are scattered throughout the Delivery Area.

Population

- The West Northumberland Delivery Area is the most sparsely populated in the County, with 11.2 people per km²;
- It has the lowest population of the four areas with approximately 20,200 people in 8,950 households;
- The proportion of population aged up to 15 years is small at 15.5%, while 21.5% are aged 65 years or older.

Roles of main towns and service centres

2.70 Haltwhistle is the largest settlement in the Area; it is located in the South Tyne Valley. It grew as an industrial town when the Newcastle to Carlisle railway opened in the 1830s. It is a hub for housing, employment, retailing and other services, and is one of the key gateways to Hadrian's Wall. Haltwhistle has good links with Hexham, Carlisle and Cumbria, and is served by the high school at Haydon Bridge.

2.71 Bellingham is the largest settlement in the North Tyne Valley and provides services to a wide rural hinterland. It grew as an agricultural market town during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a time the village had industries associated with surrounding coal and iron working and it was linked by railway to the rest of the North East, as well as Scotland. Bellingham acts as a gateway for people visiting the National Park and Kielder Water and Forest Park. It looks to Hexham for many higher level services. An increasing number of residents commute to Tyneside.

2.72 Allendale is located within the North Pennines AONB in the East Allen Valley. Its main role is as a local centre for housing and services, supporting the agricultural sector and tourism. The village is within commuting distance of Tyneside.

2.73 Haydon Bridge is located in the South Tyne Valley, west of Hexham. While it is within the commuting influence of Tyneside, its main role is as a local housing and service centre for its immediate surroundings. The main high school in the south-west of the County is located in Haydon Bridge.

Housing – development pressure and delivery

2.74 Development across the West of the County generally serves local markets and pressure for development is relatively low. However, the reaction to historic development pressure in the extreme south east of the area is reflected in Green Belt designation. The housing delivery strategy of adopted planning policy sought to stabilise the population in this area. This has largely been achieved with the exception of Haltwhistle which has seen an unintended decrease.

Transport

2.75 The east-west Tyne Gap corridor runs through the area, with the Tyne Valley rail line, relatively frequent bus services and the A69 Trunk Road connecting the settlements of Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge and Bardon Mill with Hexham. The route also provides links to Carlisle and, from there, north-south, as well as west to the port of Cairnryan. The route also connects the area with the Tyneside conurbation

and its links north-south. Within the Delivery Area, the North Tyne Valley and, to the south, the Allen Valleys and the upstream part of the South Tyne are more poorly connected by road or public transport.

Economy

2.76 The economy of the area is dominated by agriculture, forestry and tourism. Although the area has a high percentage of people of working age (63%), the population is ageing.

Relationships with other areas

- There are strong social, economic and cultural relationships with Hexham in the Central Northumberland Delivery Area, with residents looking to the town for key services;
- The eastern part of the Delivery Area is on the periphery of the main Tyneside commuter zone;
- Links with Carlisle and Cumbria are stronger here than elsewhere in the County.

3. Spatial Vision, Objectives and Outcomes

Vision

- 3.1** The vision sets out what the Local Plan intends to achieve, the vision informs all of the policies within the plan. It has been informed in the context of partnership strategies outlined in the 'Duty to Co-operate' section above. However, it still reflects the Council's Corporate Priorities set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and the Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020 which seeks to deliver a prosperous Northumberland, founded on quality local jobs and connected communities.

Northumberland's physical and cultural identity will be conserved and nurtured; its resources will be utilised in a sustainable way. The breadth, scale and quality of its special, varied landscapes and biodiversity will be conserved, enhanced and increased. The quality of its buildings and spaces will be conserved and improved. New development will be well designed, minimise environmental harm and reduce the effects of climate change.

The economy will be thriving and competitive, and deliver more and better jobs. Supported by investment and infrastructure, building on existing strengths whilst diversifying and realising the potential of the rural and visitor economy.

The health and wellbeing of the county's people and communities will be safeguarded by continually improving education and skills, and ensuring access to decent, affordable homes, services and facilities is secured.

Strategic Objectives

- 3.2** The Strategic Objectives of the plan have been developed to deliver the vision for Northumberland. They clearly relate to the issues identified within the spatial portrait of the County. Given the importance of Northumberland's environment, the overarching aim is to deliver sustainable economic growth whilst conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment. The strategic objectives are interlinked and not shown in priority order.

Figure 3.1 Strategic Objectives in Northumberland



Strategic objectives and outcomes

- 3.3** Each strategic objective can be explained in terms of the outcomes expected. These are explained below and identify what Northumberland will be like in 2036.

Economy and jobs

- 3.4** The Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015-2020) sets out a vision for growing Northumberland's economy to 2020. It seeks to deliver a prosperous Northumberland founded on quality local jobs and connected communities. The Local Plan provides positive planning policies to enable development to take place, encourage economic vitality and to allow Northumberland residents to be able to access facilities, education and training and retail choice in convenient locations across the County.

- 3.5** Key outcomes:

- Land and buildings will have been identified in sustainable locations to meet demand, allow for choice and to provide for an additional 15,000 new jobs between 2016 and 2036;
- Close cooperation with partners across administrative boundaries will ensure that locations in the south east and central areas of Northumberland will be seen regionally, as attractive alternatives to the Tyneside market and that the north of the County can benefit from the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh employment markets. Likewise the western areas of Northumberland can benefit from the economic opportunities arising from its connection with Cumbria;
- Existing employment sites will have been protected relative to need and demand;
- A diverse range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary will have been provided and will have supported growth of strategically important sectors;
- High quality office accommodation will have been developed at Northumberland Business Park and in the other Main Towns;
- Northumberland's market towns will be key drivers of economic activity;
- The creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries in the County's historic market towns, rural business developments, and more home run enterprises will have been realised;
- The tourism sector will have grown in a sustainable way benefiting rural areas, communities and visitors. The potential for Northumberland's environmental and historic assets to make a substantial contribution to the County's economy will have been realised, while ensuring their full protection, and where possible their enhancement. Tourist and visitor facilities will be located in appropriate places;
- The economic benefits of the extraction of minerals will have been given the appropriate weight in the determination of planning applications;
- A range of accessible opportunities for adults and young people to support them into education, employment and training will have been provided;

- Businesses will have benefited from the economic opportunities presented by an ageing population to offer goods and services to older people as consumers as well as using their skills and experience as part of the County's workforce;
- Forest management and processing and agriculture industries will have been supported and their economic growth facilitated;
- Appropriate retail, leisure and employment opportunities will have been located within town centres, with the existing vitality and viability protected;
- Transport and communications networks and the County's gateways to international growth – the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and links to Newcastle International Airport and the East Coast Main Line - will have been supported and improved.

Homes

3.6 To assist in the delivery of economic growth the Local Plan makes provision for at least 17,700 new homes in Northumberland over the plan period 2016-2036. It sets out a plan for an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, to address both market and affordable housing needs. It will ensure a continuous supply of housing over the plan period that is aligned to job growth and infrastructure capacity.

3.7 Key outcomes:

- The focus of new housing development will have been in the Main Towns and Service Centres across Northumberland. Areas of new homes will have been planned and designed to respect local character and safeguard the significance of heritage assets;
- In smaller settlements a level of housing development that is proportionate to the size of the settlement, and appropriate to its character, will have been delivered, meeting local needs wherever possible;
- Significant progress will have been made towards addressing the shortfall in affordable homes across Northumberland;
- Housing will have been provided by a variety of methods including, by community land trusts and through self-build;
- A range of housing tenures, types, prices and sizes will have been provided in order to help meet local needs for different groups of the population, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
- Housing design and location will allow older people and vulnerable groups to live as independent lives as possible;
- Lifetime neighbourhoods will have been developed in locations which have the greatest potential to support older people to remain independent as they age;
- New sites will have been provided for any additional identified need for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Environment

3.8 Northumberland's natural, water and historic environment is distinctive and valued. It is a significant asset to both people that live in the County and beyond. It makes an important contribution to the character, quality of life, and sense of place and the economy of Northumberland. It is a valuable resource for communities, businesses and visitors.

3.9 Key outcomes:

- Northumberland's natural, water, historic and built environments will continue to be experienced and valued by residents and visitors, within the scope that is possible to maintain their full conservation and allow for their enhancement where appropriate;
- Wherever possible, development will have been directed away from our most sensitive and valuable natural assets, habitats and species, towards less sensitive locations;
- New development will have contributed to the delivery of priorities set out by the Local Nature Partnerships or other strategic biodiversity initiatives;
- Northumberland's Green Infrastructure networks will have been maintained and enhanced;
- The landscape character of Northumberland will have been protected and enhanced;
- Tranquillity and Northumberland's dark skies will have been protected;
- Development will have been avoided that would have an adverse impact on water quality;
- Satisfactory provision will have been made as part of development proposals for water supply and sewerage infrastructure to ensure sustainable water management and drainage;
- The character of the historic settlements will have been conserved and enhanced;
- Features and areas of historical and cultural value will have been conserved and where possible enhanced in accordance with their significance, including the sensitive re-use of historical buildings and a reduction in buildings at risk;
- Northumberland's distinctive heritage will have been used as the inspiration for new developments;
- Archaeological sites and features will have been protected in accordance with their significance;
- The Outstanding Universal Value of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site will have been protected;
- Opportunities will have been taken to better reveal the significance of heritage assets;
- The design and management of public spaces is suitable for all.

Connections

3.10 The required level of growth across Northumberland will increase demand on local infrastructure services and facilities. The Local Plan ensures that infrastructure requirements are appropriately planned, secured and implemented to ensure the timely delivery of development proposals.

3.11 Key outcomes:

- Provision of essential infrastructure e.g. transport, water supply, sewerage, energy, flood alleviation, telecommunication, education, and health and social care, will have been coordinated and positively planned for;
- There will have been effective partnership working between the Council, other infrastructure providers and developers to facilitate infrastructure delivery and opportunities for the co-location and multi-functional use of existing and new infrastructure services, amenities and facilities;
- Existing infrastructure services and facilities will have been protected, unless they are no longer needed or there is alternative provision elsewhere;
- The provision of new or improved infrastructure, where need is demonstrated, will have been positively supported, provided there is no detrimental environmental impact;
- A range of viable, efficient sustainable transport alternatives will have been provided to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle, although it is recognised that in rural areas reliance on the private car will remain extensive;
- Improvements to transport and communications infrastructure and the County's gateways to international growth – Dualling of the A1 and A69, the East Coast Main Line and Tyne Valley Railways, the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, passenger services on the Northumberland Line, and links to Newcastle International Airport will have been supported;
- County highways and Highways England roads will have been improved to incorporate safe, comfortable and convenient standards for cycling, facilitating increased travel by cycle and reduced car dependence.

Community health and wellbeing

3.12 Key outcomes:

- Accessible local services and community facilities will have been protected and where possible, enhanced;
- State of the art hospitals will provide improved healthcare;
- Communities will have access to high quality education facilities;
- Neighbourhood Plans will have been produced by communities that wish to promote particular development in their areas, adding detail to the overarching policies within the Local Plan;
- Strategic growth will have been matched by the delivery of improved and new community infrastructure.

Climate change

3.13 Tackling climate change is a key role for the planning system by contributing to the delivery of the most sustainable development and by shaping communities that are resilient to the unavoidable consequences of a changing climate. Climate change poses a long term threat to preserving the special landscapes and cultural heritage of the County.

3.14 Key outcomes:

- A sustainable pattern of development will have been delivered, including the focusing of the provision of housing, employment, education, healthcare and retail particularly within Main Towns and Service Centres resulting in a reduction in the need to travel;
- The supply of energy and heat from renewable and low carbon sources will have contributed towards meeting national targets and helped to address fuel poverty;
- New development will have incorporated sustainable building practices and where possible will have contributed to improving the existing building stock;
- High energy efficiency will have been incorporated into new development;
- New developments will have been effectively assessed for the risk of flooding and if appropriate will have been sited elsewhere.

Resources

3.15 Northumberland is rich in energy resources. Its minerals provide the raw materials that are necessary to deliver the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs. There is also potential for further renewable energy development, however it is recognised that there is a limit to the scale of wind energy development that can be accommodated in Northumberland without significantly adversely affecting the special landscapes and cultural heritage of the County, or impacting on residential amenity. Alternatives to wind energy are increasing in prominence as technology advances.

3.16 The efficient use of land and buildings is important when planning for housing and economic development. Sustainable design and construction seeks to create high quality developments that are cheaper to run, consume less energy and minimise their environmental impact.

3.17 Key outcomes:

- Finite mineral resources across the County have not been unnecessarily sterilised and land has been made available to meet defined needs;
- Minerals extraction, transport and processing does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on natural resources (air, water, soil), the natural and historic environment or local communities;
- There has been no net loss of biodiversity, with the creation of new priority habitats and green infrastructure in minerals reclamation schemes;
- The minerals industry remains an important source of employment;

- Northumberland continues to have a well-established and spatially distributed network of waste management facilities, with sufficient capacity. Recycling and recovery rates are maximised;
- The need to generate energy is effectively balanced with the need to protect Northumberland's environment and communities from any significant adverse impacts associated with it;
- Efficient use is made of land and existing buildings, with priority given to the development of previously developed land, wherever possible.

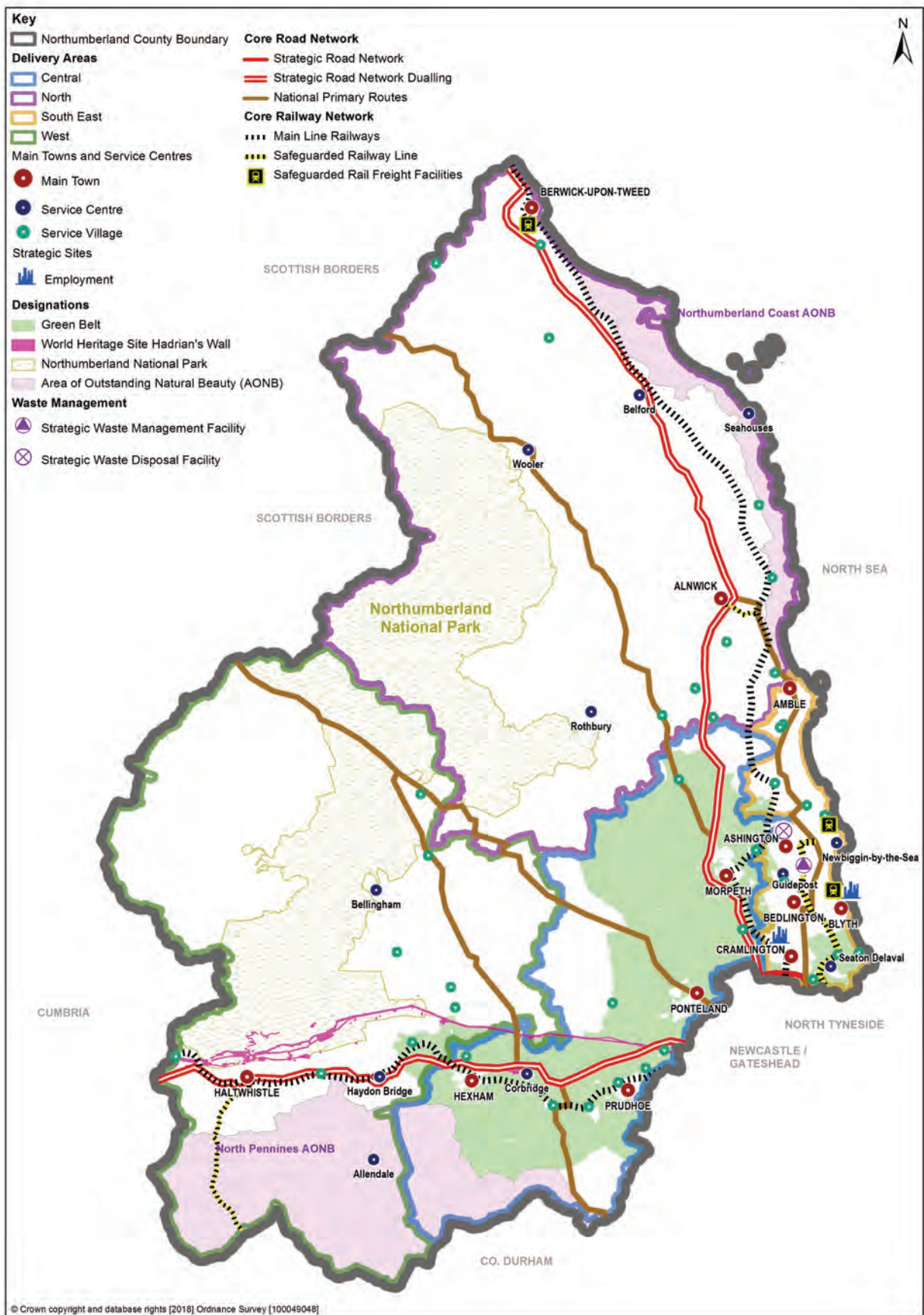
Quality of place

3.18 The way in which we experience the places that we live, work and spend our leisure time in has a huge impact on our sense of well being. Northumberland has many very high quality places and landscapes that are valued greatly by communities and visitors.

3.19 Key outcomes:

- The design of new development will have been of a high quality for its purpose;
- The individual character of the places in Northumberland will have been maintained and improved;
- New development in Northumberland will have provided attractive living and working environments that are valued by their communities;
- Development will have improved the accessibility to services for communities;
- Public spaces will be welcoming and easy to move around;
- The people of Northumberland will continue to be proud to live in the County.

Figure 3.2 Northumberland Key Diagram



4. Delivering the Vision for Northumberland

Development strategy

- 4.1** The Local Plan needs to define the level and distribution of development and include specific policies that are required to deliver the spatial vision. The vision and objectives highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing the physical and cultural identity of Northumberland, but also the need to allow development to grow and diversify the economy, and provide homes and facilities which will help to safeguard the wellbeing of local communities.

Northumberland - Predicted futures

- 4.2** A significant challenge to the delivery of the vision of the Local Plan is the profile and dynamics of the Northumberland population. While the overall population is forecast to increase from 316,287 in 2016, to 321,878 in 2036, or by a modest 1.8%, this increase is dependant upon migration as natural change (the difference between births and deaths) would result in a loss of circa 21,000 people.
- 4.3** Projections show that there is likely to be a significant accelerating ageing of Northumberland's population. Between 2016 and 2036 there is projected to be a significant increase in those over 65:
- 43.8% increase in the over 65 age group (from 74,494 to 107,105);
 - 100% increase in the over 80 age group (from 18,856 to 37,737); and
 - 161.1% increase in the 90+ age group (from 3,322 to 8,673).
- 4.4** Alongside this, the core working age population of 20 to 64 year olds is projected to decrease from 176,529 to 154,148, a reduction of 22,381 (-12.7%). The impact of this is a significantly shrinking labour force, with fewer working age people within the County. It is true that people are forecast to work until they are older in the future, in part as a result in changes to the state pension age, and the older demographic make a significant contribution to the Northumberland. Even so, if this projection is realised it has the potential to have a significant negative impact on the long term prosperity of Northumberland and the diversity and wellbeing of communities across the County.
- 4.5** In order to understand how to deliver a more suitable future for the County through the Local Plan Strategy the Council commissioned independent analysis⁽⁶⁾ to seek to ascertain how economic growth may further impact on the county's future population, and the jobs and housing needed to sustain communities. The alternative growth scenario options are summarised in Table 4.1.

6 Establishing housing and economic growth options for Northumberland, PBA, 2018

Table 4.1 Housing and Job Growth Scenarios for Northumberland 2016-2036 (April 2018)

Growth scenario	Additional workplace jobs 2014-2036 ⁽¹⁾	Annual average workplace jobs 2014-2036	Net additional dwellings 2016-2036 ⁽²⁾	Annual average dwellings 2016-2036
Baseline 'business as usual' official projections	6,900	314 pa	10,186	509 pa
Local housing need standard method - average household growth 2016-2026 rolled forward	N/A	N/A	14,340	717 pa
Intermediate jobs-led	12,100	550 pa	15,533	777 pa
Ambitious jobs-led	16,500	750 pa	17,708	885 pa

1. The workplace job numbers are calculated from 2014 as this is the basedate for the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)
2. The number of dwellings are calculated from 2014-2036 but the numbers presented take into account completions over the two years 2014-2016.

Business as usual

- 4.6** The latest evidence indicates that 'business as usual' growth, in accordance with population increases set out above would see the number of 'workforce jobs' located in Northumberland increase by 6,900, or **314 per annum** over the period 2014-36. Full-time equivalent jobs would grow by 5000, or **227 per annum**.
- 4.7** While the business as usual scenario would deliver economic growth, there is very little slack in Northumberland's labour market. This is because while the number of jobs is projected to increase, the labour force is expected to shrink by **3,900 people** over this period, primarily as a result of the aging population. The labour force within the 16-64 age group is forecast to reduce by 12,200 people. While this scenario sees a reduction in unemployment, with additional jobs in Northumberland largely being filled by reducing out-commuting, the overall employment rate is forecast to fall.
- 4.8** Over the same period 2014-36, the number of households in the County is projected to increase by 11,813. Assuming that the proportion of empty properties (vacant and second homes) remains the same over this period, the number of additional dwellings required to meet the increase in population and support the number of jobs is 12,624. Taking into account housing developments that have been delivered between 2014-16, a residual 10,186 dwellings or **509 per annum** would therefore be required over the plan period 2016-36.

A development strategy aligned with the latest population projections has the potential to have a number of adverse effects:

- Reduction in the level of wealth created and retained within the County;
- Further pressure imposed on spending in the public sector on social care and welfare;
- Impact of reduced local expenditure - reducing income to local businesses and threatening further job losses;
- The appetite for innovation and creativity may be suppressed - with those who have marketable or transferable skills moving elsewhere to find employment or further, higher education or training;
- The County as a whole could become less competitive in increasingly competitive markets;
- There is a risk of lower aspirations in education and learning;
- The reduction in wealth creation may be accompanied by reduced investment in the buildings and spaces which make up the fabric of the County's towns and villages, together with its natural and historic environments.
- This in turn may impact on the ability to attract new investment in the new economy; most notably digital, media, telecommunications and software;
- A lack of choice in the housing market across the County, inhibiting the ability of existing household to secure the homes they need, and attract a working age population.

A strategy for sustainable growth across Northumberland

4.9 The chosen development strategy for Northumberland is predicated on an ambition to support the delivery of additional, better paid and higher skilled jobs in the County, and to provide homes to meet not only the needs of the resident population, but also to accommodate the needs of people moving into Northumberland, who create and fulfil jobs across the County.

4.10 The **Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015-2020)** aims for 10,000 additional jobs to 2031. Its vision by 2020 is for a "prosperous Northumberland founded on quality jobs and connected communities". The Strategy sees key growth priorities being supported through an 'Investment Zone' in South East and Central Northumberland, where spending will help deliver industrial development and better connectivity with the Tyneside market; and a 'Growth Network' beyond this centred linking market towns. In particular the Economic Strategy emphasises the economic benefits of:

- The reopening of the 'Northumberland Line' railway, linking Ashington and Blyth with Tyneside, for passengers (promotion and assessments ongoing);
- The construction of the Morpeth Northern Bypass (now completed) and the dualling of stretches of the A1 north of Morpeth and north of Alnwick (soon to commence); and
- The potential for economic growth around the Blyth Estuary (ongoing).

- 4.11 The North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)** proposes to deliver more and better jobs. It aims to support the economy to deliver 100,000 growth in the number of jobs in North East England by 2024, an uplift of 11% on 2014, and ensure 60% of the new jobs delivered are ‘better’ jobs – offering higher skilled, more productive and better quality opportunities to more people in the area. The SEP identifies programmes, initiatives and activities what will help achieve these aims. Within Northumberland it singles out business park opportunities in Cramlington and activities around the Port of Blyth, as well as the Enterprise Zones that have been designated around Blyth Estuary (‘Round 1’ EZs), and in parts of Ashington, Berwick and Morpeth, (‘Round 2’ EZs). These locations can therefore be regarded as important regionally, as well as at a Northumberland level. More generally, the SEP promotes the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (‘IAMP’), close to the Sunderland Nissan plant, as the key North-East-wide focus for new investment, benefitting the whole region.
- 4.12** In addition to the SEP, new powers and funding will be available through the North of Tyne deal, administered through a directly elected Mayor. **The North of Tyne Devolution Deal** supports economic growth across all three constituent authorities (Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland), but recognises that Northumberland’s offer is different to that of its partners. While there is an element of competition across the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area as a whole, and within the North of Tyne authorities, many of the County’s strengths are in different economic sectors and complementary to those elsewhere. Within Northumberland, the deal will focus on helping rural communities as the rural economy and tourism sectors in particular are strengths of Northumberland. Northumberland is part of the less formal **Borderlands** arrangement with south of Scotland authorities and Cumbria. This aims to unlock cross-border growth potential in the types of tourism and small scale activities that can flourish in more remote rural areas, thanks to advances in technology.
- 4.13 The Local Plan proposes to support the delivery of an appropriate proportion of the jobs uplift identified in the SEP.** While the baseline scenario indicates that jobs in Northumberland will increase over the period 2014-36, the County’s share of the jobs across the LEP area is forecast to continue to decrease, as job growth will continue across the wider LEP area.
- 4.14** By continually improving education and skills in the County, opportunities for residents to access better jobs, start their own business, and earn a decent wage will be enhanced. A better skilled workforce will also be more attractive for potential investors in the County, who will generate more and better jobs, which will assist in retaining those of working age.
- 4.15** While there is significant scope for the County’s economically active population to start businesses and take up jobs, in order to deliver on its objectives, there is also a need to attract people of a working age, with the appropriate skills to Northumberland.
- 4.16 The preferred growth scenario is the ambitious growth scenario** which underpins the Local Plan, assumes that additional growth will occur in a number of sectors, both those which historically Northumberland has been strong, but also sectors which can be anticipated to grow as a result investments and local policies and initiatives.

- 4.17** The ‘ambitious’ growth scenario would see the number of:
- ‘workplace jobs’ in Northumberland increase by 16,500, or 750 per annum over the period 2014-36, and
 - Full-time equivalent jobs grow by 12,500, or 570 per annum.
- 4.18** In this scenario, the labour force would increase by 6,500 people. While a modest reduction in the size of the workforce aged 16-64 forecast is still forecast, the reduction is markedly less than in the business as usual scenario. This scenario also reduces the decline in the employment rate across the County.
- 4.19** In this scenario, over the period 2014-36, the total population is forecast to increase by 22,500, and the number of households by 18,852. Assuming that the proportion of empty properties (vacant and second homes) remains the same over this period, the number of dwellings required to meet the increase in population and support the number of jobs is 20,146. Taking into account developments that have been delivered in 2014-16, 17,708 dwellings or 885 per annum would be required over the plan period 2016-36 to support the level of jobs growth forecast.

Delivering the preferred growth scenario

- 4.20** The ambitious growth scenario identifies job growth of 16,500 over the period 2014-36. Of these, the majority are forecast to come forward in sectors which are not B-Class land uses such as offices, general industrial uses, storage and distribution. Many of these will be service sector jobs, such as accommodation and food services, retail, professional services, health and education. Therefore these jobs do not need to be allocated dedicated employment land to support them. The remaining jobs are forecast to come forward requiring B-Class land uses, that will require allocated employment land.
- 4.21** The Local Plan will support economic growth by providing a portfolio of high quality employment sites in the right locations which are attractive to the market, support the County’s town centres and include policies to support job growth across the County, including in rural areas, in accordance with the Borderlands Initiative.
- 4.22** The vision proposes that the Local Plan will build on existing strengths whilst diversifying and realising the potential of the rural and visitor economy. In order to deliver the economic objectives, the Local Plan will:
- Provide a portfolio of high quality employment sites in the right locations which are attractive to the market;
 - Support locations in the South East and Central Delivery Areas as cost effective alternatives to the Tyneside market for industrial development;
 - Provide a diverse range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary to provide for growth of the strategically important sectors – low carbon and environmental goods, energy generation, and offshore engineering;
 - Support improvements to the County’s gateways to international growth – The Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and links to Newcastle International Airport;
 - Support the development of high quality office accommodation at Northumberland Business Park, and key locations in the other Main Towns;

- Enable the development and diversification of the rural economy, and deliver the Borderlands Initiative, by supporting the creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries in the County's market towns, rural service centres and larger villages, and through more home run enterprises;
- Support the growth and diversification of the visitor economy, including the development of tourism facilities and accommodation;
- Support improvements to town centres;
- Support initiatives to improve skills levels in Northumberland's resident workforce;
- Support the objectives of partners including those within the North of Tyne, and North East Local Enterprise Partnership, to support business investment.

4.23 In order to maximise the potential to deliver the above, infrastructure improvements are essential. The Plan will:

- Support improvements to the East Coast Main Line, the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Rail Line, and improvements to the strategic highways including the dualling of the A1;
- Support the rollout of effective superfast broadband across the County, and improvements to mobile communications.

4.24 In order to meet the needs of Northumberland's resident population, including the diverse needs of an ageing population, and to provide attractive housing options for those moving into the County to boost the economy, the plan proposes to extend choice in the housing market. As such, the plan proposes to deliver housing at a level above the minimum 'Local Housing Need' identified by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The plan proposes to deliver the right types of homes in the right places. This includes homes which will enable residents to get onto the housing ladder, affordable homes to rent, and specialist housing including extra care housing. The plan proposes the delivery of 17,700 dwellings. This housing will also help:

- Increase the numbers of skilled workers moving into the County, and reduce the number moving away, stemming the decrease in the size of the working age population;
- To rebalance and re-energise the resident population, and strengthen the labour force;
- Maintain and enhance vitality, and the provision of local services in the County's rural communities.

4.25 In order to ensure that the range of needs of residents and workers are met the development strategy supports the town and service centres in their retail offer and as community hubs and the provision of supporting community infrastructure such as health, education, leisure and sport, and community meeting places.

Spatial strategy

- 4.26** One of the ways in which the Local Plan can contribute to a more sustainable future for Northumberland is by providing a spatial guide to the location of development. Whilst the more urban south east Northumberland, together with the County's market towns are where most development is focussed, the plan also encourages development in rural areas to support the rural economy, maintain the vitality and sustainability of communities and the retention of services, and to enable local people to live in the communities in which they grew up.
- 4.27** The plan directs 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. New development is focussed in those locations which benefit from facilities and/or have the greatest potential to support new facilities and services, as a result of their location and / or a result of the size of the population within them. Such an approach will allow for limited resources to be allocated in an effective way that maximises access to facilities and services.
- 4.28** The Green Belt in Northumberland, which forms part of the wider Tyne & Wear Green Belt has an important role in helping to direct development to the most sustainable locations. The defined Green Belt wraps around the Tyneside conurbation and extends to the west of Hexham, while a Green Belt extension⁽⁷⁾, the details of which are defined in this plan extends north of Morpeth. National policy attaches great importance to Green Belts to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 4.29** 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. However, in order to support economic growth, it is proposed that limited changes in past Green Belt boundaries are required in a number of locations.
- 4.30** The spatial strategy also gives recognition to the fact that the Green Belt extends across wide swathes of the Northumberland countryside, which also happens to be the most easily reached from the conurbation. This area contains many hundreds of farming and other small rural businesses. It is vital to ensure that the Green Belt status does not unduly stifle rural economic development or the local visitor economy. So, within the bounds of Green Belt restriction, the Plan seeks to ensure that the Green Belt rural economy can thrive just as other countryside areas and aims to add value to Green Belt areas as a resource for visitors.

7 The general extent of the Green Belt extension was established in Policy S5 of the Northumberland Structure Plan (2005).

Settlement hierarchy

- 4.31** A hierarchy of settlements for development is set out, which gives priority to identified Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages. There is no specific definition of a Main Town, Service Centre or Service Village. The role of settlements within these categories varies across the County. In rural parts of Northumberland, a smaller settlement may provide the focus for a spread of communities, offering key services for a wide catchment area, and be the clear primary centre for different levels of services. In more urban parts of the County in particular, where settlements are closer together, the roles of different settlements are less easily defined. The catchment of some larger settlements in the south east of Northumberland may be more limited as residents utilise a range of services across different settlements. However, many of Northumberland’s key employment areas are located in the south east, with employees being drawn from further afield including from outside the County. The pull of the Tyneside conurbation is more significant in the south east, both for work and accessing higher level services.
- 4.32** The Local Plan directs larger scale development to Main Towns which offer the greatest range of services including schools, healthcare facilities, leisure facilities, shops and employment opportunities. Service Centres also have a number of key services for their communities and surrounding areas, but the range and number is generally more limited than the Main Towns, so the level of development directed towards them is also at a lower level.
- 4.33** Service Villages generally have a school or a shop, and population of a size considered likely to maintain the viability of such services into the future. They have a reasonable level of public transport to enable residents to access some higher level services without the reliance upon private transport. A settlement’s status is not reliant upon one specific criterion, and may be influenced by its close proximity to other settlements.

Table 4.2 Settlement hierarchy

Main Towns
Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington/Bedlington Station, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland, Prudhoe
Service Centres
Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guidepost/Stakeford, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses/North Sunderland, Seaton Delaval, Wooler
Service Villages
Acomb, Barrasford, Bardon Mill/Henshaw/Redburn, Broomhill/Togston, Chollerford/Humshaugh, Choppington, Ellington, Embleton, Felton, Giltsland, Hadston/South Broomhill/Red Row, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Longframlington, Longhorsley, Longhoughton, Lowick, Lynemouth, New Hartley, Newbrough/Fourstones, Norham, Otterburn, Ovingham, Pegswood, Riding Mill/Broomhaugh, Scremerston, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, Seghill, Shilbottle, Stamfordham, Stannington, Stocksfield/Broomley, Swarland, Wark on Tyne, Warkworth, West Woodburn, Widdrington Station, Wylam

Settlement boundaries

- 4.34** In order to enable the Local Plan to better control the location of development, settlement boundaries are proposed. While criteria based policies will also be used, it is considered that settlement boundaries will provide a higher degree of certainty to communities regarding future development. They will help to protect the countryside from ad hoc development encroachment, prevent the merger of settlements, maintain the character and form of settlements, and protect the settings of historic and ecological assets. All settlements which benefit from settlement boundaries in the current development plan documents, are proposed to retain their boundaries, albeit that, in some instances, they may be adjusted due to more recent development or other changes that have taken place.
- 4.35** The plan defines settlement boundaries for all Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages unless local communities, through the neighbourhood planning process, are defining boundaries or have specifically chosen not to. Settlement boundaries are defined on the policies map.
- 4.36** In all of the Main Towns, Service Centres, and Service Villages, settlement boundaries are defined in order to support a level of housing and economic growth over the plan period which is considered appropriate to its size, role and function. In some settlements, housing allocations are proposed to support the delivery of a level of new dwellings appropriate to their role. In these instances, the boundaries direct development to the most suitable and sustainable locations, to protect the countryside from ad hoc incursion.
- 4.37** Given that a significant level of residential development is already committed across the County, in a number of settlements boundaries are proposed to allow only for the commitments to come forward. In these areas of high development pressure, boundaries represent a degree of policy of constraint.
- 4.38** In areas where there is particular development pressure, most notably along the A1, A69, and A697 corridors, the north Northumberland coast, and just beyond the boundaries of the Green Belt, settlement boundaries are also proposed for a number of smaller settlements. Given the limited services that these settlements contain, or have easy access to, it is not considered appropriate to direct development to them, and to apply a policy of constraint to protect the countryside and character of these villages.
- 4.39** In order to support sustainable development in settlements without boundaries, development within or immediately adjacent to the built up form will be supported if it is an appropriate size and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.
- 4.40** In the open countryside, development will be restricted through a criteria based approach. The open countryside is defined as:
- Land beyond settlement boundaries, where they are defined on the policies map,
 - Land not within, or immediately adjacent to the built up form of settlements where limits are not defined.

- 4.41** The above approach will support economic growth, provide the right homes in the right places, and protect the character of Northumberland's towns and villages and its valued countryside.

Policy STP 1

Spatial strategy

To deliver sustainable development which enhances the vitality of communities across Northumberland, supports economic growth, and which respects the County's unique environment assets:

- a. The Main Towns of: Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington/Bedlington Station, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe will be the main focus for employment, housing, retail and services;
- b. The Service Centres of Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guidepost/Stakeford, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler will accommodate employment, housing and services that maintains and strengthens their roles;
- c. Rural areas will become more sustainable, with development and investment in Service Villages and clusters of smaller settlements supported, which contributes to social and economic vitality and the retention of key local services;
- d. Development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the policies map;
- e. Sustainable development within the built up form, or immediately adjacent to other settlements without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported if it is of an appropriate scale and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement;
- f. Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
 - i. Is directly related to the needs of primary activity in agriculture, forestry, other land based industries, rural businesses, or the sustainable diversification of such activities;
 - ii. Supports the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing business;
 - iii. Supports a newly forming business which requires a location in a rural setting;
 - iv. Supports or adds to the range of sustainable visitor attractions and facilities appropriate to the character of the area;
 - v. Reuses redundant or disused buildings and leads to an enhancement of to the immediate setting; and/ or
 - vi. Is a house, the architecture of which is innovative and of the highest standard, it significantly enhances its immediate setting, and is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Sustainable development

- 4.42** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the Local Plan seeks to encourage sustainable development through growing the economy, supporting healthy and vibrant communities and contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, water and historic environment of Northumberland.
- 4.43** The presumption in favour of sustainable development will not apply when the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposal⁽⁸⁾, or when any adverse impacts of development would significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. It is also important to note that paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being determined.
- 4.44** The NPPF requires Local Plans to provide clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally. The policies in the Local Plan set out how the Council will apply the presumption. Policy STP 2 explains how the presumption will be applied overall and STP 3 identifies a number of sustainable development principles that development proposals will be expected to adhere to.

Policy STP 2

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

1. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.
2. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Northumberland Local Plan, and policies in 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, and those which have passed independent examination, will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

⁸ The policies referred to are those in the NPPF relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within a National Park (or the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland; aged or veteran trees; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in the NPPF); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

3. Where there are no policies relevant to the application, or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:
 - a. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
 - b. Specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy STP 3

Sustainable development

In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- a. Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- b. Provide a type and mix of housing to meet local housing need, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
- c. Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- d. Contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland's natural, historic, water and built environment assets;
- e. Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
- f. Contribute to net gains for biodiversity and establish a coherent and resilient ecological network;
- g. Prevent or minimise waste and make prudent and effective use of Northumberland's available finite and renewable resources, including water, minerals, soil, land and buildings, particularly through the re-use of brownfield sites;
- h. Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;
- i. Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;

- j. Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;
- k. Maximise energy efficiency and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources including, but not limited to decentralised energy supply systems;
- l. Be located in areas which are least vulnerable to climatic impacts such as risk from all sources of flooding and rising sea levels; and
- m. Mitigate anticipated impacts, including those from climate change, on the historic and natural environment, including landscape, biodiversity, ecosystems and water resources. If mitigation is not appropriate or suitable, then development should be sited elsewhere.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

- 4.45** Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the environment, society and the economy both at a global and local level. Spatial planning has an important role to play in influencing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change through influencing the location and design of development. This seeks to assist in meeting the UK's requirement under the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (from the 1990 baseline) by 2050. Local planning authorities are also importantly bound by the legal duty in Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) to ensure that, taken as a whole, local plan policies contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
- 4.46** Policy STP 4 provides principles for how the local plan and development proposals should contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. There are policies throughout the plan that provide more detail on the policy position and how individual proposals should respond to these principles.

Policy STP 4

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

1. Development proposals should contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to meeting targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. The Local Plan will support climate change mitigation through:
 - a. Focusing development in locations that reduces the need to travel for both people and goods and encourages sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport and the layout and pattern of development encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
 - b. Supporting the development of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy;
 - c. Supporting and encouraging building design that reduces energy consumption and demand on water resources;

- d. Supporting the re-use of existing buildings;
 - e. Requiring the use of sustainable drainage systems to minimise and control surface water run-off;
 - f. Supporting waste minimisation, the sustainable management of waste and the collection of gas from landfill for energy generation;
 - g. Safeguarding infrastructure for sustainable transport, including railheads and wharves to allow the transport of people and goods by rail;
 - h. Supporting multifunctional green infrastructure, which can help species adapt to climate change through preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats, provide carbon storage, reduce heating of the urban environment, manage flooding and provide environments that encourage walking and cycling; and
 - i. Protecting peat habitats, an important carbon sink.
3. The Local Plan will support climate change adaptation through:
- a. Incorporating design features in developments to ensure that they provide resilience to climate change;
 - b. Locating development to take account of flood risk and coastal change and requiring the use of sustainable drainage systems; and
 - c. Supporting multifunctional green infrastructure, which can help species adapt to climate change through preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats, providing carbon storage, reducing heating of the urban environment, managing flooding and providing environments that encourage walking and cycling.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.47** Evidence shows that health and wellbeing, and quality of life is linked to a range of social, economic and environmental factors. Development, through its location and design, has the ability to positively influence health and wellbeing. It can improve access to community facilities, healthy housing, healthcare facilities, local employment opportunities, open space, healthy food, and encourage active lifestyles.
- 4.48** The provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities is an important factor. Areas of open space that are valued by residents provide an important community function, and can make a significant contribution to quality of life. Allotments and private gardens, in addition to providing green space in an area, also provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, contribute to physical and mental wellbeing by providing a place for people to interact, and to produce healthy locally grown food.
- 4.49** With an increasing proportion of older people in the County, and communities with diverse requirements, it is essential to make sure that the needs of all are met in a fair and inclusive way. Development can contribute to ensuring that residents have equal access to opportunities in employment, housing and health, and that

opportunities for social interaction are provided in a safe environment. By ensuring an equitable distribution of services and amenities, the plan can help reduce health inequalities and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

- 4.50** The Council will continue to work with partners, including health and social care providers, to deliver and protect appropriate health facilities in sustainable, accessible locations, promote and seek to enhance access to quality open space and food, and control the location of eating outlets that contribute to a poor diet.
- 4.51** Wellbeing, health and equality are cross-cutting themes, and Policy STP 5 is therefore one of the many policies throughout the plan that address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. These include the distribution of development and policies in relation to community facilities, design, housing, sustainable transport and open space.

Policy STP 5

Health and Wellbeing

1. Development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported.
2. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
 - a. are safe, inclusive and attractive, and easily accessible on foot or by bicycle where feasible;
 - b. have a strong sense of place which encourages community cohesion and social interaction;
 - c. provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities;
 - d. are designed to promote and facilitate physical activity, and healthy lifestyles;
 - e. prevent negative impacts on residential amenity;
 - f. protect, and alleviate risk to people and the environment, support wider public safety, and do not have a negative impact upon ground instability, ground and water contamination, vibration, air and noise pollution.
3. All development proposals of 30 or more houses will require Health Impact Assessments to be submitted as part of the application process.
4. The Council will:
 - a. work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to improve the health and well-being of Northumberland's residents;
 - b. protect existing facilities, where possible, and support the provision of new or improved health facilities;
 - c. promote allotments and gardens for exercise, recreation and for healthy locally produced food;
 - d. promote improvements and seek to enhance accessibility to good quality green spaces and green infrastructure corridors;

- e. control the location of unhealthy eating outlets, and promote healthy options;
- f. seek contributions towards new or enhanced facilities from developers where development results in a shortfall or worsening of provision.

Green Infrastructure

4.52 Green infrastructure is a term used to promote the consideration of green spaces, as part of an integrated network of green areas and strips, connecting natural habitats, human activities and town and countryside and not as isolated blocks of land providing for particular sport, play or other recreational needs. Being close to where people live, high quality multi-use local green spaces can play a key role in providing alternative settings for sport and healthy activities for communities, including new participants who are less likely to use traditional sports centres.

4.53 Bringing about a meaningful green infrastructure across Northumberland is a central aspiration of this plan. The approach recognises the importance of the quality of the environment and availability of green space on people's health and well-being and seeks to realise the multiple benefits of such space for healthy activities, and reconnect people and nature.

4.54 Across Northumberland and reaching into adjoining authority areas, 'green infrastructure' is a network of multi-functional, natural and managed open space⁽⁹⁾ which:

- Helps sustainable planning - by addressing global climate change and providing wide ranging ecosystem services, such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions through carbon storage or reduced car use from walking and cycling provision;
- Supports networks which link habitats and biodiversity sites - preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats;
- Protects and enhances natural, historic and built assets and links between them;
- Connects people with their environment and heritage - creating a sense of place and identity or helping people develop an attachment to their environment;
- Improves public health locally - making high quality green space available to everyone;
- Helps people to develop new skills and responsibilities through environmental and heritage volunteering;
- Provides opportunities for growing healthy food; Helps to get more children learning outdoors - removing barriers and increasing schools' abilities to teach outdoors;

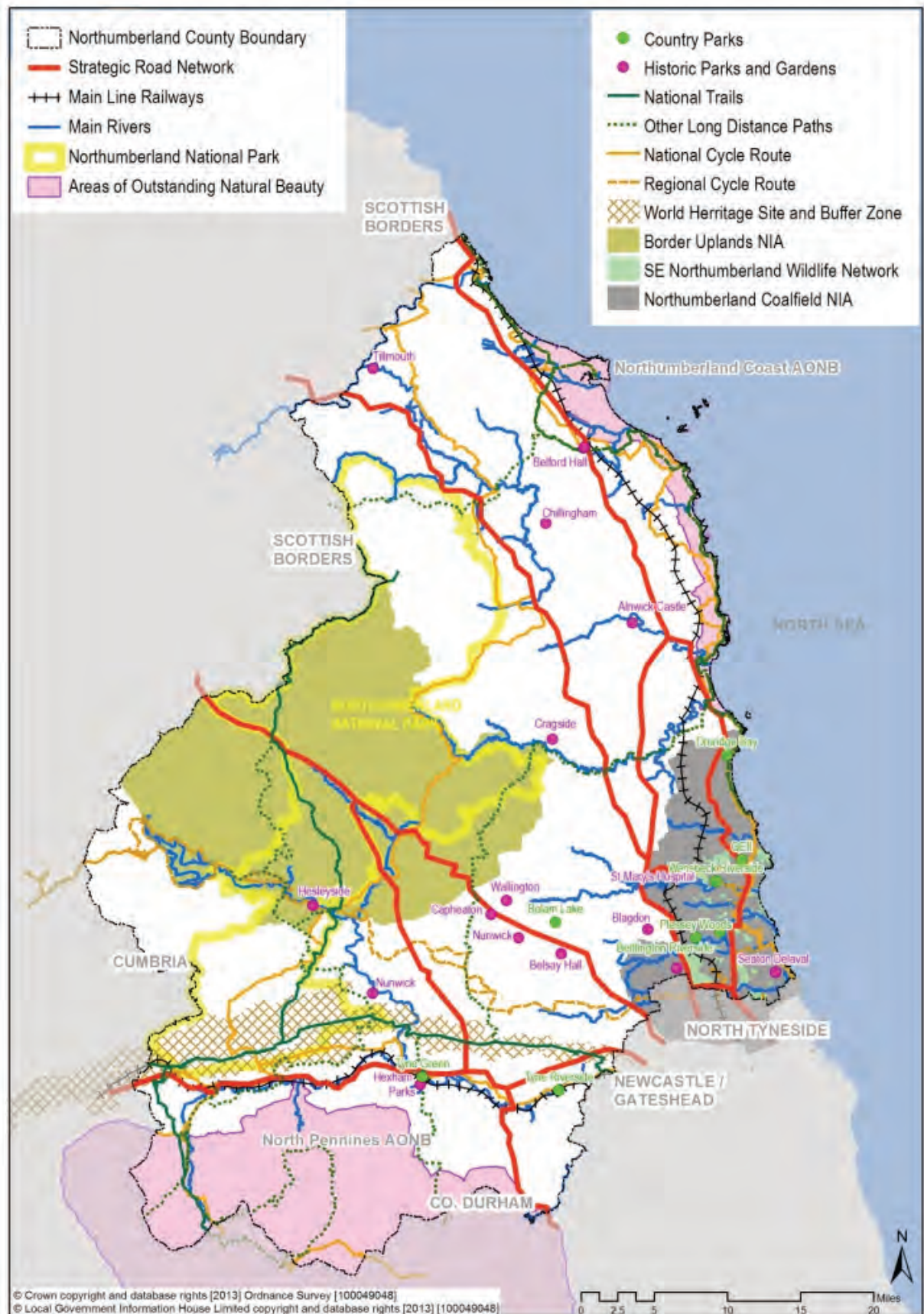
9 The NPPF defines open space as including all open space of public value, including areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

- Balances the potential of green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism with the protection of vulnerable environmental and heritage assets; and
- Enables Local Green Space designation - empowering communities to protect local environments that are important to them.

Strategic Green Infrastructure

- 4.55** Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure includes the international and national natural designations, key moorlands, forests, river valleys and many other features. It also includes what may be termed the blue infrastructure – i.e. rivers, ponds and other water bodies including the sea itself. Together, these represent an overlying network of assets, some linear, some covering wide areas, which bring a range of quality of life benefits for local communities. However, the network can never be regarded as complete as long as there are disconnects between natural, green areas and as long as there are opportunities to add to the network. Green infrastructure does not stop at local authority boundaries. The Council continues to work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that strategic green infrastructure assets are aligned.
- 4.56** Maintaining and enhancing well-planned green infrastructure networks, by creating new assets and links or new functions for existing green spaces, will significantly improve the existing attraction of Northumberland as a place in which to live and work, visit or invest. However, for successful integration and multi-functionality, green infrastructure needs to be planned at all levels or scales. The Local Plan identifies 'strategic green infrastructure' that sets the strategic framework for developing 'local green infrastructure' such as village greens / Local Green Spaces, bridleways, street trees or amenity planting. Local green infrastructure may be identified through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.57** As well as scale differences between strategic and local green infrastructure it is important to recognise differences in the scope of green infrastructure provision between rural and urban areas. Northumberland's more urban south east has significant local green assets but a lack of overall connectivity, while in the rural areas an apparent abundance of open countryside can mask an actual lack of multi-functionality and public access. Figure 4.1 shows Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure network.

Figure 4.1 Strategic green infrastructure and corridors



Local Green Space

4.58 The concept of local communities being able to protect green areas of particular local significance was first introduced into the planning system through the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012 which created the specific designation of 'Local Green Space'. The intention of this designation is to provide locally important green areas a level of protection consistent with that given to the Green Belt thereby preventing development other than in very special circumstances.

4.59 Local Green Space may only be designated through policy created in a neighbourhood plan or a local plan, and it must be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. Designation of land as Local Green Space will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. National policy describes the circumstance in which it may be appropriate to use this designation which is limited to where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

4.60 Many of the Town and Parish Councils across Northumberland involved in preparing neighbourhood plans have investigated the opportunities presented by this potential designation. All of the neighbourhood plans made to date have designated at least one area of Local Green Space. Whilst the opportunity to create Local Green Space through the Local Plan exists, the County Council considers that, given the need to show that any such designation is demonstrably special to a local community, the most appropriate mechanism for designating Local Green Space is through a neighbourhood plan. It is therefore not proposed to designate any Local Green Space in the Northumberland Local Plan. The County Council will continue to advise and support Town and Parish Councils across Northumberland who are preparing neighbourhood plans and will support the designation of Local Green Space through those plans where it meets the tests established in national policy.

Policy STP 6

Green infrastructure

1. In assessing development proposals, the contribution of strategic and local green infrastructure to the health and well-being of Northumberland's communities and visitors, as well as its economy, will be recognised, promoted and enhanced.
2. Development proposals should seek to protect and, where practical and viable, improve and extend Northumberland's green infrastructure. When determining planning applications, consideration will be given to how development proposals:
 - a. Protect and enhance strategic and/or local green infrastructure assets, provide high quality links between existing assets including links with green infrastructure networks in adjacent authority areas and/or provide additional uses for multi-functionality;
 - b. Secure improved access to green infrastructure, including rights of way, the network of cycle routes and high quality provision for the widest possible range of ages, abilities and interests where this would not have an unjustified adverse effect on biodiversity and environmental and heritage assets;
 - c. Secure net-gains for biodiversity through the protection, creation and enhancement of coherent ecological networks;
 - d. Improve the potential green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism without unjustified adverse effects on environmental and heritage assets;
 - e. Create a sense of place by fully integrating high quality, green infrastructure into the plan or proposal design to reflect locally distinctive character having regard to rural and urban character, open space, connective corridors and links with the wider countryside;
 - f. Integrate green infrastructure with sustainable drainage and the management of flood risk;
 - g. Consider the management and maintenance of new and existing green infrastructure throughout and beyond the plan period;
 - h. Provide opportunities for the protection and enhancement of local environments that are important to affected communities; and
 - i. Provide opportunities for growing healthy food, including through community schemes.

Sustainable design

- 4.61** Design is an integral aspect of sustainable development and is therefore fundamental to the successful delivery of the Local Plan. The Draft NPPF attaches great importance to achieving high quality, inclusive design through the planning process and recognises that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals (paragraph 127).
- 4.62** The Council recognises that new development which responds to the principles of good design has the potential to maintain, enhance and enrich existing environments, in addition to creating vibrant new places. Good quality design will help deliver against a number of objectives of the Local Plan, particularly in relation to Quality of Place.
- 4.63** Northumberland is rich in natural beauty and built heritage. It is important that the character of Northumberland, the essence of what makes it unique and distinctive, is not only conserved but enhanced and enriched by new development. Innovative design which reflects changing architectural styles and construction techniques can make a valuable contribution towards this objective. Appropriate consideration should be given by developers, designers and assessors to the reality that the buildings and places created now will become part of Northumberland's heritage and legacy in the future.
- 4.64** Delivering high quality design is not only about creating an aesthetically pleasing built environment. The social, environmental and economic benefits of good design are well documented. A well-designed building or place can contribute to the economic vitality of a community and can reduce the costs of operating and maintenance. General wellbeing of individuals and communities can also be enhanced by high quality inclusive spaces and buildings which encourage healthier lifestyles, welcome diversity and improve general amenity. Incorporating natural features within the design of developments, allows daily exposure to nature with its health benefits and addresses health inequalities. In terms of the environment, good design can contribute towards lessening and mitigating the effects of climate change, promoting efficient use of finite natural resources and enhancing the natural environment.
- 4.65** Buildings and spaces should therefore function properly, both individually but also to create integrated places and local areas. Incremental additions or changes to Northumberland through new development must be designed to respond to the existing and anticipated physical, social, economic and environmental context, both locally and in terms the wider perspective.
- 4.66** Policy STP 7 sets out design principles which must underpin the design of any new proposed development in Northumberland. The design principles seek to ensure that development contributes positively to the people, places and natural environment that define Northumberland.
- 4.67** A supplementary planning document, the Northumberland Design Guide, will be prepared which will include more guidance on the requirements of the design principles and other design-related policies within the Local Plan. The design policies and the Northumberland Design Guide will together set out local design expectations for the County.

Policy STP 7

Design principles

1. In determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.
2. Proposals will be supported where design:
 - a. Contributes to, or enhances, the positive aspects of local character and distinctiveness;
 - b. Creates or contributes to a strong sense of place and integrates the built form of the development with the site overall, and the wider local area;
 - c. Incorporates high quality aesthetics, materials and detailing;
 - d. Respects and enhances the natural and built environment, including heritage assets, ecological assets and any significant views or landscape setting;
 - e. Ensures that buildings and spaces are functional and adaptable for future uses;
 - f. Facilitates an inclusive, user-friendly and legible environment;
 - g. Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life;
 - h. Supports positive social interaction, and a safe and secure environment;
 - i. Protects general amenity;
 - j. Incorporates, where possible, green infrastructure, and opportunities to support wildlife, and contribute to net gains for biodiversity;
 - k. Makes provision for efficient use of resources;
 - l. Responds to the climatic conditions of the location;
 - m. Mitigates climate change, and is adaptable to a changing climate; and
 - n. Ensures the longevity of the buildings and spaces, and secures the social, economic and environmental benefits over the lifetime of the development.
3. Particular support will be given to proposals which demonstrate outstanding or innovative design, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

Green Belt in Northumberland

- 4.68** The Green Belt in Northumberland forms part of a wider area of Green Belt designation surrounding the conurbation of Tyne and Wear. Since the original designation in 1963⁽¹⁰⁾, the Green Belt in Northumberland has undergone a number of modifications, with areas being added to as well as removed from the Green Belt. The Northumberland Local Plan identifies the full extent of the revised Green Belt in Northumberland, as defined on the Policies Map.

10 Northumberland County Development Plan: Amendment No. 16 (1963) North Tyneside Green Belt

- 4.69** The revised Green Belt consolidates the boundaries defined in the Local Plans and Core Strategies of the former Tynedale and Wansbeck districts, and the borough of Blyth Valley, and identifies the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt around Morpeth.
- 4.70** Whilst a large portion of the Green Belt was defined through the former district Local Plans, an area surrounding Morpeth has remained largely undefined. The extension to the Green Belt around Morpeth was identified in Regional Planning Guidance in 2002 and subsequently, Policy S5 of the revised Northumberland Structure Plan (2005) defined the general extent. A small part of the general extent was defined in detail in the former Wansbeck District Local Plan in 2007. As a result of the cancellation of the RSS in 2013, the saved Structure Plan Policy S5 was retained by the Government to enable the Northumberland Local Plan to define the remaining detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension.
- 4.71** A methodology and assessment for defining the outer boundary and inset boundaries are set out in the Green Belt Review.
- 4.72** Although housing growth in the plan has been accommodated outwith the Green Belt, the Council has identified exceptional circumstances to revise the Green Belt boundaries in order to deliver an identified need for employment land in sustainable locations. At the time of the publication of this version of the Local Plan the Council is consulting on options for the reorganisation of schools in the west of Northumberland, which includes schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships. The outcomes of this consultation are not expected until summer 2018. Following the conclusion of this process, there may be considered to be exceptional circumstances to revise Green Belt boundaries for educational purposes.
- 4.73** The boundaries of the previously defined Green Belt have also been amended in some areas to improve coherence across the designation.
- 4.74** The following changes have been made:
- Detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth have been defined;
 - The following settlements, previously washed over, have been inset from the Green Belt to improve coherence across the wider Green Belt and allow development within sustainable locations:
 - Broomhaugh
 - Fourstones
 - Mickley Square
 - Newbrough
 - Wall
 - Whittonstall
 - Minor amendments of the Green Belt boundary have been made to address anomalies, enabling boundaries to better align more accurately to physical edges;
 - Land has been released during the plan period from the Green Belt in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe for employment purposes.

The purpose of the Green Belt

- 4.75** Nationally, the Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt. The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and that a key attribute of land in the Green Belt is its openness.
- 4.76** The NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt⁽¹¹⁾, which are to:
- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.77** The main function of the Green Belt in Northumberland is to prevent the unrestricted sprawl of the Tyne and Wear conurbation by keeping land permanently open. The protection of the Green Belt is a key element of the Plan's development strategy. In line with the purposes of the Green Belt identified in the NPPF, the strategic approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland is set out in Policy STP 8.

Policy STP 8

Strategic approach to the Green Belt

The revised Green Belt within Northumberland, as defined on the Policies map, will be protected to:

- a. Check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear;
- b. Safeguard the countryside from encroachment;
- c. Prevent the merging of: Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport, or Cramlington; and North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth;
- d. Preserve the setting and special character of Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth;
- e. Prevent Morpeth merging with neighbouring settlements;
- f. Prevent the merger of rural settlements; and
- g. Assist in the regeneration of settlements in South East Northumberland beyond the Green Belt.

11 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraph 80

Development in the Green Belt

- 4.78** In plan making and the determination of planning applications, the overarching principle is that the Green Belt should preserve openness and reflect the purposes of the designation. The NPPF restricts the types of development that may be permitted in the Green Belt and includes a presumption against permitting inappropriate development within the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances.
- 4.79** Whilst the Plan seeks to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt, certain forms of development are not considered inappropriate. It is recognised that development can be positive, for instance where it improves access to the countryside or supports outdoor sport and recreation. Proposals that support a positive use in the Green Belt will be encouraged, providing they comply with the restrictions on Green Belt development set out in national planning policy.
- 4.80** Policy STP 9 sets out how Green Belt in Northumberland will be protected and enhanced in accordance with national planning policy.

Policy STP 9**Development in the Green Belt**

In assessing development proposals within the Green Belt:

- a. Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be permitted unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt;
- b. Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will normally be permitted;
- c. Development which improves access to the countryside; provides opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; enhances landscapes and biodiversity; or improves damaged and derelict land will be encouraged and supported, provided it does not conflict with national policy in relation to Green Belt.

Safeguarded land

- 4.81** Green Belt boundaries are intended to endure over the longer term, therefore when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, it is important to draw new boundaries having regard to potential development needs arising beyond the plan period. Green Belt boundaries have been reviewed to meet employment land requirements for the Plan period. In order avoid the need for another review of the Green Belt at the end of the Plan period safeguarded has been identified to meet the long-term employment requirements of Morpeth and Ponteland. The monitoring framework will identify indicators to help determine when a Plan review may be required.

Policy STP 10

Safeguarded land

Safeguarded land that may be required to meet long term employment needs, beyond the period of the Local Plan, is identified on the Policies Map. Safeguarded land is not allocated for development within the plan period.

When assessing development proposals on or affecting safeguarded land, the following principles will apply:

- a. Safeguarded land is not allocated for development during the plan period. Permanent development of safeguarded land will only be permitted following the adoption of a replacement Local Plan which proposes such development; and
- b. Any development which would prejudice the future comprehensive development of safeguarded land will not be permitted.

5. Economic Development

Introduction

5.1 The Development Strategy, earlier in this document, set out an ambitious growth scenario for employment that will deliver on the Local Plan's main 'Economy and Jobs' and other objectives that aim to benefit economic well-being. The Development Strategy goes on to list what the Local Plan can do to deliver on this, by way of:

- A **locational strategy** that will recognise the importance to Northumberland's economy of each of its component parts - the urban core areas of SE Northumberland; the key strategic sites, the main 'gateways' (such as ports and the Airport), the rural economy, the County's town centres and its very wide range of visitor destinations.
- A **strategy for businesses and the workforce** aimed at increasing the quality of jobs, the skills of the workforce and working in partnerships to support business investment.

A planning strategy for the Northumberland economy

5.2 The spatial strategy for planning economic development and regeneration will reflect the overarching spatial strategy set out in the Plan. It will:

- Continue to focus economic development opportunities in Northumberland's **towns**, in their centres, their dedicated employment areas and through other opportunities.
- Promote the main **communication lines and hubs** - notably the N-S and E-W corridors, the Port of Blyth and Newcastle International Airport.
- Maximise opportunities for the **rural economy** in the context of local constraints, including through supporting digital communications, farm diversification and the reuse of redundant buildings.
- Continue to build on the economy of **SE Northumberland**, strengthening links with the conurbation and promoting specialised economic opportunities, including at Blyth estuary.
- Seeking to provide more widely for latent **visitor and tourism** demand through efforts to increase opportunities across the year and across the County.

Policy ECN 1

Planning strategy for the economy

1. The Plan will deliver economic growth, while safeguarding the environment and community well-being, so helping to deliver the objectives of the Council's economic strategy.
2. Development proposals will:
 - a. Seek to deliver sufficient employment land and premises of the necessary range and quality and in the right locations to meet requirements;
 - b. Support town centres as locations for employment and business;
 - c. Assist the regeneration of existing areas through employment-related measures;
 - d. Support rural enterprise;
 - e. Support and promote tourism and the visitor economy;
 - f. Facilitate the training and upskilling of the workforce.

5.3 Policies to deliver the above strategy are set out in the remainder of this chapter, as follows:

- **Strategic and special economic needs** (Policy ECN 2 on Blyth Estuary, ECN 3 on West Hartford, ECN 4 on Enterprise Zones and ECN 5 on large windfall sites);
- **General employment land** (Policy ECN 6 allocating employment areas and necessary new sites, ECN 7 on B-Class employment areas, ECN 8 on flexible employment uses, ECN 9 on additional flexibility and ECN 10 on Loss or depletion of employment land);
- **Employment uses not requiring land allocation** (Policy ECN 11 on sites in built-up areas and home working);
- **Rural enterprise** (Policy ECN 12 setting the strategy for rural growth, ECN 13 on rural employment needs and ECN 14 on rural diversification);
- **Tourism and Visitor development** (Policy ECN 15 on facilities and accommodation and ECN 16 on the approach in Green Belt areas);
- **Town Centres** (Policy ECN 17 on a hierarchy of centres, ECN 18 defining the centres, ECN 19 on the role of centres, ECN 20 on proposals outside centres, ECN 21 on high street vitality and ECN 22 on hot food takeaways).

Forecasting employment growth

- 5.4** Long-term employment forecasts inform how jobs are likely to grow under different scenarios. These forecasts provide the basis for objectively assessing how much land needs to be made available for economic development through the plan period. This is looked at in the context of what proportion of the forecast jobs growth can be accommodated and/or facilitated in other ways, such as those noted the bullet points above.
- 5.5** In revising the evidence base for this Local Plan, an employment sector based approach has been applied to arrive at alternative forecast scenarios for jobs growth. This has involved examining which sectors are successful in Northumberland and applying a series of assumptions about the speed at which these sectors could grow and what this could mean for jobs.
- 5.6** The results identify what would happen if the Northumberland economy followed existing trends - i.e. without any assumptions on extra growth in Northumberland's successful sectors over and above past performance and current trends or a slowing of decline in less successful sectors. This 'business as usual' scenario reflects existing policy but assumes no significant changes in economic or planning policies. In the 'business as usual scenario', the net growth in jobs averaged across all sectors, across Northumberland and over time, would be around 300 per annum.
- 5.7** Growth scenarios, known as 'intermediate' and 'ambitious' were developed, based on a more optimistic outlook for key sectors, building in policy ambitions from the Strategic Economic Plan but modifying these to reflect the Northumberland situation, including evidence on successfully growing sectors, as well as the County's own economic strategy. The more ambitious of the two scenarios would see growth of an average of around +750 jobs a year, a growth rate almost 2½ times higher than the laissez-faire approach. The intermediate scenario would see around 550 extra jobs per year on average.
- 5.8** These higher scenarios, as well as applying a more optimistic set of projections to Northumberland's successful employment sectors, also assume that the Council will be able to keep more of its own residents working in the County, (rather than commuting out). This, in turn will place a greater reliance on the quality of the new jobs and associated training and upskilling.
- 5.9** Translating the potential jobs into additional land is not straightforward. It has been estimated that as little as 10 percent of all the new jobs created, under the 'business as usual' scenario, would rely on dedicated land allocations in industrial estates and business parks. The growth sectors that have informed the scenario reflect recent reality and the recent policy background - jobs in such things as tourism and local services. Even the most ambitious scenario would only see 30 percent of new jobs relying on land allocated on employment sites, with the intermediate scenario resulting in 25 percent of the new jobs relying on available land. These higher figures reflect the greater success (under these scenarios) of sectors such as the energy and port-related industries that involve land take.
- 5.10** These forecasts are a robust foundation for identifying the objectively assessed economic development needs and they were undertaken independently from the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan.

The chosen scenario and land implications

- 5.11** The Plan's strategy is the highest 'ambitious growth' scenario, out of the three put forward. This means that some 15,000 jobs will be sought during the new plan period running from 2016 to 2036, around 8,700 more than the 'business as usual' situation.
- 5.12** The translation of future jobs growth into employment land needs, however, suggests that, even with this higher scenario placing greater reliance on certain land hungry sectors, the modelled requirement for additional available land over the plan period remains low. According to the model, only about 40 hectares of employment land will be needed over the whole plan period.
- 5.13** It is encouraging to understand that most of the jobs generated in the County do not require the effort and expense of bringing dedicated employment land and buildings on stream. However, the Council regards the provision of a wide range of land and premises across the County, tailored for a wide variety of potential users, as a vital part of its strategy for the County's economy, as explained in the next section.

Measuring and meeting the need for employment land

- 5.14** The Council regards it as key to its strategy to allocate and reserve considerably more land for future employment needs than the basic forecasts would suggest - even for the chosen higher growth scenario. In deciding the amount, range and distribution of land, the factors that influence the Council's approach include the following:
- It is not desirable or prudent to plan for exhaustion of the supply of land by the end of the plan period: growth could be greater than current projections over a twenty year span; for example, a major inward investment could result in unexpected uptakes of land;
 - There are strategic employment needs that require their own, dedicated land supply;
 - More generally, it is important to maintain a wide portfolio of sites and premises at all times and in all areas. The spread-out geography of the County necessitates extra flexibility in the choice of land: the land needs of a firm looking to a particular town will not necessarily be satisfactorily met simply because land is available in the wider area or the next nearest town;
 - The development of employment land does not always result in an increase in jobs, such as when a factory expands onto adjacent land simply to accommodate additional automation;
 - Assumptions must be built in to cover unexpected losses from the employment land portfolio: even where the land supply situation would suggest retaining land in employment use, there have sometimes proven to be other sound planning reasons for land to be lost to non-employment uses;
 - Conversely, serviced sites in some areas may not have been taken up but deallocating them would be inappropriate, since they would not be suitable for other uses, being in the heart of serviced employment areas;

- Some specific cases require a policy intervention. For example, the closure of the former Alcan smelter site is still relatively recent, affecting a relatively remote area that strongly relied on the plant for its employment. The creation of a new employment area ('Lynefield Park') on the site is therefore still regarded as exceptional. While the new site is intended for general employment, the employee density is likely to be low. For these reasons it is concluded that reductions in available land elsewhere to compensate for this new injection of available land would be neither reasonable nor desirable;
- As employment areas are developed, a proportion is developed for supporting uses such as roads, substations and public landscaping.

Considerations regarding the allocation of employment land

- 5.15** Notwithstanding the low modelled figure for employment land needs, the detailed evidence base has provided very strong advice and a steer on which areas of the County have experienced surpluses or shortages of suitable employment land. It found that, in terms of quantity, quality, suitability and marketing, there were shortages in towns to the west of Tyneside, and a possible oversupply in parts of SE Northumberland, for reasons relating to Green Belt constraints and industrial legacy (respectively).
- 5.16** From the evidence gathered, it has been possible to conclude which currently monitored employment areas should now be taken forward as employment designations and, therefore, within these, how much undeveloped (available) land remains.
- 5.17** Besides this, the evidence has guided the identification of additional land to meet key requirements in certain locations and/or for specialised needs.
- 5.18** In total, the portfolio of available employment land brought forward, through this Local Plan, in designated areas or separate allocations amounts to **409** hectares split between **203** hectares on strategic employment sites and **206** hectares of generally available employment land.

Allocating strategic employment sites

- 5.19** A vital element of the portfolio of employment land in Northumberland is land for large-scale, specialised and/or strategic purposes. There are three elements to this:
- The **Blyth Estuary** area, devoted to port logistics, energy generation, and more recently specialist research and advanced manufacturing - a significant proportion of the area (at Bates and East Sleekburn) has the advantages of Enterprise Zone status;
 - **West Hartford**, a prestige' site to meet the needs of businesses requiring a high quality environment, including those proposing a scale of development that could not easily or suitably be accommodated within existing employment areas.

- Three '**Round 2' Enterprise Zones** at Ramparts Business Park (Berwick), Fairmoor (Morpeth) and Ashwood Business Park (Ashington) which will complement other initiatives encouraging 'smart specialisation' - often small and medium enterprises contributing to growth sectors. All three are strategic locations in a Northumberland context.

Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area

5.20 The Blyth Estuary has historically been a focus for economic activity in South East Northumberland, including ship building, port logistics, energy generation, and more recently specialist research and manufacturing.

5.21 Based on numerous factors including the recent growth of these sectors nationally, the North East SEP highlights that the low carbon and renewables have the potential to deliver significant new investment and jobs. It identifies Blyth as an 'innovation hub' for this sectoral growth. This is supported by the Northumberland Economic Strategy. Specifically the area around the Blyth Estuary is considered to have a number of advantages which put it ahead of other areas targeting this economic activity:

- The offshore renewable energy cluster, located at the Port of Blyth, is the centre of innovation excellence for the development, testing and commercialisation of renewable technologies;
- The Port's existing deep water port facilities and access to marine engineering skills and training;
- Proximity to sites in the North Sea with potential sites for offshore wind energy production, being roughly equidistant from Dogger Bank and the Firth of Forth.

5.22 The appeal of Blyth Estuary is wider, attracting interest from other business related to offshore and subsea activity, including those in manufacturing, engineering, relevant service providers and ancillary facilities (such as on-shore convertor stations).

5.23 In addition, energy generation is a strategic sector to which the Blyth Estuary offers site characteristics which cannot be readily found elsewhere in the country. A large amount of land is for planned future investment in a new power station. Given the strategic nature of the location for energy generating uses, it may also be appropriate for related uses to be sited on unallocated land around the Blyth Estuary. However it is important to avoid uses in the close vicinity of the Port frontages that do not, in some way, need such a location.

5.24 The potential to attract investment around Blyth Estuary should be greatly helped by:

- **Enterprise Zone (EZ) status**, covering around sixteen and a half hectares across four sites (parts of East Sleekburn and Bates, as well as Wimbourne Quay, Commissioner's Quay and Dun Cow Quay) - 14ha of Enhanced Capital Allowance (applicable to energy and water efficient plant) and around 2½ha of Business Rate Discount.

- **'Local Development Orders'**, which cover a wider area - around 73 hectares straddling the estuary - at Bates Colliery and East Sleekburn - which automatically grant planning permission for certain types of industrial development, (to 2019).
- Proximity to the **Ashington Blyth and Tyne** freight railway line and its branches, with the potential for passenger services to be reintroduced.

5.25 The strategic policy approach must also recognise that the Blyth Estuary is a nationally designated ecological site.

5.26 The competitive advantages of the Blyth Estuary sites and their strategic importance in regional and Northumberland economic strategy for the attraction of inward investment in new economic sectors, indicate their distinction from the supply of general employment land. The likely low job densities and requirement for large sites within the targeted sectors also indicate the need for this substantial land allocation.

Policy ECN 2

Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area

1. Land at Blyth Estuary is allocated as a 'Strategic Employment Area' within which the following sectors within the B-Class industrial uses will be prioritised:
 - a. low carbon and related environmental goods and services;
 - b. offshore and subsea engineering;
 - c. renewable and low carbon energy generation sectors;
 - d. development which will support and strengthen the economic role of the Port of Blyth.
2. Other sectors will also be supported particularly if they can demonstrate a link with or reliance on proximity to the above sectors, especially if they have significant land requirements and/or require proximity to the Port.
3. Development proposals in the above categories will be permitted where:
 - a. the amenity and functioning of adjacent communities and other land uses are not significantly adversely affected;
 - b. there is no unacceptable adverse traffic impact on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure, unless it can be suitably mitigated; and
 - c. there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape, biodiversity, historic and built heritage and the water environment, including designated ecological and heritage assets and their settings.

West Hartford

- 5.27** The fact that the very large area north of the Blyth estuary is being earmarked for particular uses, still leaves the possibility that other large scale employment sectors will require a large site. Cramlington has a history of being seen as a strategic location for employment growth given its proximity to Tyneside, former new town status and modern layout.
- 5.28** As such, when the former Regional Spatial Strategy was prepared, the town was identified as the location for a large, 'prestige' employment site and West Hartford was assessed as being the most suitable location for this. It would have the role of meeting the needs of businesses requiring large sites in a high quality environment, on a scale that could not easily or suitably be accommodated within existing employment areas. This continues to be regarded as the priority for the site, although parts of the site could also be opened up for smaller scale employment uses seeking a very high quality setting that is nevertheless close to the Tyneside conurbation.
- 5.29** While considerable infrastructure investment has taken place, the land requires further remediation, as well as provisions for its better connection with the rest of the town, for example for pedestrians.
- 5.30** It will be important that a masterplan is prepared for the site to reflect the dual role, define the proportion of the site which will be available for prestige and general employment and ensure that development is of the highest quality.

Policy ECN 3

West Hartford Prestige Employment Area

1. Land at West Hartford, Cramlington is allocated as a 'Prestige Employment Area' within which the following will be prioritised:
 - a. Large scale, modern industry or offices, within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8, requiring a high quality of environment and which could not be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere on allocated employment land;
 - b. Smaller scale uses, particularly within Use Classes B1 (Business) that require to be located in a high quality landscaped setting.
2. Significant detailed proposals on the site will be taken forward once a masterplan has been agreed, which should:
 - a. Reflect the dual role of the site;
 - b. Define the proportion of the site which will be available for large scale and smaller scale employment;
 - c. Set out the form and means of achieving a suitable landscape structure, connections with the rest of the Cramlington and with existing public rights of way, non-motorised transport and other measures that will ensure that development is of the highest quality.

3. Development proposals in the above categories will be permitted where there are appropriate safeguards for the ecology, landscape and/or amenity, particularly in relation to:
 - a. The River Blyth corridor to the north;
 - b. Nearby housing to the south-east;
 - c. Habitats within or close to the site and any protected species; and
 - d. Nearby farms and farmland.

'Round 2' Enterprise Zones

- 5.31** Enterprise Zones are designated to encourage businesses to invest by putting in place infrastructure and enhancing their access to specific benefits, including discounted business rates or increased levels of capital allowance on investment in plant and machinery.
- 5.32** The 'Round 2' Enterprise Zone sites, designated in 2017 and spread across the North-East, were chosen for their potential to provide strategic locations where the scope for 'Smart Specialisation' industries, advanced manufacturing and research, technological / digital industries etc. could be realised. Three sites in Northumberland are covered:
- **Ramparts Business Park**, Berwick, covers over six hectares and will focus on improving the quality of manufacturing and industrial premises building on these existing economic strengths in Berwick. The site is seen as highly strategic, as it is mid-way between Newcastle and Edinburgh, close to the A1 and Berwick railway station.
 - **Fairmoor**, Morpeth, covers over nine hectares of greenfield land in northern Morpeth on the new junction between the A1 and the 'northern bypass' link to SE Northumberland. The intention is to support knowledge intensive growth, drawing on a highly-skilled labour pool, by developing an innovation park with new office, light industrial and incubator premises.
 - **Ashwood Business Park**, Ashington, covers over sixteen hectares at a strategic point on the SE Northumberland Spine Road (the A189). It will focus on pharmaceuticals and mixed manufacturing building past successes and the strengths shown in the local economy.

Policy ECN 4

'Round 2' Enterprise Zones

1. Within the defined sites with Enterprise Zone status at Ramparts Business Park in Berwick, Fairmoor north of Morpeth and Ashwood Business Park at Ashington, support and encouragement will be given to high quality employment in line with the overall strategy of these sites as follows:
 - a. At Ramparts, Berwick, high quality manufacturing in the B1, B2 and B8 use classes;
 - b. At Fairmoor, Morpeth, knowledge intensive office, light industrial and incubator premises, likely to fall within the B1 Use Class;
 - c. At Ashwood Business Park, Ashington, pharmaceuticals and mixed manufacturing, likely to be in the B1 or B2 Use Classes;
2. Other uses will permitted, especially where these support the preferred sectors;
3. Non employment uses will not be permitted unless they meet (2) above and there is a clear need for their location within the Enterprise Zone areas.

Windfall employment development

- 5.33** The Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area and West Hartford Business Park, as explained, will include the opportunity for large-scale inward investment opportunities in key sectors. However, some significant inward investment opportunities can be unforeseen and emerge quickly. When large firms plan to invest in a new location, their site requirements can be very particular and therefore the search is often national or wider. Similarly existing local or regional businesses may experience growth at greater rates than expected with no suitable allocated site available.
- 5.34** The windfall employment policy aims to address such circumstances by allowing for the accommodation of large-scale major economic development proposals with specific requirements that cannot be met by the existing land portfolio.
- 5.35** It is important to emphasise that this is an exceptions policy. Northumberland's existing employment land portfolio and key allocations must remain the focus for business development; greenfield land should not be developed unnecessarily; other objectives and policies in this Plan should not be compromised. Therefore, to be considered under this policy:
- The development must be 'large scale' and 'major', the definition of which may vary according to the context, (given the range of characteristics that exist across Northumberland's towns, employment areas and landscapes), but, at the very least, should comprise built floorspace totalling at least 10,000sqm and/or a site area of at least 2 hectares.

- The development should lead to significant job creation.
- The needs of the business must not be capable of being met on an existing employment site, both within Northumberland and, within reason, in adjoining authorities which make up the functional economic area of the NELEP.

5.36 Clearly the policy is not intended to include Green Belt areas, which could only be considered as a last resort after other areas and, applying Green Belt policies, it would need to be demonstrated unequivocally that there were 'very special' economic circumstances that would outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt, considering its purposes.

Policy ECN 5

Windfall employment development

Development proposals for large-scale major business development within the B use classes, either as a standalone proposal or an extension of an existing business, will be permitted on land, which is not designated as employment land, provided that it can be robustly demonstrated that:

- a. The development represents a major inward investment and would provide a significant number of new, permanent jobs; and
- b. The needs of the business cannot be reasonably met on allocated employment land within the North East Local Enterprise Partnership area; and
- c. The proposal would not compromise the viability or deliverability of sites allocated for development that are demonstrably deliverable within the Plan period; and
- d. The proposed scale, mass and form of the development would be appropriate to its setting and be capable of being integrated into the character of its surroundings, with suitable mitigation measures where necessary; and
- e. There would be no significant adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses; and
- f. The development can be satisfactorily accommodated, including through suitable mitigation measures, in accordance with other development plan policies regarding highways, public transport, utilities infrastructure, the historic and natural environment, and archaeology. Proposed mitigation measures will be considered in relation to the capacities of critical infrastructure, and timescales associated with investment works.

General employment land - Introduction

5.37 As explained earlier, forecasts, projections and additional considerations have led to the need for the Local Plan to provide for the supply of around **206** hectares of land for general employment development between 2016 and 2036 not including the strategic land at Blyth Estuary and at West Hartford but including the three 'Round 2' Enterprise Zones.

- 5.38** The April 2016 monitoring of available employment land found that about 218 hectares was available for general employment use, distributed widely across Northumberland. However evidence has shown that around half of this land should not remain in the portfolio of available sites for a range of reasons including lack of demand, poor quality or unserviced land, unsatisfactory accessibility, generally poor locations or imminent loss to other uses. This still leaves about 119 hectares of available land in the portfolio of sites monitored as available and still suitable at the base date of the Local Plan (2016).
- 5.39** The remainder of the 206 hectares is made up of around **13** hectares on sites that have been added to the portfolio since March 2016 - e.g. through made Neighbourhood Plans - and **74** hectares on additional sites being brought forward through this Local Plan in order to make up for local shortfalls, as explained below.

Foci for general employment land provision

- 5.40** It is important to stress that the places where this plan allocates land for future factories, warehouses and offices are the places where a large proportion of the County's population will be expected to find work. It follows that the bulk of this land should be in the places that are most accessible to most of the population - i.e. the **Main Towns of Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.**
- 5.41** The **Service Centres**, also have a role in providing suitable sites for more local businesses; but some of these are constrained by heritage or other protections, while others are not on as many public transports routes as nearby Main Towns. Therefore there is a necessity to be more selective in how and whether land is allocated for employment in these towns. In some cases, new or expanding businesses will need to locate in the nearest main town. (Neighbourhood Plans covering Service Centres may identify local shortfalls through evidence they collect and could, in due course, allocate suitable sites).
- 5.42** Finally, **Lynemouth**, where regeneration is being pursued following the closure of the aluminium smelter, forms an additional key location for general employment land.

Meeting the shortfall in general employment land - the Green Belt towns

- 5.43** Given the employment role of the Main Towns, it is vital that each of them has a sufficient supply and range of available land for general employment purposes to meet the needs of its own and its likely catchment population for the whole of the plan period, taking full account of patterns of travel to work. Balancing the evidence on demand in each town with the availability of viable and sustainable sites for general employment in the current portfolio, and taking into account what has already been allocated through neighbourhood plans, it is clear that the Main Towns that will see a shortfall within the plan period, unless additional sites are found are those that are constrained by the Green Belt.

- 5.44 Hexham** has been identified as needing 10 to 15 hectares of general employment land over and above the small amount that remains in the town's existing employment areas. This cannot be achieved within the existing Green Belt inset boundary. It is considered that the strategy of maintaining the role of each main town as a provider of general employment opportunities in an accessible location will not be fulfilled unless this order of land can be added to the portfolio of general employment land at Hexham. For this reason, it is considered that exceptional circumstances warrant the deletion of an area of Green Belt to the east of the Egger Plant, at Harwood Meadows, totalling about **10** hectares. This site has been assessed against other alternatives around the town and has been found to be the most sustainable option. The land will be made suitable for employment use through reclamation following the gradual extraction of sand and gravel from the site and through an improved access point onto Rotary Way.
- 5.45 Prudhoe** has been identified as needing up to 10 hectares of general employment land over and above that remaining in the town's existing employment areas. Again, this cannot be achieved within the existing Green Belt inset boundary. It is considered that the strategy of maintaining the role of each main town as a provider of general employment opportunities in an accessible location will not be fulfilled unless at least one contiguous area of new land is found. For this reason, it is considered that exceptional circumstances warrant the deletion of an area of Green Belt to the west of the former Hammerite plant. This site has been assessed against other alternatives around the town and has been found to be the most achievable sustainable option. The site will only contribute about about **2.5** hectares but would be difficult to extend further without harming the Green Belt and for reasons of topography and access. Opportunities will need to be sought to accommodate additional, small scale employment opportunities on unallocated land within the town, as opportunities become available.
- 5.46 Ponteland** has been identified as needing additional land for employment uses. An earlier employment land review suggested up to 5 hectares but the most recent evidence document considered demand as potentially being high, not least because of pressure for non employment uses on the centrally located existing employment area and the possible need for businesses to relocate. In addition, the presence of the Airport is creating considerable demand, albeit that much of this will be catered for within the Newcastle administrative area. Opportunities within Ponteland's existing Green Belt inset boundary do not exist. It is considered that the strategy of maintaining the role of each main town as a provider of general employment opportunities in an accessible location will not be fulfilled unless additional land is identified. For this reason, it is considered that exceptional circumstances warrant the extension of the Airport Green Belt inset to take in land around the area of partly reclaimed land opposite the Airport entrance at Prestwick Pit. Part of this area will be allocated. The remaining land within the new inset area will be safeguarded for employment use beyond the plan period. To complement this, and make up the 5 hectares needed, land at nearby Prestwick Park Business Park is also allocated and removed from Green Belt protection.
- 5.47 Morpeth** was identified in earlier evidence as needing 15 hectares of general employment land including the Fairmoor area that was already an allocation in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. The requirement will be met through land allocated in the made Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, plus the area to the south-east of the

new junction between the A197 and the A1 that has permission for an innovation centre and service area. It is, however, important to ensure that, in drawing the Green Belt inset boundaries, opportunities remain for a continued supply of land to follow the take-up of the allocated land. As such, around 5 hectares south of the A196, close to the existing Coopies Lane employment area, has been included in the inset and is safeguarded for future employment use.

Outstanding employment land issues - Non-Green Belt towns

5.48 For the remaining towns and larger village service centres, based on available evidence, other practical considerations and constraints, it can be concluded that no additional (new) employment land needs to be found over and above what is already part of employment land portfolios, (or allocated in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan). Aside from countywide quantitative considerations, the reasons for this conclusion can be summarised as follows:

- For South-East Northumberland, the close-knit nature of the settlement pattern means that, while there are detailed land-supply issues in certain areas, which may become more marked as the plan period progresses, surpluses in other locations should be able to address the imbalance, with the additional input of reclaimed and recycled land at Lynemouth providing a valuable backstop to the supply;
- For rural areas, other than the Green Belt towns, where shortfalls are being addressed above, the supply is generally sufficient, constraints enough of a barrier and solutions enough of a possibility for it not to be necessary to identify additional land areas for allocation at this time.

5.49 In spite of this the following more specific issues are identified:

- There are likely to be places where regeneration and possible targeted redevelopment of existing employment areas could benefit the land supply situation as time progresses. Such places might include the Blyth Business Park area, Double Row in Seaton Delaval and parts of Haltwhistle.
- Some more isolated centres could benefit from further new land coming forward in future years. In Rothbury, this will mean the plan supporting the future use of land adjoining the existing estate.
- Some places where, ideally, additional land should be identified are nevertheless too constrained for this to be a practicality. Solutions to this include:
 - allowing smaller sites to come forward more easily within the built-up area (as proposed for Prudhoe);
 - a neighbouring town possibly providing additional land (e.g. the highly constrained village of Corbridge looking to Hexham); or
 - opportunities being maximised for rural conversions to soak up some of the demand, (which could apply to several of the small, rural towns).

5.50 All of the above approaches can be realised through criteria based approaches involving:

- Small scale windfalls close to settlement edges and/or the edges of existing employment zones (although not where Green Belt would be affected) - see Policy ECN 11(a);
- A permissive approach to the conversion of rural premises for employment uses - see Policies ECN 12, 13, 14 and 15 on the Rural Economy and Green Belt;
- An approach to small scale employment uses locating on vacant or infill sites within built-up areas (see Policy ECN 11(b))

Policy ECN 6

General employment land - allocations and safeguarding

1. In order to support the strategic plan for economic development across Northumberland, 206 hectares of additional general employment land for new economic development is identified for general employment uses, in addition to strategic, specialised allocations at Blyth Estuary and West Hartford. In order to achieve this, as well as taking forward allocations within made Neighbourhood Plans, the Council will:
 - a. Allocate remaining available land in established employment areas defined in Policies ECN 7 and ECN 8, including the Enterprise Zone sites defined in Policy ECN 4, (unless already allocated through neighbourhood plans), and safeguard it for the particular ranges of employment uses defined in those policies; and
 - b. Allocate additional land to ensure a continued essential supply for towns constrained by the Green Belt, to be located within extensions to inset areas, as follows:
 - i. Hexham, Harwood Meadows, around 10 hectares
 - ii. Prudhoe, Eltringham, around 2.5 hectares
 - iii. Ponteland - Airport inset, Prestwick Park, around 2 hectares
 - iv. Ponteland - Airport inset, Prestwick Pit, around 3 hectares
2. Land is safeguarded for future employment use within Green Belt inset areas, as follows:
 - a. Morpeth, South of A196 at Coopies Way, around 4.5 hectares
 - b. Ponteland - Airport inset, Prestwick Pit, around 4 hectares

Appropriate ranges of employment uses in defined employment areas

5.51 The nature of many of the County's industrial estates, business parks and other monitored employment areas is such that there is a need to differentiate between:

- Key employment areas that should be limited to the main '**B-Class**' **employment uses** - essentially, manufacturing, research, warehousing and the category of office that would not require regular access by the public; and
- Employment areas where it would be beneficial for a wider range of employment uses to be allowed - referred to as **flexible employment uses**. These tend to include areas close to busy town centres and/or in smaller service centres and/or where take-up for B-Class uses has been slow.

5.52 The flexible employment uses are defined as land uses generating permanent on-site employment. Discretion will be used in deciding which employment generating uses would be appropriate in particular circumstances, but 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 - see Policy ECN 9);
- 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.

Policy ECN 7

Key general employment areas

Within the key general employment areas, as delineated on the Policies Map, which are protected for B1, B2 and B8 uses, development of non-B-Class employment generating activity will be permitted as exceptions only, if the development:

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

Policy ECN 8

Areas for flexible employment uses

General employment areas, where employment-generating uses wider than the B-Class uses will be permitted, are identified on the Policies Map. Within these areas, permission will be granted for uses generating permanent on-site employment, provided that:

- a. The proposed economic activity is compatible with existing businesses on the site and adjoining land uses;
- b. Where a Main Town Centre use is proposed, the employment site concerned is preferably close to a defined Town Centre, and the proposal meets relevant impact and sequential tests;
- c. The proposal would not generate a high level of continual public access and/or should not necessarily be located central to where people live.

Additional flexibility in general employment areas

5.53 Even with the flexible approach set out above, there are occasions when it will be appropriate to introduce additional flexibility as to what may or may not be permitted. For example, purpose built premises may have stood vacant over a long period, or dereliction and eyesores could put potential employers off moving into or staying in an area. There may be a need to pump prime the development of employment uses with a non-employment use or that use may serve a strong and sustainable purpose within the employment areas.

- 5.54** A main plank of the local plan is to improve the quality of employment in the County and provide better work opportunities for residents. A key part of this is to support, spatially, initiatives to improve skill levels in Northumberland's resident workforce in accordance with the Northumberland Skills Strategy; through for example the development of dedicated technical training centres on employment sites.

Policy ECN 9

Additional flexibility in general employment areas

Permission for uses other than B1, B2, B8 or other employment generating uses will be given if the proposal:

- a. Is ancillary to and will support the main employment-related use of the area; and/or
- b. Is for part of a larger site or premises and would facilitate the retention of the remainder in the specified employment use range; and/or
- c. Is on part of a larger development site and would facilitate the development of the remainder for employment uses in the specified range, which would otherwise be undeliverable; and/ or
- d. Would bring back into use premises that have stood vacant for at least five years; and/or
- e. Can be demonstrated to deliver significant community and economic benefits that override the need to maintain the site or premises within the specified range of employment uses; and/or
- f. Would help foster skills development and cannot be provided in an existing educational establishment or as ancillary to an employment use.

Addressing loss and depletion of employment land

- 5.55** The development of employment land for non-employment uses, such as housing or large scale retail or leisure use, can deplete the supply of land available and make it more challenging to deliver the plan's economic growth objectives. The loss of high quality, well connected sites could be especially detrimental.
- 5.56** Conversely anticipated market demand may not materialise long term for some sites and it is not beneficial to continue to protect such sites unnecessarily.
- 5.57** As such the portfolio of sites will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Council to assess if they are still likely to attract investment. The vacancy of existing premises within these same employment areas will also form part of this monitoring process. The Policy below therefore sets out criteria which would need to be addressed when development of allocated employment land for entirely non-employment uses is proposed. It focuses on the feasibility of demand across the plan period as well as recent market signals.

Policy ECN 10

Loss or depletion of employment land

Within the areas identified in Policies ECN2, ECN3, ECN6, ECN7 and ECN8, development for non-employment generating uses, such as housing, will be permitted where robust evidence can demonstrate all of the following:

- a. That re-development of the land or building for an employment generating use is no longer financially and/or technically viable, and there is no demonstrable market demand that it will be developed for an employment generating use over the plan period; and
- b. That sufficient land of a comparable quality and accessibility is available, and deliverable in the local market to provide for identified need; and
- c. That the development would not result in an unacceptable loss of active businesses and jobs; and
- d. That the development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing function of nearby existing businesses and/or the development of available employment land.

Other means of accommodating employment

- 5.58** Apart from land provision, the other important contributors to the economy of Northumberland include business activity occupying small sites and underused buildings around the built-up areas of towns and villages, rural enterprises away from the towns, activity at and around visitor destinations, and small businesses in people's homes.
- 5.59** Another major aspect of economic well-being - town centres - is the subject of a separate section later in this chapter.

Micro-businesses - opportunities in residential locations and in homes

- 5.60** Micro-businesses account for a high proportion of the County's work opportunities. Evidence shows that these occur throughout the County's built-up areas but also are spread surprisingly evenly across rural areas. Therefore it will be valuable for communities and the Northumberland economy if planning policy continues to support businesses being created within the areas where people live.
- 5.61** Within the built up areas of towns and villages, the Council has sought to avoid wide expanses of housing with no jobs or services, recognising, in line with national planning guidance, that mixed areas can work as long as 'bad neighbour uses' and parking issues can be successfully addressed and avoided. With some towns being constrained such that only limited dedicated employment land can be brought forward, the potential contribution of small, windfall employment sites and premises conversions can be valuable.

- 5.62** More than one third of all businesses in the North-East LEP area operate from home, and this may well rise with improving telecommunications . Such businesses are a feature of all parts of Northumberland but their relative significance is magnified in remote rural areas where, cumulatively, they are a lifeline to the local economy. As they are set-up and grow, these businesses may rely on the modest additions such as the conversion of outbuildings or small-scale new buildings within the dwelling curtilage. These will be supported through planning decisions, as far as the scale and the context allow.
- 5.63** In principle the plan also supports the provision of new build live/work units to provide purpose built accommodation for business and residential development within one building.

Policy ECN 11

Employment uses in built-up areas and home working

Businesses operated from within the built-up areas, including residential areas and people's homes, will be supported by:

- a. Allowing small-scale windfall employment sites adjoining existing employment areas, provided that they are not allocated for other uses;
- b. Permitting business proposals seeking to occupy small sites or buildings within residential or other built-up areas, provided that they are not allocated for other uses or are otherwise protected;
- c. Allowing for the creation of workspace for home-run businesses involving the conversion of part of a dwelling, its outbuildings, or the development of appropriately scaled new buildings within the dwelling curtilage;
- d. In appropriate locations, either separately or as an element of a larger housing scheme, supporting and permitting buildings designed as 'live-work' units - part living accommodation, part workspace.

Rural economy

- 5.64** Northumberland's geography is such that only a small proportion of the total County area (in its south-east corner) can be described as 'urban', with the remainder being 'rural'. If the market towns on which the rural County is centred are included, rural Northumberland contains around half of its population. However, once these main market towns and service centres are deducted from the total, it becomes clear that upwards of 50,000 people are distributed very sparsely across hundreds of small villages, hamlets and farmsteads. Analysis also shows that small businesses are widely spread across all areas of the County.

5.65 Rural Northumberland is highly significant in terms of how the economy of the County functions and how this affects the well-being of its communities. Every scenario that projects the likely number of new jobs coming forward in Northumberland during the Plan period, predicts that the vast majority of these jobs will be in the types of employment that do not require specific land allocations - i.e. including the types of jobs typically provided in the County's rural areas. Planning for a thriving rural economy therefore demands measures that allow the accommodation of these jobs within rural communities, on farms, in tourist areas and generally across the countryside.

The importance of Northumberland's rural areas to the regional economy

5.66 The contribution of rural Northumberland to the region's wellbeing has been recognised recently in the devolution deal for the North of Tyne area. This newly defined mayoral area is to become a national exemplar for rural growth and stewardship with Northumberland as the focus. In support of this a comprehensive North of Tyne Rural Productivity Plan is being developed. This will align with the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the wider north-east and the Borderlands initiative which links up rural initiatives on either side of the Scottish Border.

5.67 The North of Tyne deal proposes a partnership approach with a view to scaling up small rural businesses, where necessary removing barriers to this growth. Innovation will be fostered - e.g. looking at how digital technologies can enhance the interconnectedness of rural economies.

Policy ECN 12

A strategy for rural economic growth

The growth of the rural economy will be encouraged through:

- a. Fostering innovation, promoting digital technologies and enhancing the interconnectedness of rural economies; and
- b. Facilitating the formation, growth and up-scaling of small businesses in rural locations;
- c. Safeguarding the rural environment, rural communities and traditional rural businesses upon which the rural economy depends.

5.68 The traditional rural occupations do not employ anywhere near the numbers that they used to, although their contribution to the rural economy remains strong. Farm diversification into uses, such as specialist agricultural products, food and drink and leisure activities, are increasingly important for farms to remain viable. The equine industry also makes a significant contribution. However, there is a limit to the scale of these activities that can be absorbed into the landscape and by local

communities. Market towns provide the best and most accessible work opportunities within rural Northumberland. However even they are not easily accessible. So keeping the rural economy thriving presents one of the greatest challenges for this plan to address.

5.69 Rural areas need to generate adequate wealth to support local services and more sustainable communities - part of the Plan's vision. Encouraging young people to stay in Northumberland is problematic - but especially so when they have grown up in rural areas. This means that the plan must seek to add to the diversity of job opportunities in rural areas for young people to access.

5.70 The policy below seeks to ensure that, while most employment activity stays in accessible town locations, reasonable opportunities are taken to support employment in countryside areas, applying adequate safeguards. The policy also recognises the need to cater for economic supply chains in rural areas, which can be just as complex as for urban manufacturing or service industries. The creation of rural enterprise hubs to allow clusters of small businesses to locate together with shared facilities is also supported, particularly where existing buildings can be used and the locations are accessible. Finally the policy promotes necessary upskilling opportunities to be available in the rural County.

Policy ECN 13

Meeting rural employment needs

1. Employment opportunities for those living in the rural areas will be permitted in designated or allocated employment areas and in town and village centres.
2. Elsewhere, development involving B-Class uses or other employment generating activities, will be permitted where all of the following apply:
 - a. Existing buildings are reused or, where this is not possible, appropriately scaled and designed extensions or new buildings that:
 - i. Contribute positively to local building traditions and landscape character; and
 - ii. Where possible make use of previously developed land or previously developed agricultural land;
 - b. The proposal is related as closely as possible to the existing settlement pattern, existing services and accessible places;
 - c. There is no loss to development of the best and most versatile agricultural land;
 - d. It will not have an adverse impact on:
 - i. the amenity of local community; or
 - ii. the operational aspects of local farming and forestry; or
 - iii. the local transport and utilities infrastructure.

3. Within the parameters of the above criteria, particular support will be given to:
 - a. Developments on farms which would add value to farm produce on-site and provide other supply chain opportunities in the County therefore reducing the distance products need to travel during the production process;
 - b. The further diversification and development of educational facilities where these will help to further enhance Northumberland's rural economy and training opportunities for rural professions, particularly those in relation to the County's further and higher education offer;
 - c. Rural enterprise hubs where a number of small businesses are located in a cluster with shared broadband connection and other essential facilities, with preference given to building conversions to house them.

Farm / rural diversification

- 5.71** Farm diversification is important to widen sources of income and sustain agricultural businesses. It is one of the primary ways in which diversification of rural work opportunities can be achieved. Typically farm diversification provides for tourism and leisure activity, but also new office and workshop space, as well as on site manufacturing, and in some cases sale of farm produce.
- 5.72** The policy approach supports diversification schemes and encourages the re-use of redundant farm buildings where possible, and seeks to ensure that new development is accessible and located as close as possible to existing buildings on the farm. However it is important that the main agricultural function of the farm is maintained to ensure farmland remains productive. To support this, new build development should avoid using the best and most versatile agricultural land, given its importance to the productivity of the agricultural sector, and the nature of the development should be complementary and compatible in scale with the continuing farm enterprise.
- 5.73** Some farms or estates in the County have diversified to provide education opportunities and are considered to be of key importance to the County's rural economy, particularly those catering for the higher education sector and it is considered important that the future development of these should be supported.

Policy ECN 14

Farm / rural diversification

1. Rural diversification developments will be permitted if the proposed use is:
 - a. Directly related to agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations, or other activities, which by their nature would require a rural location; and/or
 - b. For leisure, recreation or tourism activities that require open land in a countryside location; and/or
 - c. A business or employment generating use, provided that the Council is satisfied that there is an economic and/or operational need for the particular countryside location, and that it cannot be reasonably be accommodated within a recognised settlement.
2. The scale nature and detailed location of proposals for rural diversification should:
 - a. Not prejudice the long (or short term) operational needs of the host farm or other rural operation;
 - b. Have no significant net negative ecological impact and, where possible, a positive impact;
 - c. Have no significant adverse impact on nearby uses;
 - d. Not unacceptably impact the rural character of the area.
3. Proposals for rural diversification that involve a new business requiring additional buildings in the open countryside, including for tourism purposes, will require a business case that supports the proposal to be submitted as part of the application process where it is necessary to demonstrate deliverability of the proposed business development.
4. The need for farm diversification will not, on its own, be accepted as a reason for granting permission for a new dwelling in the open countryside, except where it is clearly necessary for the operational needs of the farm. Where prior approval is sought under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 for the creation of up to three new dwellings, this will only be given if the building requires no new basic structural elements; a structural appraisal may be required to demonstrate this.

Tourism and visitor development

The strategy for tourism

5.74 Northumberland Tourism Destination Management Plan sets out a strategy for a sustainable visitor economy, developing Northumberland's attractions and activities. It seeks to bring about a better range of visitor experiences, depressurising areas most likely to experience environmental harm from more visits, by distributing visitors more widely across the County and throughout the seasons. The need for diversification also extends to the range of accommodation available and to the types and quality of jobs available.

The range and quality of Northumberland's tourism attractors

5.75 Northumberland's key foci of visitors include the coastal, river valley, and upland landscapes, as well as key historic assets such as Hadrian's Wall, castles and the County's historic market towns. It is important that the Local Plan supports heritage led regeneration and sustainable tourism growth to create jobs and economic resilience and so help deliver the objectives.

5.76 Tourism development differs from other forms of economic development in that attractions often exist in poorly accessible locations, (e.g. with no public transport), meaning that car travel may be the only means of reaching them. Where a new attraction is being created, it should be possible to direct this to an accessible location but such places must also be attractive in their own right, otherwise this can be counterproductive.

5.77 It is considered that the visitor sector has the potential to grow right across Northumberland and that planning policy can help this happen.

5.78 Linear attractions can also contribute to this broadening of the offer. Cycling and walking holidays are an integral part of the outdoor tourism offer and an important reason for visitor loyalty. The County has an extensive public footpath network and renowned long distance walks like the Hadrian's Wall Path and the Reivers' Way. There is also a lengthy network of high quality cycle routes and 100 miles of purpose built trails. Such holidays can be cross seasonal, help to disperse the benefits of the industry across the County and can be low impact. The plan supports the development of appropriate new and expanded cycle and walking routes to add to Northumberland's network. Facilities that help to support the network of long distance routes, where appropriate, will be strongly supported.

5.79 The policy approach on attractions must therefore seek to balance the development of visitor facilities throughout Northumberland with the protection of the unique qualities of the County's natural and built environment, which are responsible for attracting many of the tourists in the first place. Development that involves new building must be prioritised in locations that are accessible, have complementary land uses for tourists, can accommodate additional growth without causing significant environmental harm and have strong potential to attract visitors. At the same time, it is acknowledged that, from time to time, a small-scale building or structure may be needed to serve a visitor attraction in a more isolated location - e.g. a visitor

centre or toilet block. They may also be needed at locations where regular temporary events occur. Clearly such features would need to be capable of being absorbed into the local landscape as far as possible.

Accommodation for visitors

- 5.80** There is a wide range of types of visitor accommodation including all development falling within Use Class C1 (hotels and guest houses) as well as caravan, chalet and camping parks and facilities for business visitors such as conference and exhibition space.
- 5.81** Hotel accommodation is a Main Town Centre Use and, wherever possible, this should be located within the centres of the County's Main Towns and Service Centres. A sequential approach to this type of accommodation will be applied, in line with the general approach for the development of Main Town Centre Uses covered later in this chapter.
- 5.82** Other types of visitor accommodation are very often more suited to countryside locations. Small scale permanent accommodation may be needed - e.g. to serve the long-distance walking and cycle routes mentioned above. These can be appropriately located in the countryside through the efficient use of existing buildings. This recognises the value of bringing these buildings back into economic use. Failing this, the redevelopment of previously developed land may be acceptable. On occasion these approaches may not be viable or suitable for the business and so appropriately scaled and designed new buildings will be supported in accessible locations, where the development would improve and/or diversify Northumberland's offer of tourism accommodation. Clearly, such accommodation would need to meet all other landscape and other environmental protection policies and have the ability to blend in with the settlement pattern and local landscape character.
- 5.83** As far as non-permanent accommodation, such as caravans, chalets and campsites, are concerned, the approach taken will very much reflect the degree of protection that the area of the countryside in which the proposal is being made, with landscape character and visual impact, as well as the effects on local infrastructure and communities, being key considerations.

Policy ECN 15

Tourism and visitor development

Northumberland will be promoted and developed as a destination for tourists and visitors, while recognising the need to sustain and conserve the environment and local communities. This will be achieved through the development of new visitor attractions and facilities, accommodation and the expansion of existing tourism businesses, applying the following principles:

- a. Main Towns and Service Centres will be prioritised for the development of significant new facilities and accommodation;

- b. Where hotel development that classifies as a Main Town Centre Use can be supported outside a defined centre, other Main Town Centre Uses that are truly ancillary to the visitor accommodation, will not themselves be subject to the sequential test;
- c. In rural locations the development of new build, permanent buildings for holiday accommodation of any sort should be small scale with locations within recognised settlements being given preference;
- d. In the open countryside new holiday accommodation should be limited to the re-use of buildings or sensitively located non-permanent accommodation, with new build accommodation only being supported where it:
 - i. would demonstrably improve and diversify the County's tourist offer and/or clearly provide necessary accommodation along an established tourist route; and
 - ii. is located as close as is practicable to existing development; and
 - iii. is appropriate to its surroundings in its design and character;
- e. For non-permanent tourist accommodation in the open countryside, new or extensions to existing sites for camping, caravans, and chalets will be supported in accessible locations outside designated areas, provided the development:
 - i. Is adequately screened by existing topography or vegetation or new good quality landscaping compatible with the surrounding landscape; and
 - ii. The site layout and scale, and the appearance of the accommodation, would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the surrounding landscape, taking into account short and long range views.
- f. Where there is a proven need to develop buildings, which do not include accommodation but would otherwise serve visitor or tourist attractions that are located in the open countryside, the reuse of conveniently located, substantial buildings will be preferred. If a new build facility is required, this should be located so as not to have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the surrounding landscape, taking into account short and long range views.
- g. Tourism related developments that enhance the environment or bring neglected or underused heritage assets back into appropriate economic use will be strongly supported;
- h. In non-designated rural areas, any larger-scale, new tourist development will be assessed on the potential economic gain weighed against any possible harmful impacts and other plan policies. Comprehensive master planning should accompany such proposals;
- i. Temporary events for visitors will be encouraged at suitably accessible locations by permitting any associated but ancillary structures if these would serve the needs of events for much of the year and meet the criteria in part (f) above.

Green Belt and the tourism and visitor economy

- 5.84** The Northumberland Green Belt is very extensive, stretching up to 30 kilometres from the built-up area of Tyneside and covering in the region of 70,000 hectares in Northumberland alone. While larger settlements within the extent of the Green Belt are inset, meaning that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within these towns and villages, numerous small settlements and groups of buildings are ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt and are subject to the limitations on development imposed by Green Belt policy.
- 5.85** The previous sections, dealing with the rural economy and tourism have sought to unlock the economic potential of countryside areas. It is true that most of the main countryside based tourist attractions - e.g. the North Northumberland Coast, mediaeval castles, Roman Wall, North Pennines, Kielder and (of course) the National Park - lie beyond the Green Belt. But the countryside areas that are the easiest to reach from the conurbation mostly lie within the Green Belt. Day trippers from Tyneside and tourists who chose to base themselves there pass through these areas to reach the destinations beyond.
- 5.86** It is considered important in the context of the objectives of this plan to include a planning approach that seeks to capture some of the economic potential of Green Belt countryside, while maintaining fully the Green Belt’s protective role.
- 5.87** National policy urges councils to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt. Much of Northumberland’s Green Belt is rolling, managed farmland. It includes highly attractive countryside such as estate landscapes, incised river valleys and small woodlands. Nevertheless there is clear scope for landscape and biodiversity enhancements and, hand-in-hand with these, a greater level of countryside access for informal recreation. More formal sport and recreational activities also have a legitimate role in the Green Belt context, especially near to larger settlements.
- 5.88** All these types of uses have the potential to stimulate the economy and can be associated with business uses and employment generation, as well as significant visitor dwell-time and spending. While the Green Belt limits the scope for substantial buildings, there are ways in which modest built development, necessary for such businesses to operate successfully, can be realised and provide high quality contributions towards the wider economic and tourism strategies:
- Through limited infilling within an existing (washed-over) group of buildings;
 - Through the use of derelict brownfield land;
 - Through the conversion of existing buildings; and
 - Through buildings that are small and discreet that are demonstrably ancillary to open space uses occupying a large expanse of land.

Policy ECN 16

Green Belt and tourism and visitor economy

1. The potential of the Green Belt areas to contribute towards strategic economic and tourism aims will be maximised, while ensuring that there would be no greater impact on the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it and where possible less than the current situation. This will be achieved by:
 - a. Allowing open land uses that may lead to a reduction in operational farmland subject to:
 - i. No unacceptable loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and the ability of the farm to continue to operate; and
 - ii. The proposal resulting in a significant increase in the ability of the public to access the countryside on foot, bicycle or on horseback and/or the creation of a new or enhanced visitor attraction of a type that would be most appropriately located in a countryside setting;
 - b. Allowing new buildings as infill among or replacement of existing buildings, subject to any built conservation considerations, as long as:
 - i. The new buildings do not occupy a larger area of the site or exceed the height of the existing buildings, except where the overall scheme would result in a more beneficial visual impact upon the landscape than the existing situation;
 - ii. Any proposals for partial redevelopment are accompanied by comprehensive long term plans for the site as a whole.
2. Any development meeting the above criteria must be capable of and deliver adequate linkage to the strategic road network and other essential infrastructure.
3. Within the above restrictions, proposals will be permitted if they:
 - a. Allow an existing business and/or employment to continue or modestly grow in situ;
 - b. Allow for facilities that contribute to education, training and upskilling that is connected to rural sectors including agriculture, horticulture and tourism.

Town Centres, Village Centres and Local Centres

- 5.89** Northumberland's town and village centres are key to the functioning of the County's economy. They are not only shopping centres but provide essential community services. They are the focus of significant employment opportunities. In this context, it is important to note that all projections regarding likely new jobs created in the next 15 to 20 years show that the vast majority will be in the types of employment that do not require specific new land allocations - i.e. including the types of jobs typically found in the County's town, village and local centres.
- 5.90** In terms of the Plan's objectives, this means that centres help the 'Economy and Jobs' objective and engender 'Community Health and Wellbeing'. As accessible locations they help with the 'Climate Change' objective. Also, if the Plan's objective of securing better 'Quality of Place' is to be realised, town centres must act as the focus of this.
- 5.91** Northumberland includes town centres with considerable numbers of people relying on the jobs and services that they provide - sometimes from wide rural hinterlands. They cannot simply be retail centres but must also offer a range of essential services, leisure opportunities and, perhaps most importantly of all, jobs and businesses.
- 5.92** These roles sit within the context that these centres are the most long-established parts of the settlements and contain a significant proportion of the County's assets of historic significance - something that can attract additional visitors but which can mean that there are constraints on future development opportunities. They have to act as cultural, social and economic centres, catering for many modern-day needs while conserving their historical significance.
- 5.93** The main factors that the Local Plan needs to make provision for in town centres are:
- To establish and maintain their relative roles as service centres for residents and visitors;
 - To bolster their roles as community hubs by allowing for a wide range of uses including shopping, other essential and non-essential services, leisure facilities, offices and other workplaces, as well as a residential presence;
 - To make sure that they are not constrained in fulfilling these roles, physically or in policy terms;
 - To ensure that key uses are concentrated to the extent that the centres continue to be vibrant and vital without stifling expansion and innovation; and
 - To provide scope for good transport access including space for public transport, pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchairs and sufficient car parking.

Retailing

- 5.94** Shopping has traditionally often been thought of as the lynchpin of town centres - the main reason for visiting them. However, Northumberland's town centres have always served a much wider role than just shopping and, due to rapidly changing retail environment, it is more important than ever to plan the County's centres to be diverse with a comprehensive range of essential services and attractions.

5.95 Developments and trends which will influence the future planning of town and key village centres are:

- The accelerating growth in **online shopping** and the consequent reduction in footfall on high streets and reduced potential for investment in ‘bricks and mortar’.
- **High street adaptation** of retailing to these new trends with additional services and the growth of niche shops.
- **Supermarket diversification** - large stores widening their offer to include more durable items, the growth of the ‘discounters’ in more medium size stores and the emergence of smaller convenience shops on high streets.
- Increased **popularity of cafes and leisure facilities** so that they become increasingly appropriate for key high street frontages.
- Risk reduction **investment strategies** by the main retail chains meaning that any closures are likely to affect smaller town centres and any new investment likely to be in regional centres.

Maintaining a hierarchy of centres

5.96 A large part of south and central Northumberland lies within the strong influence of the main regional centres of Newcastle and the Metrocentre. The northern and western extremities of the County are influenced by the more distant regional centres of Edinburgh and Carlisle respectively.

5.97 The Local Plan recognises that Northumberland’s centres will always be positioned below these strategic hubs in terms of importance and influence. However a key challenge is to avoid the County’s centres dropping further behind, as investment is concentrated in regional centres which can already offer a wide-ranging visitor experience. In short, the centres of Northumberland’s market towns may need to ‘run in order to stay still’.

5.98 Evidence gathered previously helps to define a hierarchy of centres, based mainly on their retail and leisure offer. As this approach relies on quantitative data, it continues to be an appropriate way of defining a hierarchy. Northumberland’s main towns, as defined in Policy ECN 17, actually split into two tiers as far as the town centre offer is concerned, with the service centres, in effect forming a third tier and more local facilities a fourth:

- **Main towns - larger centres:** Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth and Hexham all have a good level of retail provision along with wide ranging town centre community facilities. They are also hubs for public transport and offer a good level of off-street car parking. They can be regarded as pivotal points for community activity, jobs and services for large populations and wide hinterlands.
- **Main town - smaller centres:** Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle, Ponteland and Prudhoe have good local retail provision along with a reasonable range of town centre community facilities, serving the towns themselves and all except Bedlington also with modest rural hinterlands. These centres are accessible by public transport being on regular bus routes linking them to larger centres and some of their surrounding settlements.

- **Service Centres:** Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler are the settlements that are categorised in the second tier of the main hierarchy. They have a range of mainly essential services and serve hinterlands (some are extensive and rural), so allowing visits to larger centres further afield to be less frequent.
- Below these are:
 - **Other village centres** providing for the most essential day-to-day local service needs of the population of one or two rural parishes;
 - **Suburban parades of shops and services** serving the same purpose. These are increasingly difficult to define, often being taken over by non-essential services or spread out along radial routes.

5.99 The Policy below sets the hierarchy and the levels of protection afforded to them, in general terms, and seeks to maintain and bolster their positions in this hierarchy relative to other tiers and the regional centres that rank above them. The more detailed approach to protection in relation to the top three tiers in the hierarchy - their vitality and viability - are dealt with in the policies that follow. Where communities are strongly dependent on the continuity of particular local services, these issues are covered as part of the wider approach on community facilities set out in Chapter 12.

Policy ECN 17

Hierarchy of centres

1. A hierarchy of centres is defined as follows:
 - a. Main towns - larger centres: Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth and Hexham;
 - b. Main town - smaller centres: Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle, Ponteland and Prudhoe;
 - c. Service Centres: Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler.
 - d. Other small parades or clusters of shops in towns and larger villages not part of the centres defined above.
2. In assessing development proposals, growth within centres will be permitted and encouraged at a scale which helps to maintain and reinforce their roles within the hierarchy, as well as their relationship with regional centres.
3. Proposals that seek to replace significant areas of Main Town Centre Uses with other uses will be resisted if it is demonstrable that this would undermine the centre's overall role and position within the hierarchy.

Defining Town Centres and their role

- 5.100** The Local Plan needs to include clear definitions of Northumberland's town centres if it is to be successful at promoting them as hubs for their communities and as service centres for people living in their catchment areas, as well as for visitors. The centres must be vital and viable, which can best be achieved by directing 'Main Town Centre Uses', such as large shops, leisure centres and hotels, towards certain defined areas while discouraging them elsewhere.
- 5.101** Centres have therefore been carefully defined, based around evidence on where clusters of activity are, as well as past consultations (e.g. those connected with neighbourhood planning). The five smaller town centres have been given a single 'Town Centre Boundary', while the seven larger centres, with larger populations and wider ranges of facilities, have also been given tightly drawn 'Primary Shopping Areas', so as to keep key shopping streets as vibrant as possible.

Policy ECN 18

Defining centres in Main Towns

Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area boundaries are defined on the Policies Map. These may be subject to review or updating in Neighbourhood Plans. Main Town Centre Uses should be located within these boundaries, unless there are strong planning reasons to locate them elsewhere.

Establishing the role of Northumberland's centres

- 5.102** The Council has gathered and intermittently updated evidence on people's spending patterns, their shopping and leisure habits and how these factors relate to the performance of Northumberland's town centres. This allows an assessment of how healthy the centres are and whether or not they are meeting their roles as multi-functional community hubs. Key to this is how they provide for shopping needs. If a centre fails in this, it is essentially failing as a centre.
- 5.103** However, to be fully successful, they must offer a whole array of other accessible services, some essential, some leisure related, as well as being foci for work and business. This is especially true of the type and size of market town that characterises Northumberland. Continual reinvention and adaptation are needed. Planning for centres often has to be more aspirational than the raw growth forecasts suggest.
- 5.104** Evidence shows that a range of planning approaches have helped Northumberland's centres to keep pace with each other and with regional centres:
- The need to retain a **strong retail presence** has been paramount in policy decisions on key frontages and the town centres as a whole;

- There has been recognition that **non-retail uses**, such as cafes and leisure service uses can contribute to vibrancy on the high street and reduce vacant shop space;
- The granting of permission for **larger format stores** (often on edge-of-centre sites) has attracted national chains so keeping some spending in the town that may otherwise have leaked elsewhere;
- Despite competition from national chains, the historic nature of many of Northumberland's town centres has helped protect a range of **local independent retailers** that contributes to the range and interest of the shopping offer;
- The use of flexible policy approaches to allow **niche markets** (including temporary 'pop-up' shops etc.) to be developed in centres has been considered against the need to keep key essential services and a degree of stability;
- The encouragement of **residential uses** in town centres, to add a sense of community and security, and fill voids such as above shops, has been considered against the need to keep a strong representation of shops and services and against possible conflicts like noise pollution and parking issues;
- Initiatives relating to **parking restrictions or pedestrianisation** have been looked at in relation to any negative effects on local businesses.

5.105 The roles of Northumberland's town centres will continue to be enhanced by continuing these approaches, as well as adapting to new developments in retailing and other service provision.

Appropriate enhancements to individual centres

5.106 From the above, it is clear that opportunities must be sought to allow centres to expand in scale with the growth in the number of residents and their spending power, increased visitor numbers, innovations in the range and type of services that can be offered and many other factors.

5.107 A separate background paper contains the analysis that takes forward evidence base information on the shopping and leisure habits of Northumberland residents and visitors, patterns of spending growth and retail trends. The analysis projects the additional shopping floorspace and leisure provision that would be needed in each of the twelve Main Towns to keep people spending patterns constant. In reaching conclusions, the analysis takes into account a number of factors, which may serve to modify the projections:

- Possible reasons for modifying projected additional retail / leisure needs downwards:
 - **New forms of trading** such as online shopping are growing increasingly rapidly, meaning that the plan may need to be less optimistic about the growth in physical floorspace than the figures suggest; this effect would be likely to be more pronounced in rural areas where the propensity to switch to online purchasing is likely to be greater.

- **Physical constraints**, which might include a tight-knit historic fabric or poor road access, can provide reasons for seeking other (qualitative) ways to accommodate growth rather than land allocation.
- Possible reasons for modifying projected additional retail / leisure needs upwards:
 - The **spread of town centre uses** within the town as a whole: There are certain towns - most notably Blyth and Berwick - which have a high proportion of their overall retail offer located well away from their centre, making them potentially weaker and more vulnerable than others. It is especially important, in these places, that future opportunities for growth are concentrated in the centre, rather than in outlying sites.
 - The **potential for spending 'claw-back'**: Some towns may have additional potential through increasing the proportion people's spending power retained within the town, rather than elsewhere. This tends to apply especially to the smaller centres and/or those most within the influence of regional centres on Tyneside which are seen as currently 'underperforming' relative to their catchment populations.
 - **Physical opportunities**, which might include the availability of land or the benefits of developing brownfield land or redeveloping a rundown area, can add to reasons for allocating land for town centre uses.

5.108 The initial conclusions identify what would be needed, and when, if the solution to maintaining the retail and leisure role of each town is expressed in terms of land needed to accommodate brand new floorspace. The initial conclusions are:

- **Cramlington** and **Ashington** would benefit from additional shopping and leisure-related space in the short term and may require up to 6 hectares each within the plan period.
- **Berwick-upon-Tweed** and **Blyth** would need means of accommodating additional retail capacity in the short to medium term - particularly for comparison shopping - requiring up 4 hectares in each of these two towns within the plan period but solutions other than land allocations will be needed in Berwick.
- **Morpeth, Hexham** and **Alnwick**, i.e. the remaining 'large centres', are reasonably well provided for at present but may have scope for more floorspace in the medium term, (although Morpeth would benefit from further choice of convenience retailing in the fairly short term). Up to 3 hectares may be needed in each of these towns by the end of the plan period, but this is certainly not an imminent need.
- **Amble, Bedlington, Haltwhistle, Ponteland** and **Prudhoe** - i.e. all of those Main Towns with smaller centres - currently retain relatively small proportions of the total spending potential of their populations. In Haltwhistle and Prudhoe particularly, current shops are few in number but trade well so that these centres would benefit from modest additional shopping choice in either the short or medium term but the land needed (by the end of the plan period) to fulfil this would be minimal - certainly less than a hectare in all cases.

5.109 The background analysis also assesses the influence of each of these factors on the ability of (or the need for) each centre to expand to the extent that the initial conclusions suggested. Ashington would offer the greatest scope, followed in equal second place by Blyth and Cramlington, then Bedlington and Prudhoe. The two centres least equipped to accommodate significant extra floorspace are Alnwick and Hexham.

5.110 The Background Paper sets out detailed conclusions for each centre, and these are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Summary of findings and proposed approach for each centre

Ashington	<p>A robust approach to delivering scope for additional retail, large scale leisure and other relevant town centre uses - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering an area in the NE quadrant of the Town Centre for these purposes; • Encouraging renewal of some existing frontages along Station Road and Woodhorn Road.
Cramlington	<p>A robust approach to delivering scope for additional retail, large scale leisure and other relevant town centre uses - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering an area in the south of Manor Walks and Forum Way for these purposes; • Allowing for further intensification within the existing centre.
Blyth	<p>A robust approach to bringing any future additions to its offer into the town centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering an area to the north and east of Keel Row for these purposes, which will include existing uses such as the bus station, which would be retained / replaced within the site; • Encouraging renewal within frontages and blocks surrounding the Market Square, Bowes Street and Regent Street.
Berwick-Upon-Tweed	<p>A strong approach to ensure that any significant future additions to floorspace are as close as possible to the town centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates; • Examining any development options that could achieve larger floorplates in locations within 300m of the edge of the Primary Shopping Area, subject to appropriate impact testing
Morpeth	<p>Recognition that scope exists for some additional retail and leisure floorspace but that, given the widely drawn Primary Shopping Area and Town Centre boundaries, these could be accommodated without the need for particular areas to be outlined - also achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial

	<p>redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates.</p>
Alnwick	<p>No urgency for more significant additions to floorspace. No land allocations required. Nevertheless, from a qualitative point of view, there would be benefits if any additional floorspace were within the existing centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates.
Hexham	<p>No urgency for more significant additions to floorspace. No land allocations required. Nevertheless, from a qualitative point of view, there would be benefits if any additional floorspace were within the existing centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates.
Smaller Centres	<p>A positive approach is needed in order to facilitate modern retail floorspace on a modest scale which may help counteract leaking expenditure - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering areas for new town centre development to the rear of the north side of Front Street, Prudhoe, north of Front Street, Bedlington, at Merton Road, Ponteland, north-west of Queen Street, Amble and south of the B6322, Haltwhistle; • Encouraging renewal of some existing frontages along Front Street, Prudhoe; • A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the conservation areas through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates in Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle.

5.111 Offices are a key element in the mix of uses found in town centres. It is particularly important that offices which rely on frequent public access, such as banks and professional services, should have a town centre location. However all offices have high employment densities: they therefore not only benefit from a central, accessible position but their employees can significantly increase footfall and spending within the centre.

5.112 It is difficult to secure stand-alone privately funded office schemes in most of Northumberland for reasons of viability. Therefore they should be encouraged as part of mixed use schemes.

Policy ECN 19

Maintaining and enhancing the role of centres

1. Northumberland's town and village centres will be supported and promoted, through plans and planning decisions, in their role as:
 - a. Community and service hubs;
 - b. Vital and viable centres for shopping, business, culture and leisure; and
 - c. Places to live, work and visit
2. This will be achieved in main towns by identifying opportunities and permitting proposals for developments which are physically and functionally integrated with and add choice to the existing retail offer in the Primary Shopping Area and the leisure and other central service offer of the wider Town Centre - specifically:
 - a. Within or immediately abutting Town Centre boundaries, promoting the development of schemes involving a mix of appropriate Main Town Centre Uses, allowing an element of residential as part of any mixed use scheme. This will include:
 - i. Blyth Town Centre, especially considering opportunities to the north and east of Keel Row, including a replacement bus station, should the existing bus station be displaced;
 - ii. Ashington Town Centre, to the north-east of the town centre, including the possibility of a new bus station somewhere within the overall area;
 - iii. Cramlington Town Centre, especially the opportunities offered by vacant buildings to the south of Manor Walks;
 - iv. Bedlington, to the rear of the north side of Front Street within the constraints of the Conservation Area;
 - v. Prudhoe, to the rear of the north side of Front Street;
 - vi. Haltwhistle, to the south of the B6322, area including the existing service station;
 - vii. Ponteland, in the vicinity of Merton Road;
 - viii. Amble, including land north-west of Queen Street.
 - b. Encouraging and permitting schemes for the renewal of blocks and frontages, especially where this will result in more modern shopping, leisure or office floorspace, offering larger floorplates, provided that this will not alter the historic layout or harm the character or historic significance of the town centre concerned. This will include consideration of such opportunities in:
 - i. Blyth Town Centre, areas around the Market Place, Regent Street and Bowes Street;
 - ii. Ashington Town Centre, along parts of Station Road and Woodhorn Road;
 - iii. Prudhoe Town Centre, along parts of Front Street.
 - c. Further intensification of uses within Manor Walks, Cramlington

- d. Within the constraints of built conservation policies, allowing for small scale opportunities for enhancement of town centre offer including, if possible, the introduction of larger floor-plates, in the defined centres of Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Morpeth, Hexham, Bedlington, Amble and Haltwhistle.
3. Within Service Centres, and in other villages where there are clusters of services, new provision should be within a scale appropriate to meeting the shopping, leisure or other service requirements of residents living in those settlements and their catchments;
4. All development of additional Main Town Centre Uses will be considered positively if it will deliver social, economic and/or environmental benefits for the centre concerned, but it must be:
 - a. In scale with the size and function of the centre, taking into account the overall size of the settlement and its catchment and planned growth of that settlement over the plan period;
 - b. In keeping with local character;
 - c. Acceptable in relation to its impact on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure.
5. Schemes that will facilitate the continuation of established town centre businesses in situ or elsewhere within the defined town centres will be supported.
6. The location of purpose-built offices in defined Town Centres and their inclusion as part of mixed use schemes will be encouraged and permitted.
7. Town Centres will be promoted as places to live and work through the encouragement of a mix of residential and office use on upper floors on main shopping streets and other appropriate locations, especially if this leads to the reoccupation of disused premises and provided it would not, individually or cumulatively, lead to an unacceptable reduction in vitality and viability or limit the operation of an existing established 'Main Town Centre' service or business.
8. In smaller settlements and where there are clusters of shops and services, the loss of essential local services will be resisted unless it can be robustly demonstrated that there is no longer a community need for the facility or an alternative has been provided; this will include:
 - a. the loss of the last convenience shop in a parade of shops; or
 - b. the last convenience shop or public house in a village.

Significant proposals outside centres

5.113 In respect of Main Town Centres, the approach set out above promotes their role within the defined boundaries, as well as outlining some areas for possible expansion which may stretch beyond the current boundary lines. Any detailed proposals above certain 'threshold' sizes falling beyond the defined centres, including within any expansion areas that stretch beyond the current boundaries, will need to be assessed, first to ensure that no more central a site is available and, if not, to assess their likely impact on the vitality and viability of the centre. This allows the option of not going ahead with, or refusing the development if the impact is not acceptable. The thresholds used are appropriate for Northumberland and are based on evidence.

Policy ECN 20

Proposals outside centres

1. Where proposals come forward for development outside defined boundaries in town centres, they will be subject, first to proportionate and appropriate sequential testing and then, if a suitable more central site cannot be identified, to impact testing, as follows:
 - a. Proposals for more than 1000m² gross retail floorspace,
 - i. In Larger Town Centres, those beyond Primary Shopping Area boundaries; or
 - ii. In Smaller Town Centres, those beyond Town Centre boundaries
 - b. Proposals for leisure-related buildings of 2500m² gross floorspace, not linked with wider open space activities, that are beyond defined Town Centre boundaries; and
 - c. Proposals for office uses that are more than 2500m² gross floorspace beyond Town Centre boundaries.
2. Where the above testing demonstrates that the Main Town Centre Use can only be accommodated in an edge- or out-of-centre location, priority should be given to accessible sites well connected to the town centre or (failing that) connected to other existing services, and, wherever possible, be well related to residential areas.
3. Smaller scale development of Main Town Centre Uses, in the built-up areas of towns and villages, away from defined centres, will not be subject to the above testing, but should:
 - a. Be of a scale appropriate to the location;
 - b. Wherever possible, contribute to the range and choice of services offered in the local area; and
 - c. Be accessible and well related to existing services.

Keeping high streets vibrant

- 5.114** Local leisure-time services, such as restaurants, bars and fitness clubs, are often interspersed with shops, banks and other financial institutions within Northumberland's Primary Shopping Areas and wider Commercial or Larger Village Centres. This integration has been vital to the success of these centres in terms of daytime activity, the evening economy and in catering for visitors. Some centres clearly have scope to increase these types of local provision.
- 5.115** In the past, such uses have often been considered as reducing the vitality and viability of key shopping streets due to blank frontages or intrusion into 'the shopping experience'. But more recently, with the blossoming of cafes, restaurants, speciality health-related outlets and a whole array of other services and leisure uses, it has become clear that mixing such uses in with retailing, far from detracting from the town centre shopping experience, can add to it.
- 5.116** There remains a need to retain a strong element of retail on the busiest parts of centres - high streets, malls, market places and squares, which are identified and monitored through surveys 'health checks' that look at footfall and other key indicators.
- 5.117** Within these locations the approach, traditionally used, of seeking to maximise the percentage of certain 'Key Shopping Frontages' that are occupied by vibrant uses will continue with retail as the key driver. However, it will be given the flexibility necessary to reflect the wider purpose of town centres by allowing for an element of other types of uses that could also add to the vitality of the high street. This should help to minimise vacancies and maintain or increase footfall and average 'dwell time' (the total length of visits to the centre). Should it be considered, in the future, that a tighter approach on retail presence is needed on particular streets in particular centres, this can be achieved through a review of this Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans.
- 5.118** Other ways in which High Streets can be improved, enhanced and kept as vibrant foci for town centres include:
- Improvements to the **public realm**, through maintaining and enhancing areas for markets and events, initiatives such as pedestrianisation, seating, local information and ancillary facilities such as public toilets, having clear regard to the needs of people with protected characteristics, such as disability and deafness; and
 - Clear guidance on the design of **shop fronts**, especially where the streets concerned are an important part of the historic environment or the local character of the town or village centre; and
 - Making sure **ease of access** - on foot, by public transport and via parking facilities are as good as possible for visitors to the heart of a centre, including adapting centres for new access needs such as short-stay 'click-and-collect'.

Policy ECN 21

Keeping high streets vibrant

1. Within defined Town Centres, the Council will seek to maintain and enhance vitality and viability through geographically specific policy approaches, as follows:
2. Key Shopping Frontages are defined on the Policies Map for the seven Main town larger centres. Within these frontages, the Council will seek to maximise the active frontage through permitting and encouraging Use Class A1 retail uses and to a lesser extent Use Class A3 restaurants and cafes and, on a limited basis, other uses, subject to:
 - a. Not permitting changes of use from Use Class A1, if this would take the length of the ground floor frontage in this Use Class to below 50% of the length of the Key Shopping Frontage;
 - b. Not permitting changes of use that would take the length of the ground floor frontage in Use Class A1 plus Use Class A3 to below 75% of the length of the Key Shopping Frontage;
 - c. Not supporting Use Class A5, hot food takeaways on Key Shopping Frontages except in exceptional circumstances;
 - d. Supporting Uses other than those in Use Classes A1, A3 and A5, up to a cumulative total of 25% of the total length of the ground floor frontage of the Key Shopping Frontage, especially where it can be demonstrated that this would result in an increase in the active street frontage;
 - e. Only allowing a variation beyond the percentages in (a) to (d) above where the unit concerned has been vacant for more than a year and the overall vacancy level of the Key Shopping Frontage exceeds 10% of the units that have a ground floor frontage.
3. Further or wider frontages, including in other centres, may be defined through Neighbourhood or Area Action Plans and policies applied to these. These types of plans may also revise the policy approach on existing Key Shopping Frontages to be different from the above, so long as this is supported by evidence.
4. Improvements in the public realm of centres will be designed to encourage people to visit the centre more and remain there longer, through measures such as pedestrianisation, seating, landscaping, complementary services and controlling shop front design; these aspects should:
 - a. Adhere to any design guidance that forms part of the Consolidated Planning Policy Framework; and
 - b. Cater for the needs of people with disabilities and deafness.
5. It will be ensured, through planning decisions, that there is no loss of public spaces in central, accessible locations that have the capacity to host markets or other events and activities appropriate to town centres.

6. Within the constraints of residential amenity, businesses that are likely to contribute to the evening economy and remain open late will be encouraged and supported to the extent that they would add to the vitality of streets but, if on Key Shopping Frontages, should not detract through being closed and shuttered during the day.
7. It will be ensured, through planning decisions, that public transport stopping areas, car and cycle parking, short stay drop-off and collection points, and pedestrian and cycle routes into and around town centres are fit for purpose to serve the access requirements of their main areas of activity.

Hot food takeaways

- 5.119** Hot food takeaways are now a familiar feature of town centres and other shopping centres and are regarded by many as an essential service. However they can proliferate and cluster in town centres or among shops that line main routes in and out of towns. This can change the character of these locations through indiscriminate parking and other disturbances such as noise and smells late at night. As such, when clustered together, they can detract from the role of centres as vibrant shopping and service centres.
- 5.120** In recent years, they have been associated with encouraging unhealthy eating, especially among children. As such there are strong and supportable reasons for excluding them from the immediate surroundings of schools. In addition, there are strong reasons to limit their numbers where there is already a proliferation of takeaways or where there are higher than average numbers of younger children already falling into the overweight categories.
- 5.121** Finally there has been a tendency for takeaways to occupy shop units in local parades and even in villages, which may only have a very limited retail presence. Therefore where the last A1 unit in such a parade or the final shop or public house in a village are proposed as a takeaway it is reasonable to resist this change.

Policy ECN 22

Hot food takeaways

New Use Class A5 hot food takeaways will be permitted where all of the following apply:

- a. They are not within a Main Town or, otherwise, within an electoral division where either:
 - i. More than 35.3 percent of Year 6 pupils are classified as overweight or obese⁽¹²⁾; or
 - ii. The number of approved A5 hot food takeaway establishments per 1000 resident population equals or exceeds the Northumberland total in March 2018 based on the Land and Property Gazetteer, that is 0.69 per 1000 resident population;
- b. They are over 400 metres' walk from any entrance gate of any existing or proposed school or college with students under the age of 18 years;
- c. They will not create or add to a cluster of three or more adjacent Use Class A5 hot food takeaways in the same row of shop units;
- d. They will not be replacing the last convenience shop or public house in a village or the last convenience shop in a parade of shops that serve a residential area;
- e. They would not create safety hazards for pedestrians or other users of the public highway;
- f. They will not have an adverse effect on the living conditions of any nearby residents from noise or disturbance or litter or odours or that any such disturbance can be suitably mitigated.

12 This is the proportion of children who were overweight or obese in Northumberland in 2016/17.

6. Housing

Introduction

- 6.1** Our vision for housing is based on the principle that having a decent home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Northumberland. The Plan objectives include extending housing choice across Northumberland by delivering homes for existing and future communities and to support the Northumberland economy, alongside providing well-designed and affordable homes to meet the diverse needs of an ageing population.
- 6.2** With some 152,219 dwellings and other communal residential accommodation at the plan period baseline in 2016, over 90% of the county's housing that will be here in 20 years already exists. It is therefore crucial that the quality of this existing housing stock is maintained, and adapted and improved where necessary, to ensure those dwellings continue to meet the changing future needs of our residents, particularly as we need to cater for an increasing proportion of older people.
- 6.3** There is nevertheless an identified need to increase the supply of housing across the County to meet projected population and household growth in Northumberland, alongside supporting local economic growth. The Council is committed to meeting the diverse housing needs of Northumberland's existing and new residents, by providing a choice of decent and affordable homes, including specialist accommodation with support. To achieve well-balanced, sustainable and attractive neighbourhoods where people want to live, work and prosper, we need to ensure that new homes are developed in the right places, at the right times and of the right scale and type for the right occupants, while respecting and protecting our beautiful County.
- 6.4** Our strategic approach to housing provision is underpinned by the Government's NPPF requirement to positively seek opportunities to meet our identified needs for housing, significantly boosting the supply of housing to help support wider opportunities for economic growth while enabling sufficient flexibility to quickly adapt to changes in circumstances that may occur.

Making the best use of our existing housing stock

- 6.5** Northumberland's housing market does not generally suffer from the problems associated with low demand and abandonment that some other parts of North East England have seen, with all Council-owned and the majority of private sector dwellings now satisfying the Government's Decent Homes Standard. However, pockets of low demand and long-term empty dwellings (ie. vacant for more than six months) are nevertheless evident within some parts of the County. The Council will encourage and continue to actively support and implement initiatives to revitalise our existing residential areas and enable many of these long-term empty homes to be brought back into use to help contribute to meeting our future housing needs, including through the use of Homes England grant funding and by making use of Section 106 affordable housing contributions.

- 6.6** In terms of the existing housing stock, Northumberland has a relatively high proportion of vacant dwellings, with 9,509 recorded as at the Census 2011 (including over 2,300 long-term empty homes), representing a 6.4% vacancy rate (compared to the England average of 2.6%). The housing market always requires a small proportion of vacant dwellings (typically about 3%) to enable property turnover for the market to function efficiently, but there has been a significant increase from the 3.5% proportion recorded in the previous Census 2001. This is considered to be largely as a result of the rapidly increasing numbers of second and holiday homes without a usual permanent resident in the County. The prevalence of second homes and holiday lets is most stark along the attractive north Northumberland coast.

Policy HOU 1

Making the best use of existing buildings

Sustainable, high quality and attractive residential communities will be created and promoted by:

- a. supporting and enabling interventions to improve and renovate the County's existing housing stock where sustainable and viable to do so, while enhancing the surrounding residential environment;
- b. encouraging and facilitating appropriate renovations to bring long-term empty homes back into use where sustainable and viable to do so, particularly in the private-rented housing sector within Blyth and Ashington;
- c. supporting the conversion and change of use to residential use of other suitable redundant premises to housing where appropriate subject to residential amenity considerations in relation to neighbouring properties and land uses, including the renovation of under-used space above shops and for the provision of live/work units for rural and agricultural workers' housing where they would not adversely impact on the surrounding environment or residential amenity. Proposals for the change of use of existing non-Use Class C3 premises to residential use should take account of any other policy requirements to retain provision of sufficient premises for economic and commercial development uses and be supported by clear evidence of marketing and viability for continuation of the existing use; and
- d. considering options, in consultation with local communities, for demolition and redevelopment schemes in areas of low demand or where the existing housing stock does not meet, and is not capable of meeting local housing needs.

Planning for growth and meeting housing needs over the plan period

- 6.7** For the Local Plan to be ‘sound’ and fit-for-purpose, we need to plan to meet our objectively assessed development needs for projected growth insofar as it is reasonable to do so. The housing requirement planned for is then determined having taken account of any cross-boundary Duty to Cooperate agreements to help provide for a proportion of neighbouring local authorities’ needs, as well as any physical and environmental constraints that cumulatively might reasonably restrict the ability of the area from meeting its needs in full.
- 6.8** The Government has introduced a standardised approach for robustly establishing each local authority’s ‘Local Housing Need’ over an initial 10-year period, based upon the latest official population and household projections (which are both updated every two years) which take account of trend-based and predicted natural change in birth and death rates as well as UK internal and international migration patterns. The methodology also factors in an adjustment for affordability to reflect ‘market signals’ based on the ratio of workplace-based median house prices to median earnings (updated annually). The standardised formula suggests that, once factoring in affordability, Northumberland currently has an annual average ‘Local Housing Need’ of **+717pa** for the initial 10-year period 2016-2026. The standardised approach establishes the baseline of ‘Local Housing Need’⁽¹³⁾ and the starting point for determining the plan requirement.
- 6.9** National guidance indicates that there may be circumstances where it is justifiable to identify housing need above the figure identified by the standard methodology. It indicates that circumstances where an uplift will be appropriate include, but are not limited to; where growth strategies are in place, strategic level infrastructure improvements are planned and funding is in place to promote and facilitate growth. Recognising the Council’s economic ambitions, identified through Northumberland’s contribution to delivering the objectives of the North East SEP, the North of Tyne Devolution Deal and the Borderlands initiative, together with recently completed, committed and proposed infrastructure improvements, it is considered appropriate to consider a housing need figure in excess of that presented by the standard methodology.

Minimum housing requirements

- 6.10** The NPPF requires local plans to be prepared positively and to be aspirational, while also being realistic and deliverable. For the overall 20-year plan period, it is therefore considered that the ‘Ambitious’ jobs-led growth scenario should be taken forward as the preferred growth scenario. This is outlined in the Development Strategy section of this plan. Therefore a minimum **17,700 net additional dwellings** at an average 885 per annum is required over the plan period.

13 The official population and household projections are updated every two years, and the house price to earnings ratios published annually, the ‘local housing need’ figure will change.

Policy HOU 2

Provision of new residential development

1. The delivery of new open market and affordable dwellings in a range of tenures, types and sizes will be supported where it is consistent with:
 - a. the spatial strategy for Northumberland;
 - b. meeting our objectively assessed housing needs and housing priorities as identified through an up-to-date assessment;
 - c. making the best and most efficient use of land and buildings, encouraging higher densities in the most accessible locations and prioritising the redevelopment of suitable previously-developed 'brownfield' sites wherever possible and viable to do so; and
 - d. the implementation of necessary enabling transport and utilities infrastructure.
2. The net additional dwelling requirement for Northumberland over the plan period 2016-2036, is for at least:

	Total dwellings requirement, 2016 to 2036	Average dwellings per annum
C3 Housing	17,700	885

- 6.11** Working closely with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will continue to ensure that planned housing growth across the wider region is complementary and strategically co-ordinated. Recognising this complementarity, none of our neighbouring authorities have identified any need to seek for Northumberland to help accommodate any proportion of their needs through the Duty to Cooperate. Neither has Northumberland County Council considered it necessary to seek for any of its neighbouring authorities to help provide for any of our identified needs.
- 6.12** While the proportion of Northumberland's housing need that falls within the protected Northumberland National Park (an independent local planning authority), given the limited needs, and the low level of new house building, the Northumberland Local Plan does not seek to make any specific reduction to take into account house building here.

Meeting the needs of people living in communal accommodation

- 6.13** The minimum Local Housing Need figure only considers the projected growth in household population. The Census 2011 recorded 5,437 people not residing in households but living in communal and institutional forms of accommodation in the County, with the majority of these living in medical and care establishments. The most recent official 2014-based projections suggest that the non-household population in the County will increase by +2,564 people over the plan period to 8,195 by 2036. Given the projected increase in the County's elderly population, it is likely that much of this trend-based growth will comprise increasing numbers of elderly people residing in institutional settings.
- 6.14** However, the Council's strategic approach to housing for older people is to enable more residents to live independently in their own homes through providing support, the adaptation of existing dwellings and the building of new flexible homes. Therefore, housing for much of the projected non-household population will be provided through the delivery of more independent living and supported housing options as part of existing permissions, and proposed allocations.
- 6.15** Current assessments identify no immediate need for new care home accommodation, with bedspace vacancies in existing facilities and those currently under construction considered to be sufficient to meet future needs. However, the Council will keep the need for communal accommodation under review as models and patterns of care provision for older people continue to evolve, informed by revised needs assessments.

Distribution of housing requirements

- 6.16** The indicative distribution of our dwelling requirements across the County is informed by the spatial strategy, and using disaggregated 'Local Housing Need' identified by the standard methodology as a guide. The Plan seeks to ensure the future sustainability and viability of communities, and improve choice to meet the needs and aspirations of all existing and future residents. The approach therefore takes account of the role of main towns and service centres, the presence of key local services and facilities in smaller settlements.
- 6.17** While planning to meet future needs, the distribution of new allocations in this Local Plan is also informed by the scale of commitments in each area. Account is also taken of environmental constraints and designations (including the Green Belt) that may restrict the ability of some areas to fully meet their needs and thus necessitate a slightly higher provision in neighbouring areas.
- 6.18** The indicative distribution of housing needs across Northumberland is set out in Table 6.1. The indicative housing requirements for currently designated neighbourhood plan areas are set out in Appendix B.

Table 6.1 Indicative Distribution of Housing Requirements 2016-2036

Location ⁽¹⁾	Number of dwellings, 2016 to 2036	Average number of dwellings per year ⁽²⁾
South East Delivery Area	9000	450
Amble	540	27
Ashington	1,600	80
Bedlington / Bedlington Station	840	42
Blyth	1,800	90
Cramlington	2,500	125
Guidepost / Stakeford	340	17
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	300	15
Seaton Valley	600	30
Rest of South East	480	24
Central Delivery Area	4450	223
Hexham	530	27
Morpeth	1,700	85
Ponteland	530	27
Prudhoe	630	32
Corbridge	170	9
Rest of Central	890	45
North Delivery Area	3,390	170
Alnwick	1,100	55
Berwick-upon-Tweed	610	31
Belford	80	4
Rothbury	140	7
Seahouses / North Sunderland	90	5

Wooler	170	9
Rest of North	1,200	60
West Delivery Area	860	43
Haltwhistle	290	15
Allendale	100	5
Bellingham	100	5
Haydon Bridge	140	7
Rest of West	230	12
Northumberland	17,700	885

1. The indicative housing numbers and the geographies for Alnwick and Morpeth reflect those of Made neighbourhood plans.
2. Numbers do not add up due to rounding

Delivering our housing requirements

Housing completions and existing commitments

6.19 Northumberland saw 1,531 additional homes built during 2016-17, the first year of the plan period. In addition there are over 14,500 new homes remaining to be built on already permitted development sites including many sites currently under construction, and more than 6,200 additional units as part of other applications currently minded to approve. Analysis of delivery rates and the housing trajectory (see Appendix C) suggests that there is a reasonably high degree of certainty that most of the permitted housing applications will come forward and be delivered rather than lapse before implementation. In respect of the minded to approve applications, these are subject to final approval (e.g. may be subject to a s106 agreement) and may impact on the plan should they not receive this final approval⁽¹⁴⁾. Should that be the case then the Local Plan will be amended accordingly.

6.20 While the overall number of commitments exceeds the housing number for the plan period, a number of the County's Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages have little development committed. Net additional dwellings are therefore required to meet the future needs of these communities and help to balance the County's housing market. A limited number of housing allocations are therefore proposed, predominantly in the more rural settlements in the north and west of the County.

14 At the time of writing it is intended to bring a number of minded to approve applications back to committee for reconsideration.

Given that the majority of housing already committed is general needs housing, an increased emphasis is required in this additional housing to meet the needs of an ageing population.

Table 6.2 Distribution of housing requirements and commitments in Northumberland

Local Plan Delivery Area	Housing Requirement 2016-36	Dwelling Completions 2016-17	Permitted Dwellings Outstanding to be Built at 31 March 2017	Dwellings Permitted 01 April 2017 - 31 January 2018	Minded to Approve Applications at 31 January 2018	Total Commitments at 31 January 2018
South East	9,000	747	6,251	1,170	2,865	11,033
Central	4,450	446	3,806	226	3,318 ⁽¹⁾	7,796
North	3,390	302	2,369	220	13	2,904
West	860	36	428	58	10	532
N'land	17,700	1,531	12,854	1,674	6,206	22,265

1. Includes applications for 2,443 units proposed in the Green Belt

Housing development site allocations

6.21 As indicated above, while a significant amount of development is committed in Northumberland, there are a number of locations where it is considered necessary to make housing allocations to support the spatial strategy and re-balance the County's market. Policy HOU3 below sets out the housing development site allocations (5 or more dwellings indicative capacity) considered necessary to deliver the strategic housing priorities of the County. These housing site allocations are therefore in addition to currently permitted and minded to approve sites. Neighbourhood Plan housing site allocations are not repeated here, but are set out in Appendix B.

6.22 The selection of sites is informed by the council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which includes sites on the Brownfield Land Register. The SHLAA considers the suitability, availability and potential achievability of sites for possible future housing development, together with their indicative dwellings capacity. Potentially developable sites, located in settlements where it is considered necessary to make housing allocations, have been appraised further to identify which are the most appropriate for allocation.

Policy HOU 3

Housing development site allocations

1. In accordance with the spatial strategy, the following sites, as shown on the Policies Map, are allocated for residential development:

a. South East Delivery Area [approx. 221-249 net additional homes]:

	Site allocation	Site area	Indicative number of dwellings
i	Moorside First School, Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	2.40ha	66
ii	Spital House Farm, North Seaton Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	2.06ha	78
iii	Land north-west of Spital House Farm, North Seaton Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	1.60ha	20-35
iv	Site adjacent to Arts Centre, Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	0.26ha	12-15
v	Former Brickworks, Pitt Lane, Seghill	0.87ha	20
vi	Whytrig Community Middle School, Western Avenue, Seaton Delaval	0.93ha	25-35

b. Central Delivery Area [approx. 136-195 net additional homes]:

	Site allocation	Site area	Indicative number of dwellings
i	Burn Lane Bus Depot, Tyne Green Road, Hexham	0.40ha	10-15
ii	Hospital land at Dean Street, Hexham	1.15ha	30-40
iii	West Orchard House, Allendale Road, Hexham	0.43ha	5-10
iv	Telephone Exchange, Gaprigg (East), Hexham	0.21ha	8-10
v	Telephone Exchange, Gaprigg (West), Hexham	0.30ha	10-15
vi	Prospect House, Hallgate, Hexham	0.18ha	10-18
vii	5 Battle Hill, Hexham	0.02ha	5
viii	Land at Edgewood, Hexham	0.24ha	5

6. Housing

ix	Land west of Station Road, Hexham	0.42ha	10-15
x	Bog Acre Cottage and Haulage Garage sites, Wanless Lane, Hexham	0.10ha	8
xi	Priestpottle County Buildings, Maiden's Walk, Hexham	0.16ha	5-8
xii	Graves Yard behind Army Reserve Centre, Temperley Place, Hexham	0.18ha	5-8
xiii	Land west of West Road Cemetery, West Road, Prudhoe	1.48ha	20-30
xiv	Land at Riding Farm, Riding Grange, Riding Mill	0.27ha	5-8

c. North Delivery Area [approx. 420-547 net additional homes]:

	Site allocation	Site area	Indicative number of dwellings
i	Land to rear of Roddam & Callers Court, east of Hiveacres Road and west of Goldstone, East Ord	8.20ha	150-180
ii	Land east of Etal Road, Fildon View and south of Cemetery Lane, Tweedmouth (Robert's Lodge)	4.41ha	60-90
iii	Former Coal Yard east of Northumberland Road and west of Billendean Road, Tweedmouth	3.0ha	60-80
iv	Berwick Seaview Caravan and Motorhome Site, Billendean Road, Tweedmouth	2.65ha	30-40
v	Land north of Cheviot Terrace and south of Derwent Terrace, Scremerston	1.40ha	15-20
vi	Land south of Derwent Water Terrace, Scremerston	0.78ha	10-12
vii	Land east of Broad Road, North Sunderland / Seahouses	6.13ha	80-100
viii	The Glebe Field, north of West Street, Norham	1.60ha	15-25

d. West Delivery Area [approx. 214-290 net additional homes]:

	Site Allocation	Site area	Indicative number of dwellings
i	Greystonedale Park Road, Haltwhistle	0.90ha	20-30

ii	Land to west of Park Road, Haltwhistle	2.90ha	50-65
iii	Land west of Hougill, Tyne View Road, Haltwhistle	0.16ha	5
iv	Land at West End, Tyne View Road, Haltwhistle	1.38ha	30-40
v	Haydon Bridge Fire Station, Station Road, Haydon Bridge	0.22ha	5
vi	Land west of Langley Gardens, Haydon Bridge	1.16ha	25-30
vii	Land north of Ratcliffe Road, Haydon Bridge	1.04ha	10-20
viii	Former Bellingham Auction Mart, B6320, Bellingham	1.72ha	50-65
ix	Land south of the St Michael's Church, Wark	0.76ha	6-12
x	Land west of the A68, West Woodburn	0.60ha	8-10
xi	West Woodburn Filling Station, A68, West Woodburn	0.26ha	5-8

2. Proposals for housing development on these allocated sites should:

- a. be consistent with any relevant site development briefs and masterplans to ensure comprehensive cohesive development and avoid incremental piecemeal development;
- b. reflect the identified housing needs and market considerations as identified in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment and any more recent needs assessments, including the requirement to provide integrated affordable housing; and
- c. have regard to the provision and timing of the infrastructure enhancements and services necessary to support them, both individually and cumulatively, while minimising and appropriately mitigating any adverse impacts on existing transport and utilities networks.

6.23 Through the high level of commitments across the County and the allocations set out above, the Council will meet the housing requirements set out in Policy HOU 2. To help plan, monitor and manage delivery against the Plan's strategic objectives and ensure an appropriate supply of housing land in the right locations, a 5-year housing land supply for the County as a whole will be maintained, bringing forward achievable allocated sites from later in the plan period should it be necessary to speed up delivery. In addition to the commitments and allocations set out above, in many locations the SHLAA identifies other developable sites which may come forward during the plan period, enhancing the flexibility in the housing market.

Subject to the outcome of the Council's ongoing schools review, any proposed school closure sites may provide additional and/or alternative housing allocation options for potential inclusion in Policy HOU 3, in the next version of the Local Plan.

- 6.24** To promote the development of a good mix of sites, the Government has an expectation that at least 20% of the sites identified for housing in local plans are 0.5 hectares or less.
- 6.25** While the Plan does not allocate smaller sites of less than 5 units indicative capacity, some 40% of the site allocations in Policy HOU 3 are less than 0.5ha. Furthermore, a significant number of small extant planning permissions are in place that will also help to meet this aim. Analysis of housing completions in the County over recent years reveals an annual average delivery rate on sites of less than 0.5ha of about 264pa (1,320 over the past five years), representing 23% of total net completions, with two-thirds of these being 'minor' developments of less than 10 dwellings. Monitoring data shows that approximately 11% of net additional dwelling completions over the past 5-10 years have come from changes of use and conversions. The strategic policy objective for bringing long-term empty homes back into use is most likely to also be reflected in this future supply of smaller sites.

Housing types and mix

- 6.26** Delivering a mix of high quality housing to meet people's needs and aspirations, including affordable homes and specialist needs housing, is essential for re-balancing Northumberland's housing market and enhancing the sustainability of our communities. We need to ensure that we meet the ongoing needs of the County's increasingly elderly proportion of our population, while also recognising that attracting high quality businesses to locate in Northumberland will require an adequate supply of good quality, medium density family housing, as well as 'executive' housing (although some of this need will be provided for by the effect of older people downsizing to smaller homes). We therefore want to ensure that, as far as reasonably possible, new housing constructed in the County (both market and affordable housing) is broadly in accordance with the County's predominant needs, as informed by the latest SHMA analysis of current supply and likely future demands. This applies to homes provided through all forms of development opportunities; whether on allocated, on unallocated or unanticipated 'windfall' sites, through new build housing or by way of conversions and changes of use.
- 6.27** The SHMA indicates that, in part as a consequence of the projected ageing population, the majority of need over the next 5 years is expected to be for 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom properties, together with some 1-bedroom homes. Only a small need for larger dwellings of 4-or-more bedrooms is considered necessary. In terms of dwelling types, it identifies a need split equally between houses for families upsizing and first-time buyers/movers, and bungalows or level-access accommodation for older people downsizing, together with flats. Analysis of aspirations and expectations in the SHMA however suggests a greater need for 1 and 2-bedroom bungalows and level-access flats/apartments, further emphasising the need to meet the needs of an ageing population.

- 6.28** Self-build and custom-build housing schemes are popular in Northumberland with most developments of one or two homes likely to be such one-off customised projects, particularly in and around the County's more rural settlements. The self-build sector plays an important part in enabling high standard (quality and efficiency), innovative, sustainable and environmentally-friendly housing that is aligned to individual needs and aspirations, while also sometimes being more affordable than buying new housing on the open market.
- 6.29** More than 230 individual people or couples/ households plus four community groups have currently registered on the Council's Self-Build and Custom-Build Register as having an interest in self-building or commissioning the custom-building of their own homes in Northumberland, including around 80 citing a preference for a specific area(s) of the County.
- 6.30** Permitted housing development sites currently include circa 120 plots being set-aside for potential self/ custom-build housing projects, although there is no guarantee that they will all be delivered through this sector such that some plots within larger development sites may instead be ultimately developed by the volume housebuilders. Independent self/ custom-build plot-finder websites also reveal potential opportunities for sites that may also have scope to provide for new homes.

Policy HOU 4

Housing types and mix

1. A range of good quality, energy-efficient, and affordable homes will be provided to deliver a more balanced mix of tenures and housing types and sizes, alongside supported specialist housing for older and vulnerable people. Development proposals will be assessed according to how well they meet the needs and aspirations of those living in and seeking to move to Northumberland, as identified in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
2. Community-led housing, including individual and group self-build and custom-housebuilding, will be supported and facilitated, particularly where they will contribute to meeting local housing needs including by encouraging commercial housebuilders to set-aside dedicated serviced plots for self-build and custom-build homes where appropriate within larger-scale housing sites.

Delivering affordable housing

- 6.31** Supporting the delivery of affordable homes is a priority for the Council. The Local Plan has an important role to set out policies to enable the need for affordable housing to be met through the Development Management process. Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market,

including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential workers. A full definition of affordable housing is set out in the NPPF and the glossary to this Plan.

- 6.32** The latest official ONS affordability analysis for 2017 (published April 2018) suggests that, when comparing median house prices in Northumberland (£158,000) to median full-time gross residence-based earnings in the County (£27,104pa), the average house price is currently almost six times the average salary of people living in the County (5.83), with the ratio of lower quartile house prices (£105,000) to lower quartile earnings (£20,265pa) being similar (5.18). Hence, compared to mortgage lenders' typical 3.5x household salary eligibility criteria, many households are realistically only able to consider renting as a choice of tenure at present, while modern decent homes are generally beyond the reach of the average first-time buyer.
- 6.33** The latest SHMA identifies a net affordable housing need imbalance over the initial 5 year period 2017-22 of 151 dwellings per annum (equivalent to 17% of the County's overall annual housing requirement). Given that much of the housing requirement is being met by developments which are already committed, the ability to meet the affordable housing need on the housing allocations in this plan is limited. Having taken account of the identified affordable housing need, together with the scope to deliver this need on allocations, and viability considerations, the plan requires that 20% of dwellings within new permissions to be provided as affordable housing products. However, in locations where there is a higher level of affordable housing need (as identified in a relevant published document, such as SHMA updates, local housing needs assessments and 'made' neighbourhood plans), a requirement in excess of this proportion may be required, up to a maximum 30%.
- 6.34** The Government's expectation is that 10% of homes on major housing developments will be available for affordable home ownership. Recognising this, and to meet the need for affordable housing, the SHMA recommends an equal split between affordable homes to rent and affordable home ownership products. Given the success in bringing forward discounted market value homes in recent years, it can be anticipated that this will be the primary form of affordable home ownership in the coming years. The SHMA also identifies that the majority of need is for smaller one and two bedroom properties, through that there is still need for some larger family homes.
- 6.35** The NPPF indicates that where affordable housing need is identified, policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it usually to be met on-site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution is robustly justified, to create mixed and balanced communities. It indicates that local authorities should not seek contributions towards affordable housing from developments not on 'major' sites⁽¹⁵⁾. An exception to this is in designated rural areas where a lower five dwellings-or-less threshold can be applied if considered appropriate. Given the rural nature of much of Northumberland, small development sites make a valuable contribution to the delivery of market housing, and affordable housing. To enhance the delivery of affordable housing along the Northumberland coast where there are

15 The NPPF defines 'major' development for housing as where 10-or-more homes would be provided, or the site area is 0.5ha-or-more.

significant affordability issues, developments of more than 5 units within the designated Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be expected to make an affordable housing contribution.

- 6.36** The appropriate level of affordable housing provision on any specific development proposal will however be determined on a case by case basis and informed by an understanding of the level of need and viability issues and secured by a Section 106 (S106) planning obligation agreement. This will be informed by the SHMA and any other assessments of the needs of the particular locality, together with site-specific viability considerations and the scale of any other on-site and off-site contributions that may be required through planning obligations and tariff-based infrastructure levies. The requirement will however recognise the Government's expectation that all 'major' applications for housing development should deliver at least 10% of new dwellings as affordable home ownership products as part of the overall affordable housing contribution from the site, subject to exceptions.
- 6.37** In providing affordable housing, the presumption and preference is that it is delivered on the application site itself in order to help meet local needs and promote social inclusion as part of a mixed and balanced community. On larger development sites, developers will be expected to 'pepper pot' the on-site affordable housing element of the scheme throughout the development wherever possible (subject to their viable management by an approved affordable housing provider), rather than concentrating them all in a cluster. The affordable housing provision should therefore be designed to be integrated into the overall development, both in terms of their built form and external appearance, such that the affordable homes are indistinguishable from those intended for sale. Less desirable positions within a site should not be used for locating a particular tenure. Where a developer proposes a lower level of (or zero) on-site affordable housing provision, this will need to be robustly and clearly justified within an 'open book' viability assessment submitted with the planning application, and verified and agreed by the Council.
- 6.38** Where a Section 106 financial contribution towards alternative off-site affordable housing provision is clearly justified and considered acceptable in lieu of on-site provision, the Council's commuted sum protocol will be used to determine the level of contribution expected. The expectation will generally be that the commuted sums received will be spent in the Delivery Area within which the development that has given rise to the contribution has taken place, albeit subject to needs, demands and priorities across the County as a whole. Given that affordable housing contributions from comparatively low density schemes (particularly for 'executive' style or high value homes built on large plots) are usually delivered off-site, it is recognised that a purely target-based affordable housing approach can have an inequitable effect, and therefore the in-lieu financial contribution expected will be determined in relation to the expected value of the development rather than the number of units per se. Further guidance on affordable housing provision and associated financial contributions will be set out in a forthcoming supplementary planning document (SPD).
- 6.39** In whatever form affordable housing is provided, we will seek to ensure that homes are made available at a cost that makes them accessible to local people, with legal agreements being put in place to ensure the properties remain affordable in

perpetuity. To ensure long-term availability, affordable housing should be provided through an approved Registered Provider and thus be viable for them to provide and manage.

- 6.40** The Council will monitor the delivery of new housing, including affordable homes, and review housing needs through updates of the SHMA and local housing needs assessments, such that the County's requirements may be subject to periodic review throughout the lifetime of the Plan in order to reflect the most recent evidence. If delivery fails to meet the identified ongoing needs, mechanisms to increase the delivery of affordable housing will be triggered in accordance with the Plan's Monitoring and Implementation Framework.

Policy HOU 5

Affordable housing provision

1. To deliver affordable homes to meet the needs of those not met by the market, a minimum of 20% of homes on new permissions will be expected to be provided as affordable housing products.
2. A contribution in excess of this target, up to a maximum cap of 30%, will be expected where a higher target is required by a 'made' neighbourhood plan, or where justified by evidence of a higher local need identified in a published document.
3. An affordable housing contribution will be expected on all proposals of 10-or-more units, or a site of 0.5 hectares or more. In the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty an affordable housing contribution will be expected on all proposals of 5 units or more.
4. The affordable housing contribution will be secured by a Section 106 planning obligation agreement and will be negotiable within reason on a site-by-site basis to ensure genuine affordability and to reflect local housing needs. The exact affordable housing contribution, and the appropriate tenure mix and type required, will be as evidenced by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment, an up-to-date housing needs study, local market conditions, the structure of the local housing market, and interest from Registered Providers.
5. The on-site affordable housing provision will be expected to be of the following tenures:
 - a. 50% affordable homes to rent;
 - b. 50% affordable home ownership products.
6. In order to create mixed and balanced communities, there will be a presumption that affordable housing will be provided on-site. If off-site provision or a financial contribution can be robustly justified, the following sequential policy approach will be applied:

- a. provision to be made in the settlement, or grouping of Parishes or Wards which make up the settlement, where the contribution arises;
 - b. provision to be made in an adjoining Parish or Ward;
 - c. provision to be made elsewhere in the relevant sub-housing market area as identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Area where the contribution arises;
 - d. provision to be made elsewhere in the Delivery Area where the contribution arises;
 - e. provision to be made to cross-subsidise affordable housing provision where priorities are identified throughout the County. When a commuted sum is justified in-lieu of provision on or off-site, the financial contribution expected to be provided will be in accordance with the Council's latest commuted sums protocol.
7. Progress on the delivery of affordable housing will be monitored annually through the plan, monitor, and manage approach; and the level of affordable housing need will be reviewed periodically through an update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. If delivery fails to meet the identified need, mechanisms to increase the delivery of affordable housing will be triggered in accordance with the Monitoring and Implementation Framework.

Exception sites

- 6.41** To help first-time buyers get onto the housing ladder, the Government's 'exception site' policy in the Draft NPPF supports applications for the redevelopment for entry-level homes on land not allocated for housing, unless the need for such homes is already met. It indicates that such sites should comprise a high proportion of entry level homes, adjacent to existing settlements and be of a proportionate size to them. As identified above, the SHMA identifies a need for smaller properties with 1 to 3 bedrooms. The plan will support the development of entry level exception sites where this need is not being delivered locally through existing commitments or proposed allocations.
- 6.42** Rural Exception Sites seek to help address pressing affordable housing needs of rural communities by enabling the release for development of small sites that would not normally be used for housing. Such sites are specifically for the purposes of providing affordable housing in perpetuity for households who are either current local residents or have an existing family, or employment connection (e.g. essential local workers) to the particular area. Permitted development rights will be removed to ensure that the properties remain affordable. Some market homes may be allowed on such sites where it is essential to support and cross-subsidise the viable delivery of the affordable element. Any market homes element will be restricted to occupation as a principal residence only (i.e. not for use as second or holiday homes) in order to support the overall sustainability of the community and the viability of local services. In Green Belt areas, the NPPF and Community Right to Build Order provisions for neighbourhood planning consider that limited infilling in villages and

limited small-scale affordable housing schemes for local community needs may be regarded as acceptable exceptions to the general presumption against otherwise inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Community-led housing

- 6.43** Northumberland has a particularly strong and well-developed community-led housing network, forming part of the wider independent North East Community-Led Housing Development Network coalition of community organisations, public sector bodies, housing associations and academic institutions. Community-led housing in its various forms helps to diversify the housing market and increase choice, while making a valuable contribution to the delivery of genuinely and permanent affordable homes not readily delivered by the market, including on Rural Exception Sites. It also supports urban and rural regeneration, the return of empty properties to use, and helps to strengthen and sustain local economies, with the opportunity to lever in financial resources not otherwise available to other housing providers. Community-led schemes empower local communities and give social housing tenants a stronger voice, helping them to become more self-reliant and resilient, while reducing community opposition to development. The community does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes themselves, though some may do. The local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes, and in a manner of their choosing, while there is a requirement that the benefits to the local area and/or specified community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity (eg. through an ‘asset lock’).
- 6.44** To help provide for the Northumberland’s affordable housing needs, we will support community-led housing schemes and the provision of serviced building plots below market value on larger development sites for self-build and custom-build housing, and intermediate shared ownership models in which the shell of a property is built by a Registered Provider for the self-builder to finish off.

Policy HOU 6

Exception sites

1. The development of Entry Level Exception Sites for first-time buyers or renters will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the need for such homes is not already being met and the proposal is consistent with the Plan’s spatial strategy. Development proposals should comprise a high proportion of entry level homes, be adjacent to existing settlements and be proportionate in size to them.
2. The development of Rural Exception Sites that would not normally be used for housing within, adjacent to or well-related to an existing settlement will be supported, where:

- a. the need is clearly justified and evidenced in an up-to-date housing needs study as being necessary to meet local community needs for households who are either current local residents or have an existing family or employment connection to the particular area in which the development is proposed to take place;
 - b. the development is well-related to local services and facilities, including those outside the settlement where the development is proposed to be located;
 - c. the development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the community in which it takes place and does not unjustifiably adversely impact on the natural, built and historic environment.
3. Self-build, custom-build and community-led projects will be supported through Rural Exception Sites, if they meet criteria 2 a to c.
 4. The inclusion of market housing within a Rural Exception housing scheme will only be permitted where:
 - a. the majority of the development is for affordable housing;
 - b. the provision of the market housing element will be for occupation as a principal residence only;
 - c. and it has been demonstrated that it is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the overall affordable housing scheme.

Homes for older and vulnerable people

- 6.45** The Council recognises that most people who are able to do so prefer to remain living well in their own homes for as long as possible, with or without support, while others require specialist accommodation to meet their specific needs on either a temporary or longer-term basis. We want to support residents to be able to live in their own homes wherever possible so they can lead more independent lives, promoting the provision of better housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups, whatever their requirements, including adaptable 'lifetime homes' in accessible 'lifetime neighbourhoods' that are well-designed places suitable for all people regardless of their age or disability.
- 6.46** The proportion of older people living in Northumberland is expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years as people live healthier lives and thus live for longer, with the projected levels of proportionate growth being greater than the rest of the North East and significantly more than the country as a whole. Between 2016 and 2036 there is projected to be a significant increase in those over 65 (by almost half), with those over 80 years of age doubling in number. This will clearly present significant challenges for health and social care, housing and service provision in the County, including a need to ensure that both existing and new homes are adaptable to provide flexibility for accommodating people's changing needs so they can age well in the community.

- 6.47** The needs of older people are diverse; some still have jobs or are still actively seeking work, while others have retired from work and can reorganise their lives around family responsibilities, leisure, non-vocational education and voluntary work. For some, their lives are substantially affected by long-term illness or disability and they may require additional care or specialist accommodation.
- 6.48** The Council also needs to appropriately provide for the needs of various vulnerable groups of people, such as those with complex learning needs and physical disabilities, dementia and other chronic age-related conditions, autism and enduring mental health issues. In addition, offenders and those with substance misuse disorders needing rehabilitation, and people fleeing domestic abuse or other conflicts who have become homeless for a combination of these reasons (including asylum seekers and refugees) need to be accommodated.
- 6.49** Nearly 8,000 Northumberland residents over 18 years-of-age have some form of formal care and support, with two-thirds of users being over-65. The majority of service users are supported in community settings, many in independent supported living environments with homecare packages provided where necessary, while 20% of those over-65 are in dementia residential or nursing care. There are 115 care homes in Northumberland, of which 70 are classified for older people and 29 specifically for younger adults, while the Care Quality Commission also identifies 41 other registered community care services in the County (as at 1 August 2017). A large 88-bed care home is currently under construction in Alnwick, which together with nearly 300 bedspace vacancies in existing care homes is considered to be sufficient to provide for future needs.
- 6.50** Given the projected significant increase in the County's elderly population, both from ageing and inward migration, it is anticipated that there will be significant growth in the number of older people in need of care and specialised support. However, it is also expected that there will be an increase in the numbers of adults aged 18-64 with multiple and complex needs requiring care and support.
- 6.51** The Council's strategic objective is to enable people to be able to live actively and independently in their own homes for longer within inclusive communities that minimise the potential for loneliness and social isolation. Furthermore, many of the housing requirements of older and vulnerable people can be met through general needs housing in centrally-located developments that offer high standards of accessibility in their design and proximity to local services, health and community facilities and good transport connections (including in the form of 'lifetime neighbourhoods' and 'retirement villages'). Ensuring properties allow flexibility for adaptation and enhanced accessibility features will also reduce the need for older and vulnerable people to require specialist accommodation. The Council will support the provision of homes designed to cater for the additional space and accessibility requirements of those with disabilities and specialist needs, including wheelchair circulation space and downstairs toilets.
- 6.52** The Council considers that the relatively high proportion of households in Northumberland with a resident who possesses a long-term activity-limiting illness or disability, together with the projected significant increase in elderly people, and those with mobility problems living in the County, justifies adoption through Local Plan policy of the Government's optional accessibility housing technical standards as required enhancements of Part M of the Building Regulations.

- 6.53** Taking into consideration both need and viability considerations, and the limited ability of the Plan to influence the form of new developments given the level of commitments across the County, the Plan requires all new dwellings to meet either requirement M4(2) (Accessible Dwellings and Adaptable), or requirement M4(3a) (Wheelchair Adaptable) of the Building Regulations.
- 6.54** The Council aims to reduce the number of people living with dementia or autism, in hospital beds and residential care⁽¹⁶⁾, and maximise opportunities for independent living in the community with appropriate homecare support. A mix of specialist (independent) supported housing solutions providing on-site care and support where appropriate is therefore encouraged for all client groups, tailored to the community's needs whether in urban or rural locations.
- 6.55** New dwelling provision should also take account of demands of older households for more opportunities to down-size to one and two-bedroom level-access flats and bungalows (thereby releasing larger family homes onto the market to in turn help meet those needs), as well as additional self-contained units for independent supported living, including wardened sheltered and 'extra care' accommodation that may have some shared communal facilities.
- 6.56** The preference is for new housing designed for older people to be located centrally in towns and service centres where they are accessible to local shops, community facilities and public transport, thereby supporting the local economy and integrated into and complementing the surrounding community.
- 6.57** The latest evidence indicates priority needs and opportunities for delivering supported housing are for:
- 'extra care' or specialised supported housing for older adults aged 65+ in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Rothbury, Bellingham, Morpeth, Cramlington and Hexham, as well as for specialised supported housing in Blyth and Ponteland; and
 - independent supported living schemes for adults aged 18-64 in the North of the County.

Homelessness

- 6.58** The Council has a duty to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for applicants eligible for assistance, who are unintentionally homeless, and fall within a specified priority need group. The Council's Homelessness Strategy aims to ensure that all household types are provided for.
- 6.59** Northumberland County Council also currently provides dedicated units to accommodate homeless people in Cramlington, Ashington, Hexham, Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed, while independent providers manage hostels in Hexham and Blyth. A number of bedspaces are also provided in supported housing projects in

16 Emerging Extra Care and Supported Housing Strategy and corresponding Market Position Statement for Care and Support in Northumberland

Blyth and Prudhoe, and supported accommodation for young persons in Blyth and Berwick-upon-Tweed. Further bedspaces have been commissioned in supported hostel and dispersed accommodation countywide.

- 6.60** Where there are gaps in provision identified, the Plan will support the provision of accommodation, including hostels and other homes of multiple occupation.

Refugees and asylum seekers

- 6.61** The Council has a legal duty to support refugees and asylum seekers and assist them in finding suitable accommodation. Those families accommodated to date have been housed in the South East of the County. Further families are expected to be received by the end of 2019. A number of dwellings have been procured for this purpose, with additional properties required in the future.
- 6.62** The Plan will support the provision of housing to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Policy HOU 7

Homes for older and vulnerable people

1. Housing and other residential accommodation which meets the changing needs of older people and vulnerable needs groups and which supports residents' desires to live securely and independently in their own homes and communities will be delivered wherever possible, by:
 - a. permitting the adaptation of existing homes and the provision of new adaptable 'lifetime' homes, bungalows and level-access flats, located in accessible and sustainable central locations well-served by local health, leisure, education and transport facilities;
 - b. permitting and facilitating the provision of integrated sheltered residential retirement and 'extra care' accommodation with support for older people and vulnerable adults as part of creating balanced and sustainable communities to meet identified priority needs in Main Towns and Service Centres;
 - c. permitting and enabling the provision of Use Class C2 residential care and nursing home accommodation options for those older and vulnerable people with physical disabilities and other special needs who are unable to live independently, where justified by a specialist housing need assessment;
 - d. facilitating the creation of 'lifetime neighbourhoods' and 'retirement villages' that are well-designed to be accessible for everyone, located centrally within larger settlements close to local services and community facilities, support the principles of 'active ageing', minimise the institutional character of developments and incorporate the delivery of integrated tiered support;
 - e. requiring planning applications to demonstrate in their supporting Design and Access Statement that development proposals meet the space and accessibility needs of older and vulnerable people, as well as supporting the principles of 'active ageing'.

2. To ensure that new homes are accessible and adaptable to meet the needs of residents now and in the future, and ensure a supply of dwellings which the Council can allocate to meet the needs of households that include wheelchair users, the following standards will apply except where it can be evidenced within a Design and Access Statement and/ or a Viability Statement that the provision of step-free access is not practical and/ or viable:
 - a. all new open market dwellings and 75% of affordable dwellings will be required to meet or exceed the enhanced accessibility and adaptability housing standards in compliance with Requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations; and
 - b. 25% of affordable homes will be required to meet or exceed the enhanced wheelchair adaptable standards in compliance with Requirement M4(3a) of the Building Regulations;
3. Accommodation to meet the needs of those who are made homeless, refugees and asylum seekers will be supported where an evidenced need for such accommodation is identified.

Management of housing development

- 6.63** To ensure that any adverse impacts of new residential development are minimised, the plan sets out a set of criterion against which applications will be assessed. These criterion seek to ensure development is sympathetic to the character of the area, the landscape and townscape, does not compromise amenity, and does not result in ribbon development or the merger of settlements. The criterion are also to ensure that residential developments provide the necessary infrastructure, make efficient use of land and are of a high quality of design.
- 6.64** Undeveloped land behind existing developments often presents opportunities for infill, reducing the need for settlements to expand. The use of 'backland' sites for residential use is supported in the plan when satisfactory access can be achieved. However, tandem development which relies upon a shared access will be resisted.
- 6.65** While, in accordance with the spatial strategy, new housing development in the countryside will be not supported, the redevelopment or extension of existing buildings for residential use, particularly where buildings are disused, can ensure that buildings of character can be maintained and in effective use. Such developments will be supported subject to a number of criterion.

Optional technical standards

- 6.66** The Council seeks to ensure that all homes are accessible and flexible enough to meet the needs of current and future occupiers. National guidance allows local planning authorities, where justified by local needs and subject to viability testing,

to adopt through Local Plan policy the Government's optional technical standards for housing. These relate to enhanced accessibility, water efficiency and the Nationally-Described Space Standards, and require new housing to be constructed so as to exceed the minimum standards required by Building Regulations. Policy HOU 7 above sets out the requirements in relation to maximising the accessibility and adaptability of homes for the benefit of older and vulnerable groups of people.

- 6.67** While initiatives to maximise water efficiency and use natural resources prudently as we seek to adapt to climate change are supported, it is not considered that there is sufficient justification to require new homes to meet the tighter water supply efficiency standard. Due to the presence of Kielder reservoir, Northumberland is identified by the Environment Agency to be an area of predominantly low water stress, other than a few pockets of moderate stress and a small area of high water stress on the Scottish border west of Berwick.
- 6.68** In terms of internal space standards, analysis of planning applications since 2011 suggests that the average dwelling sizes of new housing built in Northumberland generally satisfies the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS), other than for two-storey 2-bedroom homes, larger two-storey 3-bedroom homes and three-storey 3-bedroom homes. It is evident that new homes in the south east of the County in particular have tended to be somewhat smaller, such that they would not meet the recommended standards for single storey 1-bedroom, two-storey 2 and 3 bedroom and three-storey 3-bedroom dwellings, while new housing in the north of the County would not satisfy the standard for single storey 2-bedroom homes. However, while there are clearly deficiencies in some areas for some types of housing, the degree of deficiency is not considered to be to an extent that would justify requiring imposition of the NDSS through policy.
- 6.69** The Council nevertheless encourages development proposals to seek to at least satisfy the NDSS recommended sizes wherever possible, particularly in the south east of the County. It is particularly important to ensure that affordable homes for rent provide sufficient internal space in order for them to be attractive and acceptable to Registered Providers, so as to minimise the possibility of there being no end-user and the new homes consequently being lost from the affordable rented market, and sold as discounted market value housing instead.

Second and holiday homes

- 6.70** Northumberland is a popular location for people to establish second and holiday homes due to its attractive rural environment and beautiful coastline. The Census 2011 recorded 8,876 people from elsewhere in the Country as having a second home in Northumberland, 707 of which were for work purposes. However, concentrations of holiday accommodation that are only occupied for relatively short periods of the year have become particularly evident in certain locations, such as along the north Northumberland coast, and to a lesser degree accessible upland areas.
- 6.71** The Census 2011 identified that across the County, that 6.4% of household spaces had no usual residents. In a number of coastal parishes, the proportion exceeded 40%, with Beadnell in excess of 50%. While the latest Census does not distinguish

between vacant properties and second/holiday homes, the previous 2001 Census did make this distinction, and confirms that second and holiday homes make up a large proportion of the dwellings in parts of the County. The proliferation of second and holiday homes along the north Northumberland coast in particular is further evidenced through Council Tax and Business Rates data.

- 6.72** While providing some economic benefits, the lack of permanent occupation of such properties is having an adverse impact on the social fabric of affected communities as a result of diminished support for and consequent reduced viability of local facilities and schools, thus causing settlements to lose their sense of community with some services only operating at certain times of the year. Additionally, the demand for holiday accommodation in these locations, coupled with rising house prices and a limited supply and turnover of homes, has made many smaller properties unaffordable to the local population.
- 6.73** To help sustain the vitality of communities, in parishes where 20% or more of household spaces are identified in the latest Census as having no usual residents, a principal residency restriction will be applied to all new market dwellings, which will be secured through a section 106 agreement.

Policy HOU 8

Management of housing development

1. Development proposals for housing and other residential uses will be permitted where the development:
 - a. does not cause unacceptable harm to the intrinsic character, beauty or tranquillity of the countryside, either individually or cumulatively;
 - b. does not impact adversely on the townscape, landscape, form or setting of a settlement or the countryside;
 - c. does not prejudice highway safety;
 - d. does not compromise residential or general amenity, including in relation to design and layout, neighbouring uses, noise and air pollution, overlooking and privacy, outlook, over-dominance and overshadowing;
 - e. does not result in the merging or coalescence of neighbouring settlements;
 - f. does not contribute to 'ribbon' development;
 - g. provides relevant infrastructure including in relation to the need for any necessary on- and off-site enhancements and/or other planning obligation financial contributions and/or tariff-based infrastructure levy requirements;
 - h. makes efficient use of land in character with its location and surroundings, including higher residential densities in more accessible locations where appropriate;
 - i. is constructed to a high quality of design and complies with design guidance for new housing and housing extensions set out within the Northumberland Design Guide;
 - j. performs positively against Build for Life 12 principles;
 - k. contribute to a sense of place which supports community identity and pride;

- l. provides, where appropriate, multifunctional public spaces and green spaces that support different recreation and social activities, and considers opportunities for community management and stewardship to support long-term management of neighbourhoods and community facilities;
 - m. provides functional space and facilities for refuse and recycling storage which is appropriate for the development. The location and design of facilities should provide opportunities to screen or reduce their visual prominence, not impact upon amenity, health or security.
2. Residential use of vacant and under-used 'backland' sites within existing settlements will be permitted where served by a dedicated and satisfactory vehicular access. The subdivision of large private gardens to create 'tandem' housing developments sharing a common driveway access will not be permitted.
3. Residential redevelopment and the extension of existing buildings in the countryside outside settlement boundaries, including the re-use of redundant or disused buildings, will be permitted where:
 - a. the existing building or structure makes a positive contribution to the character of the area, and is capable of conversion without complete or substantial rebuilding, disproportionate extension or unsympathetic alterations;
 - b. the extension of an existing dwelling or other householder development is within the curtilage of the existing property and is incidental to the existing dwelling, and/or
 - c. development facilitates homeworking; the development would not result in the unjustified loss of a community service or facility.
4. New dwellings within parishes identified in the latest Census with 20% or more household spaces with no usual residents will only be supported where first and future occupation is restricted in perpetuity to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a 'principal residence'. This restriction will be secured through a section 106 agreement.

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.74** Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople communities are distinct groups with their own culture and traditions. The Council has a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 and national planning policy to facilitate the traditional and nomadic way of life for ethnic gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople, while respecting the interests of the settled community, including promoting social inclusion and ensuring that they have fair and equal access to accommodation that meets their needs. National policy aims to increase significantly the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations, while local authorities are required to provide for a five-year supply of suitable, realistic and deliverable gypsy and traveller residential caravan pitches together with identifying broad locations to meet the community's needs for future years.

- 6.75** The latest Government figures recorded 138 traveller caravans on authorised sites in Northumberland in 2017, while there were no recorded incidences of unauthorised encampments. However, these caravan counts are ‘snapshots’ and the Council continues to record mainly small, short-lived incidences of unauthorised encampments which, along with statistics on household formation and other factors, have informed the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2018 Update).
- 6.76** The Council currently owns and manages two gypsy and traveller sites providing 38 pitches, at Hartford Bridge near Bedlington and at Lyneburn Cottages/ Shore Road near Lynemouth. Additionally, there is an 18-pitch privately owned site in Berwick-upon-Tweed plus a couple of small family-owned sites in the north and south east of the County. While there are currently no formal authorised transit sites or stopping places in the County, stopover needs are frequently satisfied through informal arrangements with local farmers and other landowners.
- 6.77** Taking into account projected household formation rates, the need to accommodate demand from those wishing to move out of bricks-and-mortar housing, the likelihood of pitches becoming vacant and the potential for unauthorised encampments, our latest GTAA (2018 Update) suggests that there is no immediate need for additional permanent pitches to be provided. However there is likely to be a need to provide for up to eight additional gypsy and traveller caravan pitches in Northumberland over the period 2023-36; seven in the south east, and one in the north. The likely need for a transit site of 4-8 pitches is also identified to address the remaining unauthorised encampment issue. These needs call for a solution in the medium term in the south east of the County, and it is considered that some of the need for transit pitches could be addressed by the provision of permanent pitches. As such, a site search within the Blyth/Ashington/Bedlington area will commence with a view to facilitate increased provision, and allocating a site when this Local Plan is next reviewed if the most up to date evidence supports this at the time. The assessment undertaken also indicates a continued need to provide semi-formal (emergency) stopover arrangements, including on the summer east-west Appleby Horse Fair route, subject to further discussions with Durham County Council on a potential joint approach.
- 6.78** For the **travelling showpeople community** actively involved in travelling to work at fairgrounds and events, the privately-owned and managed Showmen’s Guild yard at Bomarsund near Stakeford in South East Northumberland currently provides 30 plots for caravans and the storage of equipment related to their businesses. Our updated Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment identified a likely need to provide additional travelling showpeople plots over the plan period to take account of projected household formation within this community. This may well lead to the travelling showpeople community seeking to add plots and/or further extend their yard. As far as possible, the Council will be supportive of such proposals as it is considered that scope exists without the need to allocate new land for this purpose.
- 6.79** As a first principle in the determination of applications for new gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople facilities, consideration will be given to any existing sites in the County, while support will be given to the development of long-term sustainable sites in appropriate locations which should help to reduce the potential for unauthorised encampments. The criteria set out in Policy HOU 9 are considered

to be essential for the provision of satisfactory sites, while recognising that individual plots and sites for travelling showpeople should also have regard to the layout principles advised by the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.

Policy HOU 9

Provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

1. To facilitate the way of life of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities within the context of Northumberland's environment, economy and its settled communities, the Council will make provision for the necessary sites and/or yards, and additional pitches and/or plots over the plan period to meet the need identified by the latest Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
2. Provision will be sought in the Ashington, Blyth and Bedlington area on sites for up to 12 permanent or transit pitches to meet the medium or longer term accommodation needs.
3. The provision of additional plots to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople will be permitted through the expansion of the existing yard at Bomarsund.
4. The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining the allocation of sites or extensions to existing sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and in determining planning applications:
 - a. Proposals will not be permitted in areas designated as Green Belt;
 - b. The site will be well related to local services and facilities, including jobs, shops, schools, medical facilities and public transport;
 - c. The proposal will be well screened and landscaped and not cause unacceptable harm to ecosystems or the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including any unacceptable impact on water bodies, water quality, biodiversity and / or heritage assets;
 - d. The site will have safe vehicular access from the highway and adequate parking provision and turning areas as well as space for storage of equipment;
 - e. The proposal will not result in disturbance or loss of amenity to any neighbouring residential properties, settled communities or places of visitor accommodation;
 - f. The internal amenity of the site will be secured through the provision of essential infrastructure and on-site facilities, including water supply, sewerage, and waste removal/recycling, work areas and play areas.

7. Connectivity and Movement

Introduction

- 7.1** The Local Plan seeks to create a sustainable pattern of development which will result in a reduction in the need to travel, with the majority of development focused in the most sustainable locations. Living closer to jobs, education, services and amenities and making the most of communication technologies can lead to more sustainable travel, reduced carbon emissions and more sustainable and enduring communities in the long term.
- 7.2** The alignment of improvements to transport and connectivity with development and economic growth supported by investment in infrastructure is a key objective of the plan. Removing the need for motorised travel and improving the design and implementation of accessible transport systems supports positive health and wellbeing. Creating public spaces that are open and accessible, green spaces/routes and designing our systems to improve accessibility all play a role in what people do and encourage active travel.
- 7.3** The critical importance of ensuring connectivity is fully recognised. The Local Plan seeks to maintain and support a local transport system and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) connections that are resilient and responsive to changing needs. There are a number of emerging technologies that have the potential to become mainstream and the Local Plan should enable such enhancements to come forward.
- 7.4** Northumberland is the most sparsely populated County in England; there are challenges of connecting remote rural communities, and sometimes unavoidable reliance upon car based travel. Northumberland is interdependent with neighbouring areas, including the city regional economies of both Tyne and Wear and Edinburgh. These factors present specific issues for ensuring the mobility of knowledge, people, goods and services. Effective connections across boundaries will remain crucial to the County's success.

Regional and local transport strategies, plans and policies

- 7.5** The Local Plan is one of a range of strategies and plans that address connectivity and access matters. Regional and Local Transport Bodies and Strategies include:
- **Transport for the North** - A sub national statutory body with a strategic investment framework;
 - **North East Local Enterprise Partnership** - Have produced a Strategic Economic Plan for the North East - which sets out the strategic ambitions for the region;
 - **North of Tyne Combined Authority** - The emerging North of Tyne Combined Authority will report through a joint transport committee having responsibility for strategic transport in the region and covers the local authority areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. It's transport role will be critical in supporting a growing economy;

- **Local Transport Plan** and accompanying Implementation Plan produced by Northumberland County Council sets out the priorities; and
- **Northumberland Economic Strategy** produced by Northumberland County Council and accompanying delivery framework.

7.6 The strategic context of these plans has been addressed through the development of Northumberland's Local Plan and key policies developed which address: Sustainable connections within and beyond development; Core Strategic and Local Road Network connections; Safeguarding existing and future rail infrastructure; the Airport; and Ports and Harbours.

Promoting sustainable connections

7.7 The NPPF highlights that the Local Plan should support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport and consideration of disabled access.

7.8 The environmental impact of transport choices affects public health. Poor air quality, early mortality and climate change are less obvious impacts and the focus of policy is often on economic growth and safety. Patterns of development that locate jobs, housing and recreation in close proximity increase the potential for walking, cycling and public transport and associated potential improvements to air quality.

7.9 Well designed and safe access routes encourage walking. Streets and public spaces play an important part as areas for social interaction. Within the hierarchy of sustainable modes, pedestrians are a priority and developing links and facilities into the existing networks is a key consideration for all development through the plan period. There is a need to protect and enhance networks for everyday walking, cycling and horse riding but also the recreational networks that form an important component of the visitor and tourism economy.

7.10 Northumberland has an extensive public rights of way network along with more informal routes. This network provides access for walking, cycling and horse riding. Cycling infrastructure includes cycle routes which are not public rights of way. The Council will look to protect and enhance the coverage, standards and safety of these networks in accordance with the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

7.11 The Council will work with partners to create and develop the strategic cycling network across the County. Cycle hubs to support tourism and leisure use will be positively supported. Cycle parking will be required at key destinations, rail stations and at developments to facilitate sustainable choices.

7.12 Northumberland currently hosts car club facilities delivered by Co-wheels. Electric vehicle charging is available at a variety of locations across the County. The Council will support the development of Co-wheels and Electric Vehicle charging facilities in the County in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers.

- 7.13** Opportunities to maximise bus services inevitably vary between urban and rural areas. The timetabling and funding of public transport services, use of public rights of way and the cycle route network lie outside the scope of the planning system, however the Local Plan provides a positive planning policy framework for the improvement of facilities and networks.
- 7.14** Behavioural change by enabling people to make smarter choices to walk, cycle or use public transport more for journeys to work, home, school and leisure destinations, especially in the towns within the County, is a priority that the Council will work towards. The important link between Health and Wellbeing and transport should be recognised and considered from a development site to a strategic level.
- 7.15** Travel information, road safety and demand management measures also play a vital part alongside traditional infrastructure improvements to support sustainable modes.

Policy TRA 1

Promoting sustainable connections

1. The Council will work collaboratively to:
 - a. Reduce the need to travel;
 - b. Support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport; and
 - c. Support a local transport system and network that is resilient and responsive to changing needs.
2. In assessing development proposals the Council will:
 - a. Promote a spatial distribution of development, which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
 - b. Promote good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
 - c. Promote sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
 - d. Ensure delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
 - e. Protect, enhance and support public rights of way;
 - f. Support the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers
 - g. Require development to roll out facilities to connect Electric Vehicles; and
 - h. Require development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by transport assessments/transport statements, and travel plans, and where appropriate delivery/servicing plans.

3. Where there is a justified need for the impacts of development to be mitigated, conditions, obligations and other contributions will be applied and sought.

Connections with Northumberland's transport network

- 7.16** A comprehensive system of local highways is essential for connecting Northumberland's communities, residents, services and jobs. To ensure a network suitable for the plan period and beyond is developed, the Local Plan seeks to prioritise the opportunities for non-car trips and a reduction in carbon emissions, however, it has to be recognised that there will still be a need to facilitate motorised transport journeys, including as a result of new development.
- 7.17** The Northumberland Highways Design Guide will set out parking requirements associated with new development. On- and off-street parking is dealt with by the Council's emerging Parking Strategy. Travel Plan Guidance will ensure developments across the County will pay due regard to facilitating and encouraging travel by sustainable means. The Council recognises the importance of making best use of space within town centres and will work to improve and enhance areas through development opportunities.
- 7.18** The Council will work with our adjacent authorities on the promotion of sustainable transport measures and focus on main travel corridors to support development within and beyond the region.

Policy TRA 2

The effects of development on the transport network

1. In assessing development proposals, all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:
 - a. Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;
 - b. Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;
 - c. Minimise conflict between different modes, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;
 - d. Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary;
 - e. Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and
 - f. Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality.

2. The submission of Design and Access Statements will be required where appropriate.
3. Where there is a justified need for the impacts of development on the network to be mitigated, conditions, obligations and other contributions will be applied and sought.
4. Travel Plans and School Travel plans will be required, where appropriate, to guide the determination of impact, shape proposals and provide an appropriate design with accompanying mitigation and contributions as required to the benefit of the scheme and the wider area.

Connections with Northumberland's core road network

7.19 The table below identifies Northumberland's core road network and the highway authorities responsible for these roads.

Table 7.1 Core road network in Northumberland

Strategic Road Network (Trunk Roads) (Managed by Highways England)	National Primary Routes (Managed by Northumberland County Council)
A1(T) A19(T) A69(T)	A68 A189 A696 A697 A1068 (part)

7.20 Northumberland's core road network plays an important economic role in facilitating the movement of people and freight across Northumberland whilst providing connections to the neighbouring authorities and the wider region. It is therefore critical that the network is fit for purpose.

7.21 Improvements to the Strategic Road network currently include 13 miles of upgrade to dual the carriageway linking Morpeth and Alnwick bypasses with the dual carriageway near Ellingham. This will create a continuous, high-quality dual carriageway from Newcastle to Ellingham enabling greater access to and from Northumberland. Also confirmed are proposals for enhancing the performance and safety of the A1 to the north of Ellingham, with measures including climbing lanes, enhanced junctions and improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The longer-term vision is to upgrade the full route to Expressway Standard.

- 7.22** The Council will continue to work with Highways England on the further assessment, development and implementation of these schemes, and to determine the necessary phasing of the improvements and how these will coincide with the delivery and phasing of the Plan's developments. The work has helped to identify appropriate means and mitigation to address the impacts of development including:
- A19/A189 Moor Farm roundabout; and A19/Dudley Lane junctions;
 - A1/A19 Seaton Burn interchange and A19/Fisher Lane junction;
 - The A1/A19 southbound merge at Seaton Burn;
 - The A1 south of the North Brunton junction.
- 7.23** The studies of the 'A1 in Northumberland' (Highways England) and the 'Northern Trans-Pennine routes' (Highways England / Department for Transport) will identify measures along those corridors of the strategic road network. In addition to this the Council will need to explore the opportunities related to the emerging DFT Major Road Networks which covers the road network with sub regional significance including access to the County's main ports.
- 7.24** The Countywide Transport Assessment has assessed key parts of the local highway network, and has identified where future development may give rise to issues on the local network. Similarly, to the analysis of the core road network, it has helped to identify appropriate means of mitigation to address the impacts of development both individually (for potential significant scale future developments) and cumulatively. This includes opportunities for removing non-essential traffic from the highway network, shifting to more sustainable modes, physical measures to address movement and capacity constraints, including effective traffic management and signage.
- 7.25** A review of the need for new schemes in the form of settlement bypasses or link roads has been undertaken. A number of schemes identified by the former District Councils have been re-appraised to consider their appropriateness, feasibility and deliverability. Strategic Regional and Local Transport policies combined with the need to prioritise infrastructure investment result in a number of County priorities. Land required for improvements beyond the highway boundary will form the basis of safeguarded land policies.
- 7.26** As the local economy develops, new freight movement patterns may emerge including that of abnormal loads, which the Local Core Road networks must be flexible enough to accommodate. The Council will work with partners in the region, including freight management groups, throughout the plan period.
- 7.27** Strengthening links to neighbouring authorities beyond the North East region, Scotland and Cumbria, including access to freight facilities is important to support economic development in the north. Drivers making long-distance journeys need access to safe and secure parking facilities, with suitable catering and sanitation provision.
- 7.28** The Countywide Transport Assessment and Strategic Road Network Evidence base have helped to appraise the individual and cumulative impacts of development on the Local Core Road network. The work has informed the Northumberland Infrastructure Delivery Plan and its prioritisation of infrastructure investments, including in the Core Road network.

Policy TRA 3

Improving Northumberland's core road network

1. In assessing development proposals, support will be given to the maintenance and improvement of Northumberland's core road network by:
 - a. The creation of additional capacity and improvement measures on the Strategic Road network, including for:
 - i. Improvements to the A19/A189 Moor Farm and A19/Dudley Lane junction;
 - ii. Improvements to the A1/A19 Seaton Burn interchange and A19/Fisher Lane junction;
 - iii. Improvements to the A1 southbound merge at Seaton Burn;
 - iv. The A1 south of the North Brunton junction; and
 - v. Any improvement measures emanating from the strategic studies of the 'A1 in Northumberland' and 'Northern Trans-Pennine routes'.
 - b. Supporting and identifying acceptable lines and areas of improvements through the plan period including for the:
 - i. Full dualling of the A1 through Northumberland and improved local links/junctions to the A1; and
 - ii. Full dualling of the A69 west of Hexham and improved local links/junctions to the A69.
 - c. Working collaboratively with stakeholders, including Highways England, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Combined Authority to deliver continued improvements to the core road network;
 - d. Influencing the management, movement and routing of road freight to best effect, while minimising adverse impacts on the environment and communities.
2. Land will be safeguarded at the following locations to support Strategic Road Network improvements:
 - a. A19/A189 Moor Farm and A19/Dudley Lane junction;
 - b. A1/A19 Seaton Burn interchange and A19/Fisher Lane junction;
 - c. Improvements to the A1 southbound merge at Seaton Burn through to North Brunton Interchange;
 - d. A69/ B6531.
3. In assessing development proposals, support will be given to the maintenance and improvement of Northumberland's core Local Road Network. Land will be safeguarded in the following locations to support the progression of the following Local Road Network Improvement schemes:
 - a. Ponteland Bypass;

- b. Newbiggin/Ashington link;
 - c. Blyth Link Road;
 - d. Stobhill Loansdean link, Morpeth;
 - e. East-West Link, Cramlington; and
 - f. Lancastrian Road, Cramlington.
4. Support will be given through to development and creation of freight and logistics and lorry parking including:
 - a. Extension to Purdy Lodge; and
 - b. As part of new schemes improvements through the A1 / A69 dualling proposals.
 5. Where a justified need is identified the impacts of any related development are to be mitigated with conditions, obligations and other contributions sought to ensure that the development accords with the policies of the wider plan.

Safeguarding existing and future potential rail infrastructure

- 7.29** Rail lines can have major positive benefits for the local economy and the environment. As well as reducing transport-related emissions, railway lines can also provide wildlife corridors and valuable habitats for plants and wildlife. Across Northumberland there are a number of rail routes providing both local and longer distance services for passengers and / or freight. Many of the local services are operating at capacity during peak periods with continuing increasing demands for travel.
- 7.30** The South East Northumberland corridor from the Seaton Valley to Ashington currently does not have rail passenger services. A key priority of the Council is the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line (formerly known as the Ashington, Blyth, Tyne Line). This will help facilitate development growth across the South East Delivery Area. The line has significant potential to improve links between the towns, encourage access to employment opportunities, and incentivise employers to locate in South East Northumberland, in addition to its current freight transport role. Significant steps have been made in taking long held aspirations for the line forward. This includes progressing plans through a Network Rail Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) study and assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised, including station location, service frequency and considering the infrastructure that would be required to support the development and operation of the line. This includes any infrastructure requirements at level crossings to ensure safe operation of the rail network and minimise delay on the surrounding road network. Depending on the outcome of this work, some development may be required within the Green Belt. Subject to the on-going appraisal work and development needs identified, the Council may need to prepare a Development Plan Document to deal specifically with the Northumberland Line.

- 7.31** A further opportunity may be available in the long term, to link Ponteland to the Tyne and Wear Metro system. A dismantled railway alignment⁽¹⁷⁾ suggests a possibility for extension of the existing Metro network beyond its existing terminus at Newcastle Airport. Such potential would need to be subject to further investigation.
- 7.32** In addition, there is potential for the reopening of other lines and stations across Northumberland, for example:
- The South Tynedale Railway which has potential to link the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the national railway network at Haltwhistle;
 - The Aln Valley Railway, which would not only provide a new visitor attraction but would also open a transport corridor between Alnwick and the East Coast Main Line at Alnmouth;
 - The potential reopening of Belford Station on the East Coast Main Line and Gilsland Station on the Tyne Valley Line.
- 7.33** Existing rail services between Newcastle and Carlisle and Newcastle and Edinburgh serve a number of settlements in Northumberland. The Council will work collaboratively with stakeholders along the Tyne Valley Line and the East Coast Main Line to deliver continued improvements to the network, stations and facilities. The Council recognise the benefit of rail services to the most remote communities.
- 7.34** In order to maximise opportunities for the movement of goods, minerals and waste by rail there is a need to safeguard existing rail freight interchanges in Northumberland. Identified potential includes an additional rail facility near West Sleekburn for the transport of waste. Existing freight facilities at the former Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium smelter are also a valuable asset. Some rail freight facilities are privately owned and/or operated. There is a need to ensure that the infrastructure is safeguarded for future use.

Policy TRA 4

Rail transport and safeguarding facilities

1. Development which would prejudice the retention of rail transport facilities will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities.

The Northumberland Line

2. A key priority of the Council is to secure the future reintroduction of passenger rail services on the existing line between Benton Junction and Woodhorn ('The Northumberland Line'), provided that any significant adverse impact on the environment and communities can be mitigated. Development which would

¹⁷ As identified in the Nexus Metro Strategy 2030 Background Information and the North East Combined Authority document "The combined future of Metro and Local Rail in the North East" Background Document.

prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be permitted.

3. Site for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
 - a. Woodhorn
 - b. Ashington
 - c. Bedlington Station
 - d. Blyth Bebside
 - e. South Newsham
 - f. Seaton Delaval
 - g. Seghill (future phase)
 - h. Northumberland Park (North Tyneside)

Local Rail Services

4. Development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the following lines will not be permitted:
 - a. South Tynedale Railway linking the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the Tyne Valley Line at Haltwhistle;
 - b. Aln Valley Railway linking Alnwick with Alnmouth; and
 - c. Former railway track bed between Newcastle Airport Metro Station and Ponteland.
5. The route and alignment of disused railway lines, together with land identified for potential stations will be safeguarded. Development which would prejudice their future use for passenger and freight transport will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities for future use. The Council will support proposals for the use of such routes for walking and cycling, where it will safeguard them for future rail use.

Freight Rail Services

6. Existing rail freight facilities will be safeguarded and the principle of improvement to infrastructure will be support at the following locations:
 - a. Battleship Wharf, Port of Blyth;
 - b. Former Rio Tinto Alcan facilities:
 - i. Aluminium Smelting Plant Lynefield Park; and
 - ii. Lynemouth Power Station;
 - c. Alumina handling facilities, Port of Blyth; and
 - d. Tweedmouth Goods Yard.

7. Infrastructure associated with the transport of minerals will also be safeguarded.

Rail Transport and Facilities

8. The Council will work with rail and public transport operators and local communities to maintain and develop existing rail services and connections including along the East Coast Main Line and promote the development of public transport interchanges at key locations along the main East Coast Main Line, Tyne Valley rail line and the Northumberland Line.
9. Support will be given to proposals to improve the flow of passengers and freight by rail, including:
 - a. Improvements to car and cycle parking provision at stations;
 - b. Improvements to the frequency and quality of passenger rail services stopping at Northumberland stations;
 - c. Improvements to station facilities provided that they would not result in an unacceptable impact on the environment and communities.
 - d. Land will be safeguarded at the following locations for improvements to station parking: Alnmouth, Berwick, Cramlington, Morpeth and Prudhoe.
10. Development which would prejudice the retention of these facilities will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities.

Newcastle International Airport

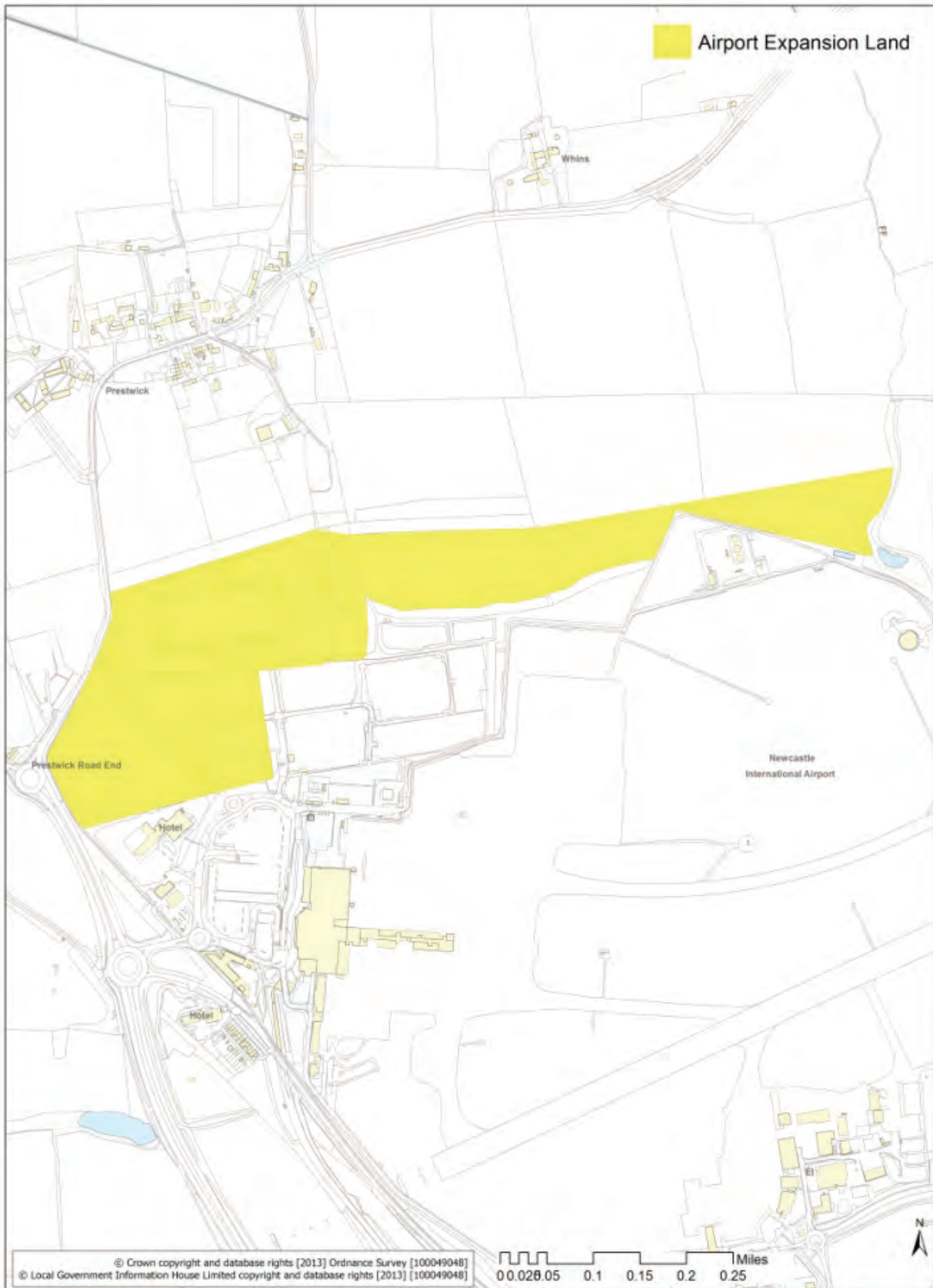
- 7.35** Newcastle International Airport is an important economic driver for investment and jobs in the North East, including Northumberland, and an international gateway for business and tourism, as well as freight. Part of the northern side of the operational area of the Airport is within Northumberland.
- 7.36** Improving links to Newcastle Airport and strategic connectivity supports the Airport, economic growth and UK competitiveness, whilst multimodal connections support businesses and customers.
- 7.37** The Council will continue to work with Newcastle International Airport operators and Newcastle City Council regarding airport-related development. In line with the options for airport development as identified in the Airport's Masterplan 2013-30 and the Newcastle Gateshead Local Plan, land to the north will be protected.

Policy TRA 5

Newcastle International Airport

1. In assessing development proposals, the Council will support the sustainable development of Newcastle International Airport.
2. In order to allow for future sustainable growth of the airport and ancillary uses directly related to the functioning of the airport 15 hectares of expansion land is allocated to the north of Newcastle International Airport. This will accommodate possible growth for passenger or freight facilities and activities supplementary to the airport's operation.

Figure 7.1 Newcastle Airport - Expansion Land



Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities

7.38 Although ports are subject to a separate national policy statement, the Local Plan is required to take account of their role within the County. There are 11 ports, harbours and beach launches in Northumberland.

Ports

7.39 The Port of Blyth is the main functioning port in Northumberland, capable of handling large freight vessels. It is significant in the context of proposals to promote strategic economic uses around the Blyth Estuary, including in respect of renewable and offshore industries, for which the Port has already established its reputation. Handling up to 2 million tonnes of cargo per annum with particular expertise in the energy, project cargo, container, dry bulk and break bulk. High quality warehousing is also available for shipping and non shipping uses. The Port of Blyth is planning for further expansion in its capacity over the coming years. Development that supports the Port including opportunities at Blyth Estuary, Ashwood Business Park and Lynefield Park will be supported.

7.40 The port of Berwick-upon-Tweed is an important small commercial port supporting the wider area and it is capable of handling larger freight vessels and has an important role in increasing exports and catering to the visitor economy.

7.41 It is expected that both ports will continue to play a key role in the County's economy including in facilitating the sustainable transport of freight.

Harbour and beach launch facilities

7.42 Much of Northumberland's coastline, estuaries and inshore waters carry international, national and local designations, acknowledging the importance of their landscapes, rivers and seas and the biodiversity which they support. There is the Northumberland Coast AONB, North Northumberland Heritage Coast, European Marine Sites, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, and local designations. Further detail is provided in the Environment chapter. The development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes place within, and must therefore be sensitive to, these and other relevant designations. These areas including designated and non-designated heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced with development proposals.

7.43 The Council will continue to work with Harbour Commissions, Trust Ports, the Marine Management Organisation and other statutory bodies to ensure that the development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes account of the sensitivity of the marine environment and related shoreline environmental issues. Developers should liaise with the Marine Management Organisation and Natural England where appropriate, and will have regard to the requirements of the Marine Policy Statement.

Policy TRA 6

Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities

Ports

1. In assessing development proposals the Council will support:
 - a. The expansion of port facilities to allow growth in sustainable sea based freight movement;
 - b. Development at Ports of Blyth, Berwick, Amble;
 - c. Connections to the industries they serve; and
 - d. New Freight movement patterns and suitable vehicular routes.

Harbour and beach launch facilities

2. In assessing development proposals the Council will require:
 - a. The development of harbour and beach launch facilities to maintain and sustainably grow the fishing industry; and
 - b. Appropriate leisure and tourism developments, provided that they will not adversely impact on the functioning of commercial port and harbour activities, including the fishing industry.

Environmental considerations

3. Development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities will be planned and implemented, taking full account of the interaction between communities, the local economy and the environment. This will include careful consideration of the statutory purposes and sensitivity of, and potential impacts on the Northumberland Coast AONB, North Northumberland Heritage Coast, European Marine Sites, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, and local designations.
4. Development proposals for such facilities will be required to demonstrate that:
 - a. The development would not result in a net loss of inter-tidal or sub-tidal habitat;
 - b. The development would not impact on fish migration; and
 - c. There will be no adverse impact on water quality during construction and during the operation of such facilities.

Digital connectivity

- 7.44** The Council supports the extension and enhancement of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure across the County provided it will not have significant adverse impacts on the environment or local communities which would otherwise outweigh its social and economic benefits.

Planning for wireless telecommunications and broadband infrastructure

- 7.45** Better connectivity provides social and economic benefits to residents and businesses throughout Northumberland. It can help businesses, particularly those in rural areas, to grow and remain competitive; and it can provide environmental benefits through reducing the need to travel. Digital connectivity can also facilitate learning and skills development as well as allowing access to community and other services online.
- 7.46** The government is clear that local authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, nor should they insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development, such as housing or schools. Whilst perceived health concerns can be a material planning consideration, the government has advised⁽¹⁸⁾ that the planning system is not the appropriate place for prescribing health safeguards. For this reason, Policy ICT 1 does not deal with health concerns.
- 7.47** The iNorthumberland project, funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Northumberland County Council, aims to provide fibre broadband to at least 95% of homes and businesses in Northumberland by the end of 2018. Providing digital connectivity across the County will increase the competitiveness of Northumberland businesses and provide opportunities for home-working. There is still, however, a need to ensure that any potential adverse impacts of such infrastructure on the environment and local communities are minimised.
- 7.48** Policy ICT 1 establishes criteria to be used in the determination of proposals to provide infrastructure for wireless telecommunications and for the extension and enhancement of the broadband network across Northumberland. Wireless telecommunications infrastructure includes: the cellular network (3G, 4G and 5G); fixed wireless (such as microwave); low power Internet of Things (IoT) technologies; and WiFi, as well as future technologies.
- 7.49** Criteria set out in Policy ICT 1 should be applied in the assessment of development proposals in conjunction with appropriate policies elsewhere in the Local Plan when considering the impact of development on: landscape character; sites and species of ecological importance; and heritage assets.

18 Paragraph 46, National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Policy ICT 1

Planning for wireless telecommunications and broadband infrastructure

Infrastructure delivering wireless telecommunications and the enhancement and extension of broadband infrastructure will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:

- a. The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus, infrastructure and any associated structures and access routes are located and designed to minimise their impact on the accessibility and visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- b. Where apparatus, infrastructure and any associated structures are located on a building, they should be sited and designed to minimise their impact on the external appearance of the host building; and
- c. Where a new mast is proposed, the applicant should demonstrate that the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, sites, masts or other structures has been explored and found not to be feasible.

New development

- 7.50** The ability to access information and services through wireless and broadband facilities is an important part of modern life. Digital connectivity can add to the overall sustainability of a development proposal. The ability for occupiers, visitors and residents in new development to connect to a digital network is an important material planning consideration in this context. Policy ICT 2 seeks to ensure that new development includes the necessary infrastructure to facilitate digital connectivity at the time new development is brought into use.

Policy ICT 2

New developments

All new dwellings and business premises should be provided with the infrastructure necessary to allow the property to be served by a fibre broadband connection which can be installed on an open access basis, prior to first occupation of the development, unless it can be demonstrated that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable.

Infrastructure alignment

- 7.51** The construction of new roads and other transport corridors provides opportunities to deliver infrastructure, such as ducting for broadband and telecommunications, to support and help facilitate the delivery of those services. Policy ICT 3 seeks to

ensure that opportunities to align infrastructure provision are not missed in the interest of securing efficient and timely provision of services. Such an approach will help to improve the viability of the delivery of broadband and telecommunications infrastructure.

Policy ICT 3

Infrastructure alignment

1. As part of all infrastructure projects, consideration must be given to the provision of appropriate ducting for future broadband and telecommunications infrastructure.
2. Developers are required to demonstrate that they have investigated all practicable means by which broadband and telecommunications infrastructure can be provided in consultation with telecommunications providers and operators during the design of their project. That infrastructure should then be provided as part of the project unless it can be demonstrated that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable.

Capacity

7.52 All residents, businesses and visitors should be able to access stable and efficient broadband and telecommunications connections. New development gives rise to the need to access existing broadband and telecommunications infrastructure and services. Increase in the number of connections and resulting usage can impact on the capacity of existing networks. Existing network capacity should not be adversely impacted from new development. Policy ICT4 seeks to ensure that adequate evidence is presented alongside development proposals showing the impact development may have on network capacities.

Policy ICT 4

Network capacity

1. Evidence must be provided by applicants for development proposals that may impact on the capacity of existing broadband and telecommunications infrastructure demonstrating that no significant adverse impact on infrastructure capacity would arise from that development.
2. Where significant adverse impacts are likely to arise, a scheme of mitigation, including the implementation of enhancements to capacity where necessary, will be required prior to occupation of the development unless it can be demonstrated that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable.

8. Environment

Introduction

- 8.1** Northumberland's environment is distinctive and valued; it is a significant asset. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages within the County are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond.
- 8.2** The natural environment of Northumberland is distinguished by a unique pattern of geology, natural landforms, river systems and soils. While these strongly influence the landscape and wildlife, much of what is valued can be attributed to human influence. Many of the most attractive landscapes and much of the wildlife reflect the turbulent social and economic history, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacturing, commerce, the building and expansion of communities and, most recently, tourism.
- 8.3** The County's rich cultural heritage has left a diverse legacy of well-preserved archaeological sites, buildings and other assets. In terms of the built environment, many of the County's main historic landmarks, as well as the distinctive character of traditional market towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads have their origin in the ancient, mediaeval and pre-industrial history. The more recent past has also created distinctive buildings, structures and townscapes, which continue to evolve.
- 8.4** The biodiversity elements of the landscape and the architectural and historic fabric which they support can be fragile and require protection. One of the Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan seeks to conserve and enhance Northumberland's distinctive environment. This will have wider benefits to the community, through positive effects on physical and mental health, and for the local economy, through continuing to attract visitors and investment to the County.
- 8.5** The conservation and enhancement of Northumberland's environment requires an ecosystem approach which looks beyond designated sites and protected species to consider natural systems as a whole and fully recognise the value of Natural Capital (the stock of minerals, soils, air, water and species that exist around us) in terms of the ecosystem services that it provides. Ecosystem services are the things that nature does for us such as pollination of crops, storage of carbon in wood and peat, the regulation of flooding in wetlands and the health and wellbeing benefits that people derive from contact with nature. The ecosystem approach, adopted within the Local Plan, aims to integrate plan-making and development management into the management of natural systems across wide areas. This will, in turn, inform the levels of protection to be given to sites and species.
- 8.6** In the context of the ecosystem approach, and recognising the health, social and economic benefits derived from the enjoyment of Northumberland's rich natural, historic and built environment, the Council will work with relevant lead authorities, land and property owners, local communities and groups, developers, adjoining local planning authorities and Local Nature Partnerships to:
- Identify opportunities for appropriate environmental enhancements, including:

- i. Habitat improvement, restoration and creation;
 - ii. Landscape enhancement in accordance with valued characteristics; and
 - iii. Restoring, enhancing and bringing into viable use heritage assets.
- Gather, record and update evidence to advance understanding of the significance of Northumberland's natural and historic environment and heritage assets; and
 - Identify opportunities to make information on assets widely accessible and promote the enjoyment of the physical and cultural components of these assets.

Designated areas

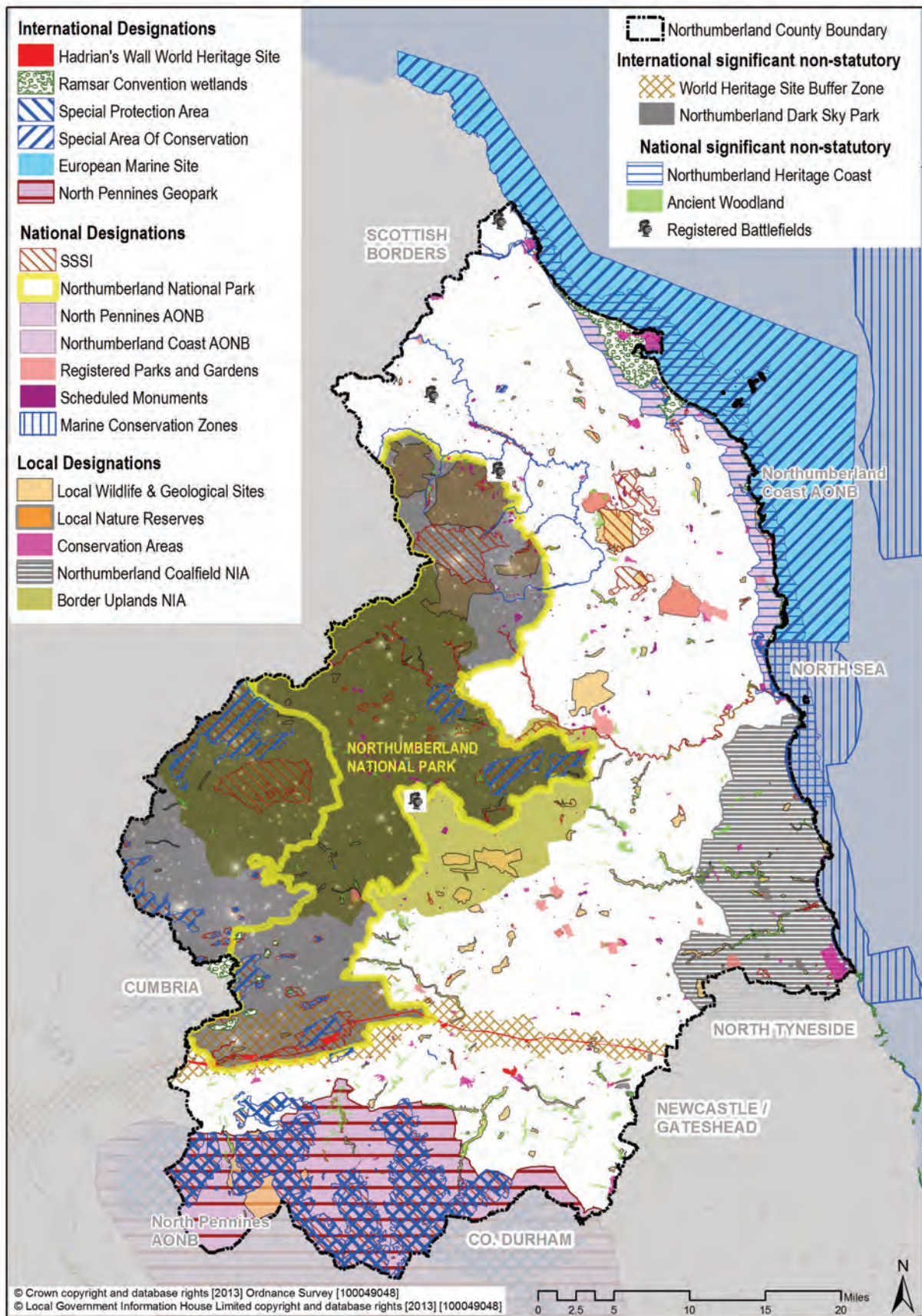
- 8.7** The County contains large numbers of designated areas both in terms of the natural and historic environment. The main ones are shown in Table 8.1. Designations vary in importance from having international recognition through to local designations. It is important to bear in mind that the position of an asset in the hierarchy does not always give the full picture on its importance. For example, ancient woodlands are often not covered by a statutory designation but are nevertheless irreplaceable; likewise many heritage assets of archaeological interest are not designated but are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments.
- 8.8** The potential scale of loss or harm caused by development, will be measured against the significance of the assets affected. The total loss or substantial harm to assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional. In other cases substantial harm or loss should be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweighs it⁽¹⁹⁾. The incremental loss of designated assets, will be guarded against.
- 8.9** In order to decide what would constitute a substantial public benefit, consideration will be given to the degree to which the proposal would benefit the public at large, in terms of their community their local economy and/or their local environment, rather than just being a private benefit. Public benefits may include heritage benefits such as securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation - e.g. where an alteration to it is the only means of bringing the property into use and removing risks to it.
- 8.10** Indirect impacts on designated sites can be as significant as direct effects. This would include a marked increase in the numbers of people residing close to or visiting the vicinity of key designated areas or assets.

19 In the case of designated heritage assets, Government policy is very clear - i.e. that development should not be allowed if it would result in substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, unless substantial public benefits would outweigh that harm or loss. A less than substantial public benefit could only justify such harm or loss if the nature of the heritage asset would prevent all reasonable uses of the site; and no viable use of the asset itself could be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that would enable its conservation; and conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership would demonstrably not be possible.

Table 8.1 Natural and heritage designations in Northumberland

International	National	Local
Statutory:		
<p>Scheduled Monuments and other listed assets that form part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site</p> <p>4 Ramsar Convention wetlands</p> <p>Seven Special Protection Areas (SPAs)</p> <p>14 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)</p>	<p>More than 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</p> <p>The Northumberland National Park</p> <p>North Pennines AONB</p> <p>Northumberland Coast AONB</p> <p>18 Registered Parks and Gardens</p> <p>Nearly 1,000 Scheduled Monument and more than 5,500 Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings</p> <p>9 National Nature Reserves</p> <p>3 Marine Conservation Zones extending landward of Mean Low Water</p>	<p>More than 200 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGSs)</p> <p>23 Local Nature Reserves</p> <p>69 Conservation Areas</p> <p>2 Nature Improvement Areas: (the Border Uplands NIA and the Northumberland Coalfield NIA)</p>
Significant non-statutory:		
<p>The Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site and its buffer zone - all that does not have a statutory designation in its own right.</p> <p>Some key areas of Ancient and Semi-ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD)</p> <p>Northumberland International Dark Sky Park (Kielder area)</p> <p>The North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark (geological heritage)</p>	<p>The Northumberland Heritage Coast</p> <p>Ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD) and ancient and veteran trees</p> <p>Registered Battlefields</p> <p>Certain non-designated archaeology</p>	<p>Locally Listed Heritage Assets and their settings</p> <p>Non-statutory nature reserves managed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust RSPB and other local groups</p> <p>Heritage assets recorded on the Historic Environment Record</p>

Figure 8.1 Natural and built heritage designations



Policy ENV 1

Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment

1. The character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:
 - a. Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation sites and their settings, as follows:
 - i. Greatest weight will be given to international and national designations, in accordance with the obligations set out in relevant legislation and advice;
 - ii. Following this, sites of regional and local importance;
2. In applying part (a) above, recognising that:
 - a. Assets with a lower designation or non-designated, can still be irreplaceable, may be nationally important and/or have qualitative attributes that warrant giving these the appropriate protection in-situ;
 - b. Development and associated activity outwith designated sites can have indirect impacts on these assets;
3. Applying an ecosystem approach that demonstrates an understanding of the significance and sensitivity of the natural resource. Such an approach should result in a neutral impact on, or net benefit for those ecosystems.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 8.11** The NPPF recognises that moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature is central to sustainable development and that contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment is a core planning principle.
- 8.12** Internationally protected sites (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites) are strictly protected, and the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply to developments that may affect such sites. Where such sites could be affected by development, the impact of this must be assessed in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Nationally important sites are also strictly protected, with the NPPF advising that developments that are likely to affect SSSIs should normally be refused.

- 8.13** Adverse impacts on these key sites can be indirect as well as direct. For example, increased foul water discharges to the River Tweed or coastal streams can lead to a negative impact on the coastal SACs or SPAs. Of particular concern, in terms of indirect impacts, are increases in recreational disturbance to coastal designated sites arising from new development - e.g. increased dog walking generated by the additional population. It is important to make it viable and practical to enable developers to provide effective mitigation for such disturbances. To address this, the Council has introduced a Strategic Coastal Mitigation Service whereby developers can make a financial contribution to a wardening service that will manage disturbances and implement positive measures to control unwanted effects such as invasive species, as an alternative to designing their own mitigation.
- 8.14** Local Wildlife and Geological Sites are non-statutory sites containing habitats or populations of species of at least local importance, although their importance can be considerably greater. These, together with legally protected species and habitats all contribute to the very important ecological resources that occur outside of sites receiving statutory protection and are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications.
- 8.15** The government encourages a wide range of people to be involved in how decisions are made about the natural environment in their local area. Northumberland currently includes two Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs): the Northern Upland Chain LNP, comprising Northumberland National Park, North Pennines AONB, Nidderdale AONB, and the North-East England LNP, comprising a wide coastal and lowland area in Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham.
- 8.16** A key initiative led by these LNPs is Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs). These are intended to bring about measurable improvements in nature conservation over widely defined areas. Currently within Northumberland, these are:
- **The Northumberland Coalfield NIA**, which aims to tackle the lack of connectivity between wildlife areas over a 41,000 hectare area, straddling the boundaries between Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. The area presents many opportunities for significant improvements to be achieved, especially through habitat creation linked to existing networks of subsidence wetlands, wet grassland, neutral grasslands, ancient woodlands and coastal habitats. Because of the high human population in this area, there are valuable opportunities to increase people's experience of the natural world; and
 - **The Border Uplands NIA**, which covers an area of approximately 100,000 hectares in west Northumberland with just over half in the Northumberland National Park, straddling the two current LNP areas. It contains significant forestry and includes much of the catchment of the Rivers Rede and North Tyne, rivers which support important species and economically important fisheries. Important features include species-rich grassland, broadleaved woodland, upland heath and blanket bog. There are substantial opportunities to improve ecological networks through enhanced management and expansion of a number of moorland related habitat types.
- 8.17** Development proposals within the NIAs will be considered in the context of the improvements to the natural environment being sought in these areas.

Policy ENV 2

Biodiversity and geodiversity

1. In assessing development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity, adverse impacts of development will be minimised and net gains for biodiversity will be sought by:
 - a. Avoiding significant harm through location and/ or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;
 - b. Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development, unless such measures are demonstrated not to be viable or practical.
2. Where sites are designated for their biodiversity or geodiversity, planning decisions will reflect the hierarchical approach set out in Policy ENV 1.
3. In the case of Local Wildlife and Geological Sites and Local Nature Reserves:
 - a. Permission will be refused if the proposed development would adversely affect them, unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm to the nature conservation value of the site.
 - b. Where permission can be granted in accordance with (3)(a) above, planning conditions or obligations will be used to protect the site's remaining nature conservation interest and to provide appropriate compensatory measures for the harm caused.
4. The Council expects the ecosystem approach to be applied in development through:
 - a. The conservation, restoration , enhancement, creation and/or (where appropriate) the re-creation of priority habitats and the habitats of priority species;
 - b. The protection and enhancement of all ecological networks and links to promote migration, dispersal and genetic exchange, including the South East Northumberland Wildlife Network and its linkages with Newcastle and North Tyneside;
 - c. Measures that will buffer or extend existing sites of ecological value, support the development of the Border Uplands Nature Improvement Area and Northumberland Coalfield Nature Improvement Area or contribute to national or local biodiversity objectives;
 - d. Minimising any adverse effects on habitats and species caused by the wider impacts of development and its associated activities including:
 - i. Various forms of disturbance; or
 - ii. The inadvertent introduction of non-native species; or
 - iii. Reductions in water quality; or

- iv. Other forms of pollution that would adversely affect wildlife;

The above to be achieved through precautionary measures including appropriate buffer zones and developer contributions to the Strategic Coastal Mitigation Service;

- e. Maximising opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around development through additional built-in or planted features; and
 - f. The necessary protection and enhancement of affected ecosystems through ecosystem services;
 - g. Securing the continued management of those ecological features created, restored or enhanced as a result of development.
5. Harm to geological conservation interests will be prevented and, where appropriate, opportunities for public access to those features will be provided.

Landscape

8.18 Northumberland's landscape is rightly considered a jewel in its crown. It has huge variety and great drama. It contains a spectrum of character from the rugged to the picturesque. It derives from the interaction between nature and people. A rich geodiversity, modified by rivers and climate, underpins this landscape. Human activity, from early forest clearance and cultivation through to modern housing and industry, has changed the visible landscape almost beyond recognition from what would have been there in prehistoric times. Today, expansive upland moors and forests sweep into Cumbria and the Scottish Borders. Rolling farmland intersperses with country estates, parkland and wooded valleys. The other great influence, the sea, meets the geology of the land in a spectacular coastline characterised by rocky headlands, islands and sandy bays backed with dunes.

8.19 Northumberland's settlements have distinctive architecture using local building stones. The more densely populated, south east area occupies a landscape associated with deep and opencast coal mining, and industries which led to the expansion of fishing villages into larger coastal towns. Early mining restoration led to the creation of some relatively featureless agricultural land across the coastal plain but, through the planning process, recent projects have included more sensitive landscape restoration, improved public access and land art.

Landscape character

8.20 Landscape protection, management and planning is promoted by the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which takes a holistic approach to the landscape recognising that "landscape can exist at any scale from parks, gardens and streetscape to extensive tracts of land". The NPPF requires that all England's diverse landscapes are valued and well looked after, providing a sense of place and identity relevant to people's lives, and that their complex ecosystems function well.

- 8.21** Local Plans are able to embrace this holistic approach by considering what is important about the character of any landscape, i.e. what gives it its sense of place, rather than confining the consideration of landscape to defined areas.
- 8.22** The starting point for the defining landscape character in the County is National Character Area (NCA) profiling carried out by Natural England. Nine of the defined NCAs fall fully or partly in Northumberland. The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment sub-divided the nine NCAs into 44 local Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and 108 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Each of the 108 LCAs has a detailed profile. In addition, each of the 44 LCTs has, defined for it, key qualities, forces for change and accompanying guidance on how to treat proposals which may impact on these positively or negatively. Each LCT has, assigned to it one of three overarching guiding principles, as follows:
- **Protect** - where conservation of landscape character is required in the face of pressures for change; or
 - **Manage** - where some change can be absorbed but changes arising from social, economic and environmental processes need to be managed; or
 - **Plan** - where important landscape character has been eroded and strong action is needed to enhance or restore it.
- 8.23** The LCTs and their guiding, and more detailed principles provide general guidance on landscape character. Any given LCT covers a relatively large expanse of land within which there will be local variations. A detailed, locally focussed character assessment will need to be carried out in association with proposals for certain types of development.

Policy ENV 3

Landscape

In assessing development proposals in relation to the Northumberland landscape, the following will apply:

- a. Proposals affecting the character of the landscape will be expected to conserve and where appropriate enhance important elements of that character; in such cases, design and access statements should refer, as appropriate, to Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant studies, guidance or management plans;
- b. Where a proposal has an impact on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this will be an important material consideration;
- c. Where applicable, the contribution of the Northumberland landscape to the understanding and enjoyment of heritage assets will be taken into account;
- d. In assessing development proposals in relation to landscape character:
 - i. The guiding principles and other relevant guidelines set out in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment will be applied;

- ii. The possibility of wider impacts on the landscape, townscape or seascape or of other significant impacts on the environmental resource will be assessed through the proportionate use of landscape and visual impact assessment;
 - iii. The impact on the setting and surroundings of the County's historic towns and villages will be assessed, ensuring that new development on the edge of settlements does not harm the landscape character of the settlement edge and, where possible that it has a net positive impact;
 - iv. The Historic Landscape Characterisation will be applied;
 - v. The potential impact that small scale development can have on the landscape in sensitive rural settings will be assessed; and
 - vi. Any net negative cumulative impacts of development on landscape character will be assessed.
- e. Where it is considered that landscape character may be adversely affected, or aspects of this character that warrant protection would be degraded as a result of a proposed development, then the development will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated:
- i. How the harmful effects will be satisfactorily mitigated or, as a last resort, satisfactorily compensated; and
 - ii. There are significant national or, outside designated landscapes, regional or local planning reasons for allowing the development, and these considerations outweigh the landscape considerations.

Tranquillity and dark skies

8.24 Northumberland was ranked first out of 87 authorities in terms of tranquillity, according to a Campaign to Protect Rural England study undertaken in 2006. The Council recognises tranquillity as a distinctive characteristic of Northumberland's remote countryside and will seek to avoid urbanising effects in these areas where possible. Such effects also include light pollution. Seeking a reversal of the trend for increased night time brightness through decisions on development can help to maintain the quality of life in the County.

8.25 In recognition of the significance of a particularly large expanse of dark skies, Northumberland National Park, along with Kielder Water and Forest Park has been designated as Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. At 572 square miles it is also Europe's largest area of protected night sky, and the fourth largest in the world. Due to its pristine skies it was awarded gold tier designation by the International Dark Sky Association, making it officially the best place in England for people to go to enjoy the heavens.

Policy ENV 4

Tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality

1. In order to limit the urbanising effects on open countryside landscapes, natural habitats and the settings of historic / cultural assets, and to conserve or enhance tranquillity, development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:
 - a. The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter are minimised and dark skies maintained;
 - b. Intrusive external features, such as hard surfaces, car parking and urban-style boundary treatments are minimised;
 - c. Where a sense of openness of the open countryside is a key quality of the local landscape character, that this will not be reduced;
 - d. The quiet enjoyment of the landscape is maintained.
2. During construction and thereafter, development should not result in a net adverse impact on the level of dark skies and where appropriate improvements should be sought, most especially in or affecting Northumberland Dark Sky Park but also in the North Pennines and Northumberland Coast AONBs and other areas of dark skies. Exterior lighting on developments, which has the potential to impact upon the dark skies should be designed in accordance with the latest guidance.

National landscape designations

- 8.26** There are three areas wholly or partly within Northumberland which are nationally important designated landscapes. The Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are wholly within the County. The North Pennines AONB straddles the boundaries of Northumberland, Cumbria and Durham. The Northumberland National Park, while entirely within Northumberland, is a separate planning authority with its own planning policies.
- 8.27** The strong landscape and ecosystem connections between the National Park and the rest of Northumberland mean that great importance must be attached to the County Council's statutory responsibility to only allow development outside the boundaries of the National Park that does not impact on its special qualities and statutory purposes. The National Park has a management plan, as well as its own Local Plan, natural environment vision and landscape guidance policy documents. Under its statutory duties, the County Council will have full regard to the implications of these documents when making decisions on planning applications.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

8.28 There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (AONBs) in Northumberland, the Northumberland Coast and North Pennines. The NPPF states that, within AONBs great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty, as they, alongside National Parks, have the highest status of protection in relation to their special qualities. It is clear that planning applications for major developments in AONBs should be refused where they would adversely impact on these special qualities, except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest, and subject to three tests:

- The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting or refusing it upon the local economy;
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the AONB or meeting the need in some other way; and
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which these could be moderated.

8.29 The national definition of 'major development' comprises, for housing, 10 or more homes or a site of 0.5 hectares or more; for other development, an additional 1,000m² of floor space or 1 hectare or more.

8.30 In recognition of the fact that the AONBs include substantial settlements, including a key Service Centre in each, the Council will use discretion as to whether certain developments that may exceed these thresholds but meet other planning requirements, may nevertheless be acceptable within the AONB. This approach will allow for the possibility that alternative, acceptable (or more acceptable) sites could lie elsewhere within the AONB as well as outside it. For example, relocating a proposal from an exposed, countryside or coastal position to a more concealed site or one within a built-up area, could mean that it be seen as acceptable despite exceeding the 'major' development threshold. This is very important in the context of the AONBs supporting living, working communities.

8.31 To assist in the conservation and enhancement of the AONBs, AONB partnerships have been formed comprising local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary or community organisations and interest groups and local people. The partnerships prepare and keep under review a statutory AONB Management Plan for each area, and prepare guidance documents.

Northumberland Coast AONB

8.32 The Northumberland Coast AONB comprises a narrow strip of coast between Spittal and the Coquet Estuary, and covers a distance of 64km. However, it is only around 4 km wide at its widest point and covers just 138 km². It is best known for its sweeping sandy beaches, rolling dunes, rocky headlands and isolated islands, and contains numerous nationally and internationally important designated sites. The landscape contains scattered settlements, imposing castles and extensive sea and inland views.

- 8.33** The area has a population of around 12,500; it contains a string of living, working communities, including North Sunderland / Seahouses, Longhoughton, Lesbury / Alnmouth, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Embleton, Craster and Warkworth, as well as several smaller villages and hamlets. Traditional agriculture and fishing often sits alongside more recent employment types, many of which are connected with tourism. Communities and businesses within the area have links with Berwick, Amble, Alnwick, Belford, as well as places further afield.
- 8.34** Visitor numbers, in particular, place considerable pressure on the key components of the AONB's special qualities. Without a careful, sustainable management approach, conflict could easily result, so threatening the unique environment and possibly the functioning of the local coastal economy and communities.
- 8.35** An important local issue within the AONB is the proliferation of second and holiday homes, which while providing some economic benefits, also contribute to settlements along the coast losing their sense of community, as a large number of properties become unoccupied and services do not operate at certain times of the year. Recognising this issue, the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan restricts the use of new market housing to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a Principal Residence.

Policy ENV 5

Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1. The landscape and other special qualities of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced, having regard to the current AONB Management Plan and locally specific design guidance.
2. When assessing development proposals in and around the AONB particular considerations will include:
 - a. The sensitivity of local landscapes and their capacity to accommodate new development, including temporary structures such as caravans and chalets;
 - b. Intervisibility between the AONB, the seascape and the landscape beyond, including the Kyloe and Cheviot Hills;
 - c. Interdependency between the special qualities of the landscape and the marine and coastal environment, including the internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites and associated ecosystems, geology, species and habitats; and
 - d. The need to sustain and, where appropriate, enhance:
 - i. The significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting;
 - ii. A sense of remoteness, wildness and open views and dark skies;
 - iii. The natural functioning of the coastline; and
 - iv. A clear distinction between settlements and open countryside.

3. As far as possible, it will be recognised that the AONB is a living, working area by allowing small scale development where it does not impact on the AONB's special qualities including those in criteria (2) a. to d. above. In particular, in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the extent to which the development:
 - a. Adds to the availability of permanently occupied and affordable housing to meet local needs; and
 - b. Supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy through the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new ones.
4. The conversion of redundant farm buildings to appropriate uses will be supported, but the scale and form of the farm steading will be protected and new built development will not normally be permitted.
5. Major development will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and that there is no alternative location which could absorb the development without a significant adverse impact on the AONB.
6. Development proposals should be subject to a full planning application. Outline applications within the Northumberland Coast AONB will only be acceptable where they include sufficient detail to allow for a proper assessment of the impact of the proposal on the landscape and special qualities of the AONB.

North Pennines AONB

- 8.36** The North Pennines AONB covers an area of 1,983 square km. Approximately a third of the AONB is within the County, the remainder in the counties of Durham and Cumbria, and North Yorkshire. The North Pennines landscape has a highly distinctive character which has been shaped by early settlers who cleared the forests, followed by generations of farming, a long history of mining for lead and other minerals, moorland management and more recent development. Part of its unique quality reflects the retention of a sense of wildness, remoteness and tranquillity. The significance of the geology of the AONB, reflected in its UNESCO Global Geopark status, is another key element of the landscape character.
- 8.37** The area is characterised by open moorland, which in the context of the rest of England can be considered relatively wild, remote and free from large scale visual intrusion. This sense of wildness and remoteness gives the area much of its character. The settlements are found in the valleys of the Derwent, the East and West Allen and the South Tyne, with only isolated hamlets and scattered farmsteads elsewhere. The landscape is the result partly of the underlying geology but also of the interaction between people and nature over thousands of years – deforestation, hill farming and a long history of mining for lead and other minerals which brought enclosure of the land as well as creating a legacy of buildings, structures and landscape features such as hushes. Other special qualities of the area include truly dark night skies, species rich hay meadows, and internationally important birdlife.

- 8.38** There is not a high level of development pressure within the Northumberland part of the North Pennines AONB. Indeed the population of the Allen Valleys was much higher in the past than it is now. It is important however to seek to sustain the local population, while recognising that even a single development which is out of scale or character with the area, including those beyond the AONB boundary, can have a widespread impact due to the openness of the moorland that makes up much of the AONB. However, the existence, within the area, of a series of communities and a working economy must be recognised within the context of the environmental constraints.
- 8.39** The moorland areas are home to a high proportion of England's red grouse. Their management through shooting forms the focus of a visitor industry, which makes an important contribution to the local economy. However, there is a danger that heavy concentrations of these activities can lead to structures such as stone roads being put in place in remote locations and, without careful planning, these could damage the special landscape qualities of the AONB.

Policy ENV 6

North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1. The landscape and other special qualities of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced, having regard to the current AONB Management Plan and locally specific guidance.
2. In assessing development proposals in and around the AONB particular considerations will include:
 - a. The openness of the landscape and its sensitivity to development;
 - b. Inter-visibility between the AONB and areas to its north and east;
 - c. Interdependency between the special qualities of the landscape and the natural functioning of the environment taking into account internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites and associated ecosystems, species and habitats, and the geology;
 - d. The need to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting maintain archaeological and built heritage assets and their settings;
 - e. A sense of remoteness, wildness, tranquillity and dark skies; and
 - f. Its UNESCO Global Geopark status.
3. As far as possible, it will be recognised that the AONB is a living, working area, seeking to sustain the local population by allowing small scale development where it does not impact on the AONB's special qualities including those in criteria a. to e. above. In particular, in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the extent to which the development:
 - a. Adds to the availability of permanently occupied and affordable housing to meet local needs;

- b. Supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy through the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new ones;
 - c. Reuses redundant buildings that contribute to the character of the area; and
 - d. Applies the most up to date design guidance, recognising that a variety of materials, including timber, have their place in the local vernacular and could contribute to lower cost, more energy efficient buildings.
4. Major development will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and that there is no alternative location which could absorb the development without a significant adverse impact on the AONB.
 5. Development proposals should be subject to a full planning application. Outline applications within the North Pennines AONB will only be acceptable where they include sufficient detail to allow for a proper assessment of the impact of the proposal on the landscape and special qualities of the AONB.
 6. Development proposals should avoid any urbanising effects on the remote, 'wilderness' qualities that characterise the North Pennines AONB, by avoiding bright lighting or noise-generating uses, unless there are other strong planning reasons to do so and it can be demonstrated that all possible measures have been taken to minimise these effects.
 7. Stone tracks across moorland, for non-agricultural purposes, will not be approved on peat areas that are or have the potential to be blanket bog. New or upgraded tracks elsewhere involving moorland may be supported if:
 - a. it has been demonstrated, through rigorous assessment, that the track will have a significant benefit for the rural economy; and
 - b. there is no alternative existing track or potential route that is less harmful or visually intrusive; and
 - c. the least environmentally damaging construction methods are used; and
 - d. maximum potential recreational benefits are accrued.

Historic and built environment

8.40 The NPPF looks to Local Plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, while also looking more widely at the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring, taking full account local character and distinctiveness.

8.41 Northumberland's historic environment has been shaped by a combination of factors, which include the economic value of its agriculture, fishing, minerals and other natural resources; its position as a national and maritime frontier; its importance for north-south communication between England and Scotland; and its remoteness.

- 8.42** Northumberland's historic legacy is the setting for people's lives; it is where they live, work, shop and enjoy leisure and recreation activities. It is also an important draw for tourists. Many of the County's heritage assets are iconic symbols of Northumberland. They have intrinsically shaped and defined the historic character of North East England.
- 8.43** Northumberland's physical and cultural heritage is manifest in well-preserved historic towns, buildings, archaeological sites, battlefields, designed and historic landscapes, many of international importance. Designated assets include the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. All known heritage assets are recorded on the Historic Environment Record, which is supplemented by a range of local studies and resources, including those locally important non-designated heritage assets. Some locally important assets have been identified through local lists. The County is also rich in undesignated archaeological sites. It is not always possible to understand the significance of heritage assets, particularly archaeological sites, without further investigation.
- 8.44** Currently there are over 150 Grade I and II* Listed Buildings and structural Scheduled Monuments on Historic England's current Heritage at Risk Register in Northumberland. Historic England assesses whether assets should be included on the basis of condition and, where applicable, occupancy (or use). They are removed from the Register when they have been brought into a stable condition, their future secured, and where appropriate, occupied or in use. There is no comprehensive information on Grade II Listed Buildings or Structures at risk. However, given the much greater numbers of buildings and structures falling within this category, it follows that there will be substantially greater numbers of them 'at risk'.

Policy ENV 7

Historic environment and heritage assets

1. Development proposals will be assessed and decisions made that ensure the conservation and enhancement of the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets and their settings.
2. Decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and the impact of any proposal upon that significance, involving:
 - a. Use of the Historic Environment Record, the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study and other relevant records to help inform decision making;
 - b. A requirement for applicants to provide a heritage statement; describing the significance of the asset and any contribution made to this significance by its setting, and assessing the impact of the proposal on this significance.

3. Development proposals, which will affect a site of archaeological interest, or a site which has the potential to be of archaeological interest, will require an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
4. Development proposals that would result in substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of designated heritage assets will not be permitted unless substantial public benefits would outweigh that harm or loss. A less than substantial public benefit could only justify such harm or loss if:
 - a. The nature of the heritage asset would prevent all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - b. No viable use of the asset itself could be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that would enable its conservation; and
 - c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership would demonstrably not be possible.
5. Where development proposals would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage asset, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
6. Development proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets shall require a balanced judgement, taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Where, in the case of a non-designated heritage asset of archaeological interest, the significance is equivalent to that of a scheduled monument, the policy approach for designated heritage assets will be applied.
7. If, following the above assessment, a decision is made that will result in the loss of all or any part of a heritage asset, or a reduction in its significance, developers will be required to record and advance understanding of the asset through appropriate mitigation. The results of such mitigation should be made publicly accessible through appropriate archiving and publication. The ability to create full records in this way should not, in itself, be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.
8. Development proposals that affect heritage assets at risk (national or local) should demonstrate how they will be brought into repair, or appropriately conserved, and the decline halted (and preferably reversed) in a timely manner. Where the asset at risk is a vacant building of permanent and substantial construction (i.e. not a ruin that should remain so), the proposal should secure its reuse in a manner consistent with its conservation.
9. New development in historic settlements or localities should sympathetically integrate and positively respond to established character, reinforcing local distinctiveness through quality design and the use of appropriate materials.
10. Decisions affecting historic places and sites should take account of the individual and cumulative effect on the visitor economy, and quality of place.

The Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

- 8.45** World Heritage Sites are places of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV), recognised as such under the terms of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. The trans-national Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) was inscribed on the List of World Heritage by UNESCO in 1987.
- 8.46** Hadrian's Wall, with a total length of 118 kilometres, was built around the year 122 AD on the orders of the Emperor Hadrian, at the northernmost limits of the Roman province of Britannia. It constituted the main element in a controlled military zone across northern Britain. The Wall was supplemented by the ditch and banks of the vallum, supporting forts, marching camps and other features in a wide area to the north and south, linked by an extensive road network.
- 8.47** While a WHS is an international designation, it is the responsibility of national governments to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value is maintained. However the designation itself brings no additional statutory controls over and above those afforded through the planning system and through other designations that cover elements of the WHS. Much of the length of the Wall and its associated forts and surrounding settlements are however scheduled monuments, and protected as such. The planning controls that apply to these assets are an important part of the recognition and protection of the OUV of the World Heritage Site. The remaining elements, (often the less obvious surface features) rely for their protection on the application of criteria-based policies and a precautionary approach applied across the WHS itself and a surrounding 'buffer zone'. A Management Plan informs such decisions, as well as the day to day management of the whole extent of the WHS, its buffer zone and its wider landscape setting.
- 8.48** The key objective within Hadrian's Wall Management Management Plan, is to secure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. The OUV is described in an agreed statement and covers matters such as the historic significance, the group value of features within the WHS and the educational and recreational benefits associated with the Wall and its associated assets.
- 8.49** In order to protect and conserve the OUV of the WHS, heritage impact assessments of the effect on the OUV of development proposals, within or adjacent to the site and its wider setting, may be required, and advice should be sought from expert bodies - notably from the International Council on Monuments and Sites, which has published Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties.

Policy ENV 8

Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

1. The Council supports measures to protect and enhance Hadrian's Wall in accordance with the Scheduled Monument designation of much of its length and associated assets. Development adversely affecting these assets and their setting will not be permitted unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV 7(4) apply.
2. Development proposals throughout the extent of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS), its buffer zone or wider setting:
 - a. Will not be permitted if they would compromise the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS, unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV7 (4) apply;
 - b. Should, where possible, seek opportunities to sustain and better reveal the significance of its Outstanding Universal Value as set out in the adopted Statement of OUV and informed by World Heritage Site Management Plan, including seeking to protect and, where appropriate, enhance:
 - i. Evidence of the scale and complexity of the Wall and its associated frontier features;
 - ii. The group value of features, including features beyond the World Heritage Site;
 - iii. The landscape value and setting; and
 - iv. Communal values including educational and recreational.

Conservation Areas

8.50 Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s.72). They are designated by the local planning authority using local criteria.

8.51 Conservation area designation remains the principal means by which local authorities can apply conservation policies to a particular area. The Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. In considering these factors, the main sources of information will be conservation area character appraisals and any design guidance relevant to the conservation of the local historic environment. The Council also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, and consult local people on them.

- 8.52** Given that conservation areas are located predominantly in towns and villages, their well-being can be significantly harmed if the condition of their building stock deteriorates. The management of development in conservation areas is a means of protecting and enhancing the intrinsic qualities of Northumberland's towns and villages.

Policy ENV 9

Conservation Areas

1. Within a conservation area, or where its setting may be affected:
 - a. Opportunities will be sought to, and development will be encouraged that will help preserve or enhance the character or appearance and/or reinforce its local distinctiveness and/or better reveal its significance;
 - b. Development that would adversely affect its significance or harm its character or appearance will not be permitted or consented unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV 7(4) apply;
 - c. Development must respect existing architectural and historic character and cultural associations, by having regard to:
 - i. Historic plot boundaries, layouts and patterns of existing built development; and
 - ii. The design, positioning, grouping, form, scale, detailing and the use of materials in existing buildings and structures; and
 - iii. The existing public realm and other open areas, including hard and soft landscape features, trees, hedges, walls, fences, watercourses and surfacing and the special character created by them.

2. Built development on public and private open spaces within or adjacent to conservation areas, which contribute to the special character and appearance of the area, will not be permitted unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV 7(4) apply. Such spaces include those which:
 - a. Are of special historic significance;
 - b. Are important to the landscape or townscape qualities of the conservation area;
 - c. Provide views or vistas into, out of or within the conservation area.

3. Development involving the demolition of buildings or structures in a conservation area will only be granted consent if:
 - a. It is demonstrated that the structural condition of the building or structure is beyond reasonable economic repair;
 - b. The building or structure makes no significant positive contribution to the architectural or historic character of the conservation area; and
 - c. There are approved detailed plans for the redevelopment of the site and a contract has been entered into for the implementation of that redevelopment.

4. Development proposals that require planning permission within conservation areas should normally be subject to a full planning application, with outline applications only being acceptable where the proposal:
 - a. Does not involve the demolition or alteration of existing buildings; and
 - b. Includes sufficient detail to allow a proper assessment of any heritage assets affected.

Supporting the conservation of heritage assets

8.53 In order to support the positive strategy for the historic environment, when assessing development proposals, the Council will pro-actively conserve and enhance heritage assets throughout the County. Substantial harm to, or loss of any of these has to be avoided but there is also a need to ensure that, wherever possible, they continue to contribute to the economy, communities and the environment in a positive way and to avoid them becoming 'heritage at risk'.

8.54 The Council will seek to avoid heritage assets falling into risk, and bring them out of risk. It will work with partners, promote and support bids for external funding, and direct available resources towards conserving and enhancing heritage assets, including reviewing existing Conservation Areas and designating new ones.

Policy ENV 10

Supporting the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets

1. In assessing development proposals, the Council will pro-actively conserve and enhance heritage assets throughout the County.
2. The Council will seek to avoid heritage assets falling into risk of harm or damage and to bring those at risk out of risk, by:
 - a. Prioritising measures that will result in the eventual removal from Historic England's at Risk Register of any Grade I, Grade II* buildings and structures or Scheduled Monuments identified therein; and
 - b. Working in partnership with the owner of assets, Historic England and communities to identify other heritage assets at risk or vulnerable to becoming at risk, including (but not limited to) those that are nationally listed at Grade II and to support the development and implementation of local strategies to reverse and remove the risk.
3. In general, when prioritising the conservation of historic assets, including any from the above at Risk Register, favourable consideration will be given to those that are considered characteristic of Northumberland, important within the context of its history, cultural development or landscape and/or unique to the area.

4. The Council, working where appropriate in partnership with Historic England, other stakeholders and communities, will seek to direct available resources towards:
 - a. Preparing, updating and acting on Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans;
 - b. Designating additional Conservation Areas and;
 - c. Where there is a case, promoting Article 4 Directions to protect Conservation Areas from harm from Permitted Development;
 - d. Assisting local groups in compiling local lists of heritage assets of local significance;
 - e. Preparing or supporting master plans or design briefs for significant places or sites, where major change is proposed, which will affect heritage assets; and
 - f. Promoting and supporting bids for external funding designed to conserve and enhance the historic fabric of towns and villages.

Design of the public realm

- 8.55** The public realm is the network of streets, spaces, buildings and structures that the public have access to. Public areas enable people to move between places, provide the setting for civic life and facilitate social activities and recreation. As the public realm is shared by different people and may be used for different purposes, it is important that public places are designed to be flexible, functional for all, easy to understand and promote positive social interaction.
- 8.56** Policy ENV 11 sets out the requirements for new development that incorporates public buildings and spaces.

Policy ENV 11

Design of the public realm

In addition to overarching design policies, the design of the public realm will be expected to:

- a. Create diverse, vibrant buildings and spaces which contribute to supporting a range of public activity;
- b. Comply with the accessible and inclusive public realm standards set out in the Northumberland Design Guide;
- c. Be clearly defined from private spaces;
- d. Have a clear hierarchy of routes and spaces, be faced by active frontages and maximise natural surveillance;
- e. Respond to opportunities to incorporate public art;
- f. Ensure that parking, where included, is sensitively integrated; and
- g. Incorporate appropriate street furniture, lighting and surface materials.

9. Water Environment

Introduction

- 9.1** Water systems have shaped the topography, landscape and ecology of Northumberland. The same systems supply water to the County's homes and business and the same systems need to be able to cope with outflows of waste water from these homes and businesses.
- 9.2** The natural water environment, comprises the water table, springs, river systems, inland water bodies and the sea. All subject to pressures from human activity and associated development. This includes demands on water supply and drainage, modifications to watercourses, the effects of pollution on water quality and water-based ecosystems, flood risk, erosion and the results of climate change.
- 9.3** Therefore, as with all aspects of the environment, sustainable planning and design must always consider the demands and effects of development on the water environment. The water environment policies reflect the increasing attention given to ensuring:
- The protection of water supply and quality;
 - The protection and where appropriate the restoration of the natural form and function of the river environment; and
 - That there is maximum resistance and resilience to flood risk.
- 9.4** The policies on the water environment will deliver a number of the plan's strategic objectives, particularly those that seek to protect the environment, mitigate the effects of climate change, and prudently manage the natural resources. Good water quality, water supply and sewerage facilities are vital to maintaining and creating sustainable communities.
- 9.5** The Council has worked closely with all relevant agencies and water authorities to achieve agreement on the policies below. They also seek to take on board the wider concerns of residents and businesses regarding flooding in particular.

Water quality

- 9.6** Northumberland has some of the only few 'high status' surface water bodies in England. They support protected species like the Freshwater Pearl Mussel that rely on the exceptional water quality to exist at all. The Council and relevant statutory bodies would resist any proposed development affecting the high status of these water bodies. This Local Plan sets out policies which will: protect the water environment from pollution; maintain quality; and improve water resources, systems, natural processes and environments, which do not currently meet European and national standards. The impacts of new development need to be managed to avoid compromising the quality of river and coastal systems, thereby protecting communities from the risk and effects of water pollution and environmental deterioration.

9.7 The European Water Framework Directive 2000 seeks to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status'. In line with this, the Environment Agency is aiming to achieve good status in at least 60% of waters by 2021 and in as many waters as possible by 2027. The Directive also established the requirement for river basin management plans. It seeks a common, consistent approach to the management of the water environment. Under the Directive each country has to:

- Prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, protect them and improve the ecological condition of waters;
- Aim to achieve at least good status for all water bodies by set deadlines;
- Meet the requirements of Water Framework Directive Protected Areas;
- Promote sustainable use of water as a natural resource;
- Conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water;
- Progressively reduce or phase out the release of individual pollutants or groups of pollutants that present a significant threat to the aquatic environment;
- Progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants; and
- Contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.

9.8 The Council has a major contributory role in relation to the above national aims, through the policies in this Plan and its decisions on individual development proposals. The complexity of the water environment in the County means that assessing existing issues, measuring progress towards eliminating them or achieving enhancements, and gauging how the wider ecosystem may be affected, can be difficult:

- All areas of water that are above ground are required to have "good ecological status" and "good chemical status". Given the huge variations in water bodies, measuring these is complex, reflecting differing 'hydromorphology' – how the bodies of water move and flow in the context of the rocks, sediments etc. that are present. There will be areas where higher standards can and must be set, than others. This would be the case, for example, where drinking water comes straight from the water body or where there is a risk that sensitive areas will be flooded.
- In the case of groundwater, the presumption is that it should not be polluted at all. This means that the EU imposes a prohibition on direct discharges to groundwater, and (to cover indirect discharges) a requirement to monitor groundwater bodies for changes in chemical composition.
- The directive also sees the extraction of water as reducing the quality if it reaches the point where reduction adversely affects ecosystems.

9.9 By 2012, just under half of the inland water bodies in Northumberland were achieving 'good' status. Where meeting the (originally set) 2015 target has not been possible under Cycle 1 of the Directive, it does allow, subject to certain criteria, the revised (Cycle 2) target date of 2021 to be used or at the very latest 2027. River Basin Management Plans action plans have been assisting in bringing the remaining water bodies up to standard and seeking to achieve this by the 2021 target.

9.10 Related to the overall issue of water quality is the quality of bathing waters – i.e. beaches, lakes or ponds that are used by a large number of bathers. A separate EU Directive on Bathing Water requires Members States to monitor and assess

the bathing water and inform the public about bathing water quality. In Northumberland, there are 12 designated Bathing Waters, where standards, set out in the revised Bathing Water Directive, must be achieved by the end of the decade. Planning decisions must therefore make sure that the network of sewerage facilities and pumping stations associated with new development have sufficient capacity and will not exacerbate any outflows (whether from normal conditions or storm event) affecting these Bathing Waters. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can help with this and also contribute to enhancements of Bathing Waters.

- 9.11** Water quality is not just about water for drinking or bathing, it is about maintaining water bodies as valuable habitats. The effective management of the water environment is therefore integral to the ecosystem approach advocated across Northumberland's natural environment and, by implication, to the provision and maintenance of strategic and local green infrastructure.
- 9.12** Within Northumberland, it is recognised that abandoned coal mining may result in poor quality water (minewater) which could potentially impact on ground and surface waters. Within the minerals section of the Local Plan the policy on the environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals deals with ground and surface water quality, flow and water abstraction issues, requiring applicants to consider the potential for the proposal to affect the flow, quality and quantity of ground and surface water supplies and include measures to prevent water pollution.
- 9.13** The challenge for the policies within the Local Plan and development management process is to maintain current water quality, in all its aspects, and improve areas that are not currently meeting required European and national standards. It is vital that discharges from new developments do not compromise the quality of river and coastal waters, nor should development be put at risk from water pollution. Other policies within the plan will also contribute to this aim – not least the flooding policy, which seeks to minimise surface water run-off and the risk of sewer flooding.
- 9.14** It is also important to recognise that, under the Water Framework Directive, any development schemes where impact on a water environment is a possibility must result in improvements.

Policy WAT 1

Water quality

In assessing development proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status' by 2021 in terms of their ecological balance and other relevant factors, preventing any deterioration in that status. This will be achieved in line with the Water Framework Directive and/or the Bathing Water Directive, having regard to local river basin management plans and the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, applying the ecosystem approach, through:

- a. Giving permission for any development and/or landscape measures that maintain, or may result in enhanced water quality, including bathing water;

- b. Ensuring that any development where impact on a water environment is a possibility, will bring about an improvement to that environment;
- c. Not permitting development if it would have an adverse impact on water quality in surface water bodies or it could affect the chemical balance of groundwater including any wider impacts, taking full account, where appropriate, of the presence of minewater;
- d. Avoiding any reduction in the 'high status' of certain surface water bodies in the County, giving very close scrutiny to any development that may affect them; and
- e. Assessing the effects of development on designated Bathing Waters.

Water supply and sewerage

- 9.15** In accordance with national planning policy, there is a need to ensure that the expected level and distribution of proposed development is deliverable and will not result in water supply and sewerage infrastructure issues that cannot be resolved. The Council will work with Northumbrian Water, prospective developers and key stakeholders to identify where strategic solutions to water-related infrastructure investment may be required in order to support the strategic aims and expectations of this Plan. This will mostly relate to the provision or upgrading of waste water treatment works, but it will also apply to assurances over the supply of water in certain areas where there are issues in its guaranteed continuity.
- 9.16** In terms of **water supply**, Northumberland is identified as an area of 'low water stress' and most of the river catchments in Northumberland are classified as having 'water available'. There are exceptions to this, mentioned below.
- 9.17** The supply of water in Northumberland is split into two 'water resource zones' (WRZs), shown in Figure 9.1:
- **The Kielder WRZ** serves the vast majority of Northumberland. Most development coming forward in this zone would be capable of being supplied without problem, although, within the area, the rivers Coquet and Font have been identified as experiencing some water resource availability issues.
 - **The Berwick and Fowberry WRZ** serves the far north of Northumberland and whilst there is generally an adequate water supply, shortages have been experienced during periods of high demand. Work has been undertaken by Northumbrian Water to improve this situation and ensure adequate supplies for existing users and new development, as well as protecting the sources themselves. Further action may include improving infrastructure, demand management and leakage control. Northumbrian Water's Water Resources Management Plan includes the current position and future plans to ensure that there is a sustainable water resource for the Berwick area.

Figure 9.1 Water Resource Zones



- 9.18** The importance of maintaining the quality of groundwater has been emphasised above. Apart from the ecological implications of not doing so, this is important because groundwater is a significant contributor to household water supply in Northumberland. The Fell Sandstone outcrop, which extends from Berwick in the north, south to Wooler and Rothbury, and then to the south west of Kielder Reservoir, is a designated Principal Aquifer which supports a number of important licensed groundwater abstractions in the Berwick and Wooler areas. These groundwater abstractions are a source of water supply within the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ. There are also a number of Secondary Aquifers, such as the Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit, which are capable of supporting water supplies at a local scale, including Abbey Well in Morpeth. Given the rural nature of the County both the Principal and Secondary Aquifers support a significant number of private water supplies. It is important that these water resources are protected.
- 9.19** In terms of the **foul water sewerage system** as with any infrastructure, an important principle of sustainable planning is to make best use of existing capacity. Through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, associated with this Local Plan, necessary new or upgraded capacity in wastewater treatment works must be shown to be deliverable in a timely manner. Some of these will be capable of accommodating wastewater from new development through the plan period. Others have limited capacity and will require investment in the medium term. However, certain treatment works do not have any remaining capacity, meaning that there are areas of the County where little or no additional development could be accommodated until new capacity is installed. Allowing new development in advance of such works could compromise water quality.
- 9.20** Some wastewater, from parts of the County close to its boundary with Tyne and Wear, is treated at the Howdon Wastewater Treatment Works in North Tyneside, along with wastewater from neighbouring authorities. There are potential future capacity issues relating to these treatment works. A large part of the Howdon catchment is served by combined sewers and there is often no option but to accept both foul and surface water from development, leading to unnecessary treatment of surface water. To ensure wastewater from future new development can be accommodated at the treatment works, there is currently ongoing joint work between the Council, other local authorities, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency on the development of a strategic policy to reduce the amount of surface water run-off from new developments, and separate it from the sewerage system.
- 9.21** Parts of the County, mainly in rural areas are not served by mains sewerage. This results in the use of non-mains systems such as package treatment plants and septic tanks. The proliferation of some small scale non-mains drainage proposals has contributed towards water bodies failing to meet the Water Framework Directive within the County, reflecting systems being poorly positioned and/or having insufficient capacity and/or being adequately maintained, causing spillages and adverse impacts on water bodies and the ecosystem generally. Therefore:
- Foul flows from all new development that is located in sewerred areas should be directed to the public sewer system.

- Where remoteness dictates that this is not possible, other methods of disposal must meet stringent standards in their positioning, capacity and maintenance regimes.

9.22 The capacity for existing sewerage infrastructure to cope with new development in the County was examined, at a high level, in the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study (WCS). This helped inform the location of key land allocations. The Detailed WCS followed.

Policy WAT 2

Water supply and sewerage

1. The satisfactory provision of adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure will be maintained or secured, having regard to the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, as follows:
 - a. Minimising the need for new infrastructure by directing development:
 - i. In terms of the supply of water;
 - To areas where an adequate supply can be guaranteed;
 - Within the Berwick and Fowberry Water Resource Zones, ensuring the adequate protection of existing abstraction sources; and
 - Obtaining an assurance from the water provider that a supply is available to support the development before the proposal is agreed;
 - ii. In terms of the sewerage network and treatment works, primarily to areas where the necessary capacity already exists, and only then to areas where the required capacity is planned, having regard to:
 - The infrastructure providers' Water Resource Management and Strategic Business Plans; and
 - The findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study.
 - b. Ensuring that, where new water related infrastructure is needed to serve development:
 - i. That the provision of the infrastructure and the development are aligned, including any appropriate phasing;
 - ii. That the provision of the infrastructure and the development are aligned, including any appropriate phasing;
 - c. Ensuring that new or improved water and sewage treatment facilities, including fluvial and coastal outfalls, contribute towards improvement in water quality and demonstrate no significant adverse impact upon the natural environment, including the coastal and marine environment; and

- d. Retaining an appropriate buffer between development and sewage treatment works, sufficient to allow for operational needs, including any planned expansion of the works, and in order to avoid any odour or noise issues for sensitive neighbouring uses.
2. Non-mains drainage systems, such as package treatment plants and septic tanks should only be employed where the development is sufficiently remote from sewered areas, applying Environment Agency standards. Where they are required, careful consideration of their siting and design will be required to ensure that there is no adverse impact upon groundwater, water quality or existing ecosystems.

Flood risk

- 9.23** Flood risk is critical when assessing the location of development. There is strong evidence that flood risk is increasing because of climate change. National policy therefore requires that Local Plans should minimise the risk of flood damage by locating development away from areas of highest risk of flooding.
- 9.24** The main sources of flood risk within Northumberland are from rivers and watercourses (fluvial), the sea (tidal), surface water run-off and sewers. Groundwater flooding is localised in nature.
- 9.25** Fluvial and tidal flood risk maps have existed for many years and allow accurate planning of where different types of buildings should or should not be sited according to their vulnerability.
- 9.26** National guidance sets out a 'sequential test' to be used to steer vulnerable buildings towards areas of low risk from flooding. The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Northumberland provides a more detailed picture of areas susceptible to different types of flooding and identifies risks across the County.

Resilience and resistance to flooding

- 9.27** Not all flooding is as predictable as fluvial, in either location or frequency. Planning policies and decisions must concentrate on minimising risk. This can be greatly assisted by adopting a 'blue-green infrastructure' approach, whereby development including the design of buildings and landscaping, as well as any other infrastructure improvements, seek to replicate a natural water cycle and contribute to amenity by bringing water management and green infrastructure together.

Sewer flooding

- 9.28** Flooding from sewers is increasingly recognised as an issue in areas that are not necessarily at risk from fluvial flooding – whereby rainfall events, sometimes away from the area concerned, cause major surface water run-off to enter the sewerage system. In places, the network does not have the capacity to accommodate these peak flows, causing wastewater to discharge from the network to surrounding land, housing and commercial property.
- 9.29** Northumbrian Water invest in sewerage infrastructure projects, specifically targeted to reduce the incidence of sewer flooding, including the separation of surface water from combined sewerage systems. However, future investment in sewerage infrastructure must also address increased sewage disposal resulting from future development. A collaborative approach will deliver sustainable surface water management, directing it from conventional systems to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS - see below). This will prevent excess surface water run-off entering the sewer system. Other benefits of such an approach will include a much reduced risk to water quality. A number of Drainage Area Studies, undertaken by Northumbrian Water, will, through detailed sewer capacity information, help prioritise the location of development in relation to sewer flood risk.

Design and flooding

- 9.30** Sometimes a development scheme that includes highly vulnerable uses, may encroach into areas at risk from flooding, including those areas prone to surface water flooding, in which case opportunities will be sought to reduce the overall level of risk through the layout, mix and/or form of the development, as well as the appropriate application of a blue-green infrastructure approach, incorporating SuDS (see below).
- 9.31** Where floodwaters are likely to affect buildings and it has been demonstrated that development may be acceptable in the particular location, the design can build in resistance to water penetration ('dry proofing'), or, if this cannot be achieved, resilience to the entry of water ('wet proofing'). Resilience can also be designed into a building's internal layout, fixtures and fittings so that, in the event of a flood incident, there will be, for example, easy access to safer upper floors and the opportunity for quick reoccupation afterwards. The SFRA has identified a number of resistance and resilience measures for consideration in the assessment of development proposals. The guidance covers building materials, foundations, floors, walls, doors and windows, fittings and utilities.

Surface water

- 9.32** Relatively small changes in hard surfacing and surface gradients can result in surface water flooding becoming more frequent. Reusing brownfield land can be beneficial insofar as development is likely to increase rather than reduce their permeability.

- 9.33** National guidance sets out a hierarchy of acceptable surface water discharge solutions with discharge into the ground being the most preferred solution and connection to sewers the least preferred solution. The emphasis of the guidance is that surface water run-off entering the sewerage system should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- 9.34** Surface water flooding is an issue in parts of Northumberland and there is a need for surface water management to reduce the risk of flooding from new development. The large scale prevention of water draining into sewers, (see above), is a key part of this. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are integral to dealing with this issue at a whole range of scales - see below.
- 9.35** The provision of green infrastructure (explained in Chapter 4) can also play a less direct but important role in the management and mitigation of surface water flooding, including preventing pollution by filtering surface water run-off, thereby maintaining or improving the quality of water in the environment in line with legislation.
- 9.36** The issue of whether minewater is present in the water table in the vicinity of proposed developments will be a key consideration in terms of the type of surface water drainage solution that is employed. An incorrect solution could exacerbate the minewater problem.

Flood alleviation

- 9.37** There are a number of existing flood defences and other flood management structures across Northumberland. These are mostly on rivers close to low-lying populated areas or other vulnerable land uses. There are still communities affected by flooding, where there will be a need to plan for additional flood defence and management schemes. Following the 2008 flood at Morpeth, work a major flood alleviation scheme was implemented, involving raised flood defences and the storage of floodwater upstream.

Policy WAT 3

Flooding

1. In assessing development proposals the potential for both on and off-site flood risk from all potential sources will be measured, taking into account the policy approach contained within: the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plan; the Northumberland Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study; and the findings of Drainage Area Studies.
2. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:
 - a. Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential

- Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;
- b. Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;
 - c. Assessing the impact of the development proposal on existing sewerage infrastructure and flood risk management infrastructure, including whether there is a need to reinforce such infrastructure or provide new infrastructure in consultation with the relevant water authority;
 - d. Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
 - e. Pursuing the full separation of foul and surface water flows as follows:
 - i. A requirement that all development provides such separation within the development; and
 - ii. Where combined sewers remain, the Council will work with statutory sewerage providers to progress the separation of surface water from foul;
 - f. Ensuring that built development proposals, including new roads, separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, with Sustainable Drainage Systems being the preferred approach, modified as necessary where minewater is present; in relation to this:
 - i. Surface water should be managed at source wherever possible, so that there is no net increase in surface water run-off for the lifetime of the development;
 - ii. Surface water should be disposed of in accordance with the following hierarchy for surface water run-off:
 - To a soakaway system, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible due to poor infiltration with the underlying ground conditions;
 - To a watercourse, unless there is no alternative or suitable receiving watercourse available;
 - To a surface water sewer;
 - As a last resort, once all other methods have been explored, disposal to combined sewers;
 - iii. Where greenfield sites are to be developed, the surface water run-off rates should not exceed, and where possible should reduce, the existing run-off rates;
 - iv. Where previously developed sites are to be developed:
 - The peak surface run-off rate from the development to any drain, sewer or surface water body for any given rainfall event should be as close as reasonably practicable to the greenfield run-off rate

- for the same event, so long as this does not exceed the previous rate of discharge on the site for that same event; or
- Where it is demonstrated that the greenfield run-off rate cannot be achieved, then surface run-off rate should be reduced by a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate;
- g. Full consideration should be given to solutions within the wider catchment area, including blue-green infrastructure based solutions and those providing ecosystem services, with wider solutions especially applied if local solutions could be harmful to biodiversity, landscape or built heritage;
3. In relation to flood alleviation schemes:
- a. The early implementation of approved schemes will be supported through development decisions;
 - b. Any proposal for additional schemes should demonstrate that they represent the most sustainable solution and that their social, economic and environmental benefits outweigh any adverse environmental impacts caused by new structure(s), including increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.
4. Any works relating to the above, which impact on natural water systems, should consider the wider ecological implications, applying the ecosystem approach, and link into green infrastructure initiatives wherever practicable.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 9.38** National planning policy requires that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Due to increased pressure on the sewerage system, including greater numbers of connected properties and increased level and intensity of winter precipitation, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are generally the preferred approach to addressing surface water drainage within developments.
- 9.39** In contrast to traditional piped sewerage systems, which struggle with sudden influxes of rainwater, SuDS features such as ponds, porous road surfaces and shallow drainage channels (swales) are designed to absorb rainwater where it falls or slow water down to reduce the levels entering the drainage system. Fast run-off from hard surfaces results in flash floods from rainwater trying to enter the drainages system within a short period of time. By slowing down and separating out run-off, the highest peak levels of water entering the drainage system are reduced and flooding limited. The issue of flash flooding due to extreme weather events has affected certain parts of the County quite badly in recent years and needs to be addressed in a way which reflects a coordinated approach and the benefits of which accumulate over time.

- 9.40** The Government expects local planning policies and decisions on major developments (10 dwellings or more or equivalent non-residential or mixed development) to put sustainable drainage systems in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. SuDS would only be inappropriate in a minority of locations - e.g. where the soils or rocks are impervious or where minewater is present.
- 9.41** With regard to housing, given that many housing development sites in Northumberland are for less than 10 dwellings, efforts will be made to secure appropriate SuDS on smaller sites as well.
- 9.42** Different situations will call for different types of SuDS, according to their effectiveness and efficiency and taking into account what is reasonable and practicable. In terms of design, construction and maintenance costs, SuDS that provide surface features such as swales and ponds can be comparable in cost (including those associated with the additional land take) with the cost of conventional, piped sewerage systems, while delivering additional environmental and social benefits.
- 9.43** SuDS should be embedded as early as possible in the design process to benefit from cost efficiencies, to maximise and integrate social and environmental benefits and to ensure maintenance and operation requirements are economically proportionate. In addition to managing surface water run-off volumes, in designing SuDS, consideration should be given to improving water quality for example by filtering out harmful pollutants from road surfaces.
- 9.44** Occasionally particular types of SuDS will not be appropriate (e.g. because they will bring more birds close to airport runways or otherwise cause a hazard, ground conditions are unstable, there is minewater present, or the development is on a steep slope). However, with regard to major development the onus is on the applicant to provide evidence if their view is that SuDS are inappropriate.
- 9.45** The Government requires that through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations there are clear arrangements in place for ongoing maintenance over the lifetime of the development. With regard to design, implementation and lifetime maintenance, the Council is working with other Local Planning Authorities and Lead Local Flood Authorities across the North East to achieve consensus on sub-regional SuDS guidance.
- 9.46** Consideration will be given to using the Community Infrastructure Levy towards the promotion of sustainable drainage.

Policy WAT 4

Sustainable Drainage Systems

1. Water sensitive urban design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated into developments whenever necessary, in order to separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, in accordance with national standards and any future local guidance.
2. SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:
 - a. That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or
 - b. That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.
3. Where appropriate, efforts should be made to link SuDS or other water sensitive urban design schemes into wider initiatives to enhance the green infrastructure, improve water quality, benefit wildlife and/or contribute to the provision of an ecosystem service.
4. Arrangements must be put in place for the management and maintenance of SuDS over the lifetime of the development, with such arrangements taking account of the cumulative effectiveness of SuDs in the area concerned.

Coastal change

9.47 Along with Northumberland's river systems, the sea is the other element of the water environment which most shapes the County's environment. The Northumberland coastline is approximately 130km in length and stretches from the Scottish Border in the north to Seaton Sluice in the south east of the County. Large parts of the coastline have important natural and built assets; its land and seascapes are particularly distinctive. It comprises a series of dune systems and wide, sandy bays separated by lengths of cliffs and small islands (Holy Island, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island). It also includes a number of towns and villages including: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bamburgh, Seahouses, Beadnell, Craster, Alnmouth, Amble, Cresswell, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Cambois, Blyth and Seaton Sluice. These are important communities in social and economic terms and many retain connections with the sea for employment and commerce. Only a small proportion of the coastline is protected by man-made defences, most notably in the more urban areas.

9.48 The Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2 provides a large-scale assessment of the risks from coastal erosion and sea flooding to places, people and the historic and natural environment. It presents a policy

framework to manage these risks over 20, 50 and 100 years. There are areas of the Northumberland Coast where there is the need to address the issue of coastal erosion and coastal change to protect commercial, economic and residential areas. Key challenges posed by the Shoreline Management Plan include the possible need to relocate caravan parks and golf courses and realign sections of roads in certain areas, as well as specific issues of eroding colliery spoil in the Lynemouth area and sea flooding at Blyth.

- 9.49** The management of coastal change and its attendant processes requires an integrated approach and the Council is working closely with its partners and neighbouring authorities to promote a coherent planning strategy along the Northumberland Coast and beyond. In line with national policy, the Council will continue to work with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) under the Duty to Co-operate to ensure integration of land-use and marine planning, taking into account the requirements of the UK Marine Policy Statement and the forthcoming marine plan for the north east.
- 9.50** National planning policy is clear that the planning system should reduce the risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast. The Local Plan has a role to play in overseeing and planning for coastal change over time and directing development accordingly.
- 9.51** The policy below sets criteria on coastal erosion and Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs), setting out the type of development which would not be appropriate within them, the circumstances in which development may be permissible and the circumstances where a Vulnerability Assessment will be required. CCMAs are defined as the area between the shoreline and the 100 year predicted erosion line plus a 30 metre buffer.

Policy WAT 5

Coastal erosion and coastal change management

1. Areas vulnerable to coastal change will be managed in accordance with the principles and approach set out in the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2), while giving full weight to the level of importance of the coast's ecological and heritage value.
2. Development proposals in these areas in particular will be required to:
 - a. Demonstrate that the need for a coastal location overrides the risk of coastal change and provides wider benefits, such as substantial, sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits;
 - b. Provide an Erosion Vulnerability Assessment which demonstrates that the development is safe over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change processes elsewhere. The assessment should be appropriate to the degree of risk and the location, scale and nature of the development;

- c. Demonstrate that there will not be any harm or loss to the significance of ecological and/or heritage assets and/or designations, including the Northumberland coastal footpath; and
 - d. Provide an assessment of the impact of the development on existing coastal defence infrastructure, including whether new infrastructure would be required as a result of the development proposal.
3. Proposals for new or replacement coastal defence schemes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
 - a. The works are consistent with the relevant management approach for the area, set out in the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2); and
 - b. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the coastal environment, including ecological landscape and heritage assets and designations; and
 - c. Where required, a programme of mitigation can be agreed.
4. Within the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA), as shown on the Policies Map, development will only be permitted, where:
 - a. It can be demonstrated that it would not result in adverse changes to the coast taking account of any impacts on landform, land stability, the ecology or biodiversity; and
 - b. It can be demonstrated that it would need to be located within the zone, as opposed to further inland, by virtue of being concerned with a coastal activity that has a direct environmental, community or economic benefit; and
 - c. Except in exceptional circumstances, any structures are small scale, of a temporary form of construction, granted for a temporary period, and designed to minimise any risk of future erosion effects, and
 - d. It will not increase coastal erosion as a result of changes in surface water run-off; and
 - e. If, applying the above criteria, the Coast Protection identifies that there could be a risk of adverse effects, including inland of the CCMA, then an erosion vulnerability assessment will be required as part of the application.

10. Contaminated and Unstable Land, Pollution and Soil Quality

Introduction

- 10.1** This chapter includes policies to assist in the consideration of the acceptability of development proposals; on land where there are stability or contamination issues; where development may be affected by or could cause pollution to air, water and land and where development proposals have implications for soil and agricultural land quality.
- 10.2** The policies will help deliver the Local Plan objective to conserve and enhance the natural, historic, water and built environment of Northumberland by:
- Preventing new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;
 - Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate;
 - Using areas of poorer quality land in preference to land of higher quality; and
 - Minimising adverse impacts on local communities and the environment.

Contaminated and unstable land

- 10.3** Land instability and contamination have the potential to cause harm to human health and the wider environment as well as damage to property and infrastructure.
- 10.4** Northumberland has a considerable legacy of land contamination and land instability, much of which originates from past coal mining and industrial activities, concentrated in the south east of the County. Land contamination can, however, also be caused by naturally occurring sources, agricultural activities and other smaller scale uses such as fuel filling stations. Similarly land instability can be caused by natural geological features and the action of water. Some contaminated, or unstable land, may be of historic or archaeological interest.
- 10.5** The Local Plan has an important role with respect to minimising the risks and effects of land instability and contamination issues by:
- Ensuring that various types of development are not allowed in locations affected by land instability or contamination without the appropriate precautions; and
 - Providing opportunities to address and reduce land instability and contamination where remediation can form part of the overall development proposal.
- 10.6** Responsibility lies with the developer to ensure that land contamination is appropriately addressed, that necessary remediation takes place and that the site is cleaned up to a level appropriate for the proposed end use. It is important that new development recognises any problems and takes a positive approach to addressing them in a manner that will allow the development to take place safely.

- 10.7** The Council will require that proposals on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated or unstable, or for uses that would be vulnerable to contamination or instability are supported by sufficient information to fully assess the contamination and instability risks. Details of the information required to support a planning application and the circumstances when this information is required is set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist.

Policy POL 1

Unstable and contaminated land

1. Development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented by ensuring the development is appropriately located and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
2. Planning applications for proposals on land that is potentially unstable or contaminated shall be accompanied by an assessment showing:
 - a. The nature and extent of contamination or instability issues and the possible effects this may have on the development and its future users, biodiversity and the natural and built environment; and
 - b. The remedial measures needed to allow the development to go ahead safely giving consideration to the potential end users, including, as appropriate:
 - i. Removing the contamination;
 - ii. Treating the contamination;
 - iii. Protecting and/or separating the development from the effects of contamination; and
 - iv. Addressing land instability; and
 - c. That the benefits of any proposed remediation measures are not outweighed by any harm to the natural, built and historic environment caused by the remediation works themselves.
3. Where remedial measures are needed to allow the development to go ahead safely, these will be required as a condition of planning permission.
4. Support will be given to development proposals that allow for the beneficial remediation of contamination or unstable land.

Pollution

- 10.8** Pollution can affect health, undermine quality of life and affect natural habitats. Alongside other consent regimes and processes, the planning system plays an important role in preventing and limiting the impact of polluting emissions such as noise, light, fumes, chemicals and noxious and hazardous substances.
- 10.9** The Local Plan aims to protect new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of pollution. The Council requires development to comply with national air and water quality standards and adopt techniques to prevent, minimise or render harmless polluting substances. When national standards become more stringent, efforts must be made to enhance the quality of the air, water and/or soils.
- 10.10** In Northumberland special consideration should be given to:
- Protecting and enhancing:
 - the high quality of the water environment;
 - the tranquil nature of the County's countryside;
 - the special qualities of the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park;
 - The important qualities of the coastline and the communities and habitats it serves.
 - The need to improve the natural environments in the two Nature Improvement Areas;
 - The need to limit the effects of air, noise and light pollution along major routes (i.e. road, rail and aircraft from Newcastle International Airport).
- 10.11** Poor air quality, caused by harmful pollutants, can have a significant negative impact on public health and biodiversity, and can lead to the production of greenhouse gases. Air quality in Northumberland is generally good and there are currently no Air Quality Management Areas in the County. However, air quality issues are particularly likely to arise from developments that may generate significant levels of traffic, introduce a new source of air pollution or expose people to existing sources of air pollution. Proposals for development which may have a detrimental effect upon air quality will need to be accompanied by an air quality assessment as part of the application and provide mitigation measures. The cumulative effects of a development upon air quality should be considered in context of existing development and alongside other permitted but not implemented developments.
- 10.12** Noise is an important consideration for developments either for uses which are sensitive to noise or for uses which generate noise, and for any development in proximity of an existing source of noise. Noise assessments, which should set out mitigation measures, and have regard to the national noise strategy, will be required for any application for a development that will introduce a noise source or that will create a sensitive receptor to existing noise source.
- 10.13** The circumstances where an air quality or noise assessment is required, and what information should be contained in such assessments is set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist.

Policy POL 2

Pollution and air, soil and water quality

1. Development proposals in locations where they would cause, or be put at unacceptable risk of harm from, or be adversely affected by pollution by virtue of the emissions of fumes, particles, effluent, radiation, smell, heat, light, noise or noxious substances will not be permitted.
2. Development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity.
3. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be permitted.
4. Development will be required to help:
 - a. Maintain soil quality standards;
 - b. Improve water quality standards in line with the requirements of Policy WAT 1; and
 - c. Maintain air quality standards and support improvements in any identified Air Quality Management Areas consistent with any local air quality action plans.
5. Advice on the storage and handling of hazardous substances will be taken from the Health and Safety Executive.

Airport Safeguarding Areas

10.14 One particular source of pollution that must be safeguarded against when determining the location of development is associated with the flight paths from the airports. There are also other reasons to safeguard people by avoiding the need for them to reside or otherwise congregate within these zones; and there are certain types of developments that need to be avoided in case they endanger or disrupt aircraft movement - e.g. tall structures or developments that might create a bird hazard (e.g. those including a ponded area).

10.15 The civil aerodromes with officially safeguarded areas overlapping into Northumberland are Newcastle and Carlisle Airports. The defined Public Safety Zones are shown on the Policies Map. Within them, certain planning applications will be subject of consultation with the operators of these two Airports. Also overlapping into the County is the 1 in 10,000 individual risk contour for Newcastle Airport where a more restrictive approach must be applied. It should be noted that these zones have been determined and fixed by expert statutory bodies and cannot be adjusted through this Local Plan.

Policy POL 3

Airport Safeguarding Areas

1. Development proposals falling within the defined Civil Airport Public Safety Zone and within this, the 1 in 10,000 individual risk contour, as shown on the Policies Map, will be subject to consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority and/or the relevant Airport consultees, as appropriate.
2. Within the 1 in 10,000 individual risk contour, permission will not be granted for residential or employment uses or any other use that would involve people remaining within the location over extended periods.
3. Elsewhere within Public Safety Zone, the following types of application only will be permitted, subject to other policy considerations:
 - a. Extensions or alterations to dwellinghouses or the addition of annexes;
 - b. Extensions or alterations to existing workplaces or other places where people congregate so long as it can be reasonably concluded that the numbers of people working or congregating there will not increase; and
 - c. Open land or new build uses that will not entail people being on site for periods of more than a few minutes at a time and/or on a regular basis.

Soils and agricultural land quality

- 10.16** Soil is a vital element of the environment that requires protection from loss and degradation, and improvement where degradation may already have occurred. Due to its extremely slow process of formation, soil is considered as a non-renewable resource, having a vital role within eco-systems - storing and filtering water and nutrients and acting as the biggest global carbon store. In addition, soil is a key element in the production of food, determining the quality of agricultural land. It is therefore important that the soil resources are appropriately protected and used sustainably.
- 10.17** The quality of agricultural land is classified by Defra and Natural England using the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). The ALC system classifies land into five grades, with grade 3 subdivided into subgrades 3a and 3b. The best and most versatile land is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the NPPF. This is the land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and which can best deliver future crops for food and non food uses such as biomass, fibres and pharmaceuticals.

10.18 The majority of agricultural land in Northumberland is classified as grade 3, with some small areas of grade 2 land in the north of the County, and some areas of grades 4 and 5 land in the west of the County.

Policy POL 4

Soil and agricultural land quality

1. Development proposals should protect the quality of any displaced soil through sustainable use by following the most up to date guidance from the Government⁽²⁰⁾.
2. Development of "best and most versatile" agricultural land will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
 - a. There are no suitable alternative sites on previously developed or lower quality land; and
 - b. The need for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect such land in the long term; or
 - c. In the case of temporary/potentially reversible development (for example, minerals), that the land would be reinstated to its pre-working quality.

20 Currently the Code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites' by Defra

11. Managing Natural Resources

Introduction to minerals

- 11.1** Minerals are important resources; they are the raw materials which are necessary to provide the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs, therefore supporting sustainable economic growth.
- 11.2** The most significant minerals in Northumberland are:
- Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock and sand and gravel for aggregate uses;
 - Coal for use in energy generation;
 - Sandstone for use as building stone; and
 - Brick-making clays (including fireclays, coal measures mudstones, brick shales and glacial clay).
- 11.3** There are also other mineral resources found in Northumberland, which are not currently extracted. These include fluorspar, witherite and barite, which occur in veins with lead and zinc ores and conventional hydrocarbons, shale gas and gas from coal seams and workings.
- 11.4** The policies within the Local Plan aim to deliver the strategic objective to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, which includes minerals, while minimising the adverse impacts of their extraction and transportation on both communities and the environment by seeking to ensure that:
- These finite resources are not unnecessarily sterilised;
 - Existing, planned and potential infrastructure associated with the transportation, handling and processing of minerals are safeguarded;
 - High quality restoration and aftercare is provided for at the earliest opportunity;
 - Land is made available to ensure a steady and adequate supply of minerals; and
 - Extraction, as well as the associated processing and transportation, does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.

Environmental criteria for assessing minerals developments

- 11.5** The potential for unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity and the local environment as a result of minerals extraction, processing and transportation is a major concern for communities. Notwithstanding this the environmental effects arising from minerals development are not always negative and minerals developments can bring environmental benefits, particularly through high quality restoration and after-use.
- 11.6** The NPPF states that Local Plans should set out environmental criteria against which planning applications for minerals extraction will be assessed so as to ensure that proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural and historic environment and on human health. Policy MIN1, therefore, sets out the policy criteria to support the consideration of the environmental acceptability of

minerals proposals in Northumberland and will be used to support the assessment of the environmental effects in conjunction with the policy criteria detailed in the resource based policies for minerals development (i.e. Policies MIN 6 to MIN 11).

- 11.7** Applicants will be required to provide sufficient information in support of their planning application to ensure a full and robust assessment can be made of the likely environmental effects of the proposals. Information should also be provided on the control, mitigation and monitoring measures that will be utilised to address the effects identified.

Policy MIN 1

Environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals

1. Proposals for mineral extraction will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that any adverse effects on local communities and the environment are acceptable.
2. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to potential effects on:
 - a. Local amenity – applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is appropriate separation between the site and dwellings and other sensitive uses, to prevent unacceptable levels of noise, dust, vibration, air pollution and harmful visual impact;
 - b. Landscape character and sensitivity – applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposal can be effectively and appropriately integrated with its surroundings and the character of the landscape, particularly as a result of changes to landform and topography both during and after extraction;
 - c. The conservation and enhancement of nature conservation and geological sites, including internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, priority habitats and protected and priority species – applicants will be required to demonstrate that their proposal will deliver a net gain for biodiversity where possible through the creation of priority habitats and by contributing to the creation of a coherent and resilient ecological network and that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects on national or international nature conservation designations or irreplaceable habitats;
 - d. The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the adjoining Northumberland National Park and their settings – applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposals do not have unacceptable adverse effects on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of these designations;
 - e. Cultural heritage, including known and unknown archaeological features, designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings – applicants should demonstrate that the proposals will not result in unacceptable harm to heritage assets;

- f. Soils and agricultural land quality – applicants should demonstrate that the soil resource is managed in a sustainable way and where proposals affect best and most versatile agricultural land applicants should demonstrate there is no suitable alternative of lower quality agricultural land that provides the same benefits in terms of other environmental considerations, the land could be restored to its previous agricultural land quality or there is an overriding need for the development;
 - g. The capacity and suitability of the transport network, including numbers of movements, site access arrangements, and impacts on non-motorised users – The transport of minerals using rail and water is encouraged and where road transport is proposed applicants should demonstrate that transport by rail or water is not practicable or feasible;
 - h. The use of public rights of way – where disruption to a public right of way is unavoidable applicants will be required to demonstrate how the proposals make provision for the diversion of routes or for the creation of an alternative route during both minerals extraction and restoration that are convenient and safe and, wherever possible, take opportunities to enhance public rights of way;
 - i. Flood risk – applicants should demonstrate that the proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on flood flows or storage capacity and do not increase the risk of flooding at other locations;
 - j. Ground and surface water quality, flow and water abstraction – applicants should consider the potential for the proposal to affect the flow, quality and quantity of ground and surface water supplies and include measures to prevent water pollution;
 - k. Light pollution – applicants should demonstrate the proposals incorporate measures to control light pollution;
 - l. Land stability – applicants should demonstrate that the operation and restoration of the site does not create land instability and the quarry slopes and storage mounds are designed so as not to create instability, and
 - m. Aviation safety – where proposals are within aerodrome safeguarding zones, applicants should demonstrate that the proposals do not give rise to new or increased hazards to aviation.
3. The criteria listed above should be considered both individually and cumulatively. In assessing cumulative impact, particular regard will be had to:
- a. The combination of effects from an individual site;
 - b. The combination of effects from one or more sites in a locality; and
 - c. The effects over an extended period of time either from an individual site or a number of sites in a locality, whilst recognising that mineral resources can only be extracted where they occur, the benefits from extending existing sites rather than opening up new areas to working and the desirability of comprehensively working resources in an area to avoid sterilisation.

Benefits of minerals developments

- 11.8** The NPPF highlights that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and quality of life and goes on to state great weight should be given to these benefits when determining planning applications. Such benefits can be both national and local and include, amongst other things:
- Supplying materials to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods the country needs;
 - Economic benefits by contributing to high and stable levels of economic growth and by providing employment opportunities;
 - Environmental enhancements through high quality restoration;
 - Opportunities to deal with areas of contaminated or derelict land and areas of unstable ground, particularly those resulting from the legacy of underground coal mining; and
 - Opportunities to recover a resource that would otherwise be sterilised by non-mineral development.
- 11.9** Policy MIN 2 identifies the benefits that shall be given weight when determining planning applications in Northumberland for minerals developments. The criteria in Policy MIN 2 are not intended to be an exhaustive list of the benefits of minerals extraction but seek to identify the key matters. Other benefits that are material planning considerations and that are not listed in Policy MIN 2 will be considered where applicants outline these in an application.
- 11.10** The benefits need to be given great weight in the decision making process and balanced against the environmental effects (see Policy MIN 1) arising from the mineral extraction, transportation and processing.

Policy MIN 2

Criteria for assessing the benefits of minerals proposals

1. When determining proposals for minerals extraction, great weight will be given to the benefits of minerals extraction.
2. In assessing the benefits of individual proposals for minerals extraction, the following matters will be considered:
 - a. The economic benefits of the proposal both nationally and locally, including contribution to the wider economy and the maintenance of employment and the creation of new employment opportunities;
 - b. The contribution the extraction of the mineral will make to a steady and adequate supply of that material both locally and nationally;
 - c. Environmental enhancements, including those delivered through the restoration of the site following extraction and the after-use of the site and outside of the operational area;
 - d. The avoidance of a mineral resource being sterilised by non-mineral development;

- e. In the case of prior extraction, the contribution this can make enabling a non-mineral development taking place;
 - f. The contribution towards the reclamation of areas of derelict or contaminated land and/or the remediation of underground coal mining legacy issues; and
 - g. The use of rail and water transport where this method is used instead of road transport.
3. Other benefits that are material planning considerations and that are not listed in (2) above will be considered where applicants provide evidence of these in support of a planning application.

Mineral and landfill site restoration, aftercare and after-use

- 11.11** It is essential that mineral and landfill sites are properly restored at the earliest opportunity and the after-use is appropriate to the site concerned. The restoration, aftercare and after-use of minerals sites are, therefore, an important consideration in assessing the acceptability of proposals for mineral extraction or landfill. Applicants should address site restoration and after-use at an early stage in the planning process and are encouraged to engage with the Council and local communities prior to applications being submitted.
- 11.12** Good site restoration and aftercare has the potential to enhance the environment and contribute to the achievement of wider policy objectives. The policy for site restoration, aftercare and after-use seeks to deliver environmental and community benefits by providing environmental enhancements that maximise opportunities for nature conservation, landscape enhancements and informal outdoor recreation.
- 11.13** It may not be possible to deliver all aspirations in all circumstances and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to the constraints, the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, the use of the site prior to working, local community aspirations and opportunities, including opportunities to link to wider area enhancements or initiative. It is, however, recognised that the majority of minerals sites in Northumberland lie in the open countryside and acceptable after-uses will, therefore, be restricted to agriculture, forestry, informal recreation and nature conservation in most circumstances. After-use proposals involving built development, such as housing and business uses, will be assessed against the relevant policies in the development plan. These types of after-uses may be particularly relevant on sites well-related to existing settlements and where the mineral extraction has supported the remediation of derelict and/or contaminated land.
- 11.14** All proposals are required to make provision for the after-care and maintenance of the restored site for a period of not less than five years. However, it will be appropriate to extend the period for after-care and maintenance in circumstances where a period of more than five years is required for the after-use to become established or a particularly innovative restoration and after-use is proposed. For example, if wildlife habitats are created they can take much longer than the standard five-year after-care period to become established and provision for the longer-term

after-care and management of these habitats will be important in these circumstances. In these circumstances the applicant will normally be expected to make provision for a further period of aftercare and management beyond the standard five year period.

Policy MIN 3

Mineral and landfill site restoration, aftercare and after-use

1. Proposals for minerals extraction will be supported where provision has been made for the high quality restoration and aftercare of the proposed site at the earliest opportunity.
2. Proposals for the restoration, aftercare and after-use of mineral extraction and landfill sites should:
 - a. Deliver net-gains for biodiversity following restoration by contributing to priority habitat creation and local ecological networks, having particular regard to the biodiversity action plan and the biodiversity strategy for England;
 - b. Deliver, where appropriate, improved public access and/or public open space, including links to the surrounding green infrastructure and expansion of the public rights of way network, whilst taking great care to minimise disturbance to wildlife;
 - c. Protect soil resources by ensuring that they are retained, conserved and handled in line with best practice during site extraction operations and during restoration and in the case of mineral development affecting best and most versatile agricultural land, the land is capable of being restored back to best and most versatile agricultural land;
 - d. When creating wetland habitats, take account of the requirement to manage the risk of birds striking aircraft when within Aerodrome Safeguarding Zones and include elements to assist in flood alleviation;
 - e. Include provision for the phased working and restoration of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not practicable or feasible as a result of the site characteristics and constraints;
 - f. Include sufficient detail to demonstrate that the proposed restoration and after-use scheme is practically achievable and includes details of the final proposed landform, the proposed after-use and how the soil resource and overburden will be managed;
 - g. Make provision for the aftercare and maintenance of the restored site for a period of not less than five years to ensure the land is capable of sustaining the approved after-use or after-uses. The aftercare period should be extended beyond the normal five year aftercare period where it is required for the after-use to become established or a particularly innovative restoration and after-use is proposed; and
 - h. Include sufficient safeguards to ensure the adequate restoration and aftercare of the site from the commencement of development until completion of restoration and aftercare. In exceptional circumstances, such as long-term

schemes where no progressive restoration is proposed, proposals where innovative techniques are to be used, or where there is reliable evidence of financial failure, a financial bond or other financial guarantee shall be sought to underpin this.

Mineral resource safeguarding

11.15 The NPPF advocates that known minerals resources should not be needlessly sterilised by development either above the resource or near to it. Local plans are therefore required to define 'Minerals Safeguarding Areas' (MSAs), MSA designation does not convey any presumption that working will take place. MSAs are defined around the following mineral resources:

- Carboniferous limestone;
- Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
- Coal;
- Igneous rock;
- Sandstone; and
- Sand and gravel.

11.16 In line with advice on best practice, the MSAs for Northumberland will cover the whole of the resource area, include known mineral resources beneath existing settlements and overlap with other planning and environmental designations. The MSAs also extend beyond the boundary of the resource to create a buffer thereby protecting the potential extraction of the mineral from development near the resource.

Policy MIN 4

Safeguarding mineral resources

1. Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are identified on the Policies Map around the following mineral resources and these resources will be protected from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development:
 - a. Carboniferous limestone;
 - b. Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
 - c. Coal;
 - d. Igneous rock;
 - e. Sand and gravel; and
 - f. Sandstone.

2. Applications for non-mineral related development in a Mineral Safeguarding Area are required to include an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the development.
3. Proposals for non-mineral development which would lead to the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will not be supported unless:
 - a. The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral concerned is not of economic value;
 - b. The mineral can be extracted without unacceptable adverse effects on residential amenity and the natural and historic environment prior to the non-mineral development, recognising that prior extraction has different characteristics to longer-term mineral extraction;
 - c. The development is temporary in nature and will not impact on the potential for mineral extraction within a timescale in which the mineral is likely to be needed;
 - d. There are no reasonable alternative options for the proposed development which would avoid or minimise the sterilisation of minerals;
 - e. The overall social, economic or environmental benefits of the proposed development outweigh the potential loss of the mineral resource; or
 - f. It constitutes non-mineral development that is exempt from the safeguarding provisions. Exempt non-mineral development comprises:
 - i. Householder development, which includes extensions, alterations or improvements to existing dwellings, the erection of domestic garages, outbuildings and garden walls or fences;
 - ii. An advertisement;
 - iii. Reserved matters applications following the grant of outline planning permission;
 - iv. Applications to change the use of an existing building, except where the change is to a residential dwelling (use class C3) and other sensitive uses such as schools (use class D1), residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres (use class C2);
 - v. Applications to remove or amend a condition attached to an existing planning permission;
 - vi. Works to trees;
 - vii. Prior notifications submitted in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2, parts 6 and 7 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015;
 - viii. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development (CLEUD);
 - ix. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD); and
 - x. Non-material amendments.

Mineral infrastructure safeguarding

11.17 The NPPF requires Local Plans to safeguard existing, planned and potential sites for important minerals related infrastructure. This includes:

- Minerals transportation infrastructure, such as rail heads, rail links to quarries, wharfage and associated storage, handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport of minerals by rail, sea or inland waterways;
- Sites for concrete batching and the manufacture of other concrete products;
- Sites for the manufacture of coated materials; and
- Sites for the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

11.18 The most strategically important sites to safeguard in the context of Northumberland are the sites that are used, or have the potential to be used, to support the transportation of minerals by rail and water. Unlike the other types of site listed above, the potential location for these facilities is more limited and there is less flexibility in terms of where these sites can be located due to their need to be connected to the existing rail network and navigable waterways, usually at ports and harbours. The safeguarding of these sites is also particularly important as the use of rail and water for the sustainable transportation of minerals is encouraged.

11.19 The introduction of some other types of development in close proximity to sites can also raise important safeguarding issues. For example, if housing and business uses that require a high quality local environment are located close to sites used for the transportation, handling and processing of minerals it can lead to conflict. This is as a result of the potential environmental effects arising from the operation of the site, such as noise, vibration and impacts from vehicle movements; that can impact on local amenity. Policy MIN 5 therefore requires applicants of development proposals in the vicinity of the safeguarded sites to demonstrate that they will not prevent or prejudice the current or future use of the site.

11.20 Details of the safeguarded minerals infrastructure is identified in Table 11.1 below. The boundaries of the safeguarded sites are also shown on the Policies Map.

Table 11.1 Safeguarded minerals infrastructure

Infrastructure Type	Site/ Facility
Rail heads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butterwell, Linton • Steadsburn, Widdrington • Belford (Easington) Quarry • Potential rail depot for Cragmill Quarry, Belford
Rail links to mineral sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Coast Main Line to Northumberland Line at Ashington via Butterwell railhead • East Coast Main Line to Steadsburn railhead • Rail links to the Port of Blyth
Wharves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battleship Wharf, Cambois • Tweed Dock, Berwick-upon-Tweed

Concrete batching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Old Gasworks, Alnwick ● Barrington Road, Bedlington ● Battleship Wharf, Cambois ● Belford South Farm, Belford ● Townfoot, Haltwhistle ● Howford Quarry, Acomb ● Lynefield Park, Lynemouth ● Red Row, Bedlington ● Brock Lane, West Sleekburn
Manufacture of concrete products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aggregate Industries, West Sleekburn ● Lynx Precast, Lynefield Park ● Charcon flooring, Barrington Industrial Estate
Coating plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barrasford Quarry ● Cragmill Quarry ● Divethill Quarry ● Howick Quarry ● Keepersfield Quarry ● Swinburne Quarry
Recycled and secondary aggregates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● East Cramlington ● Howford Quarry ● Lynemouth Power Station ● Linton Transfer Station ● Longhoughton (Ratcleugh) Quarry ● Thornbrough Quarry ● West Sleekburn

Policy MIN 5

Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure

1. The minerals related infrastructure identified in Table 11.1 and shown on the Policies Map will be safeguarded from unnecessary loss to non-mineral related development on the site or within its vicinity.
2. Proposals for non-mineral development that would result in the loss of the infrastructure will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a. The proposal for non-mineral development will not prevent or prejudice the current or future use of the site;
 - b. The site is no longer needed for mineral handling, processing, storage and transport; or
 - c. Alternative capacity for mineral storage, processing and transport can be provided and delivered sustainably at an alternative site.

Aggregate minerals

- 11.21** Aggregates are hard, granular materials used either on their own or with other materials for concrete, mortar, roadstone, asphalt, railway ballast, drainage courses and bulk fill. The principal aggregate minerals in Northumberland are Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock, and sand and gravel. Aggregates can also be produced from recycled material, typically recycled road planings and construction and demolition waste, and from secondary materials, which arise as a by-product of an industrial process or other quarrying operations.
- 11.22** The key igneous rock resource is the Whin Sill, located around Belford and Alnwick and to the north of Hexham. The Carboniferous limestone resources are associated with the Whin Sill and are also principally found in the south and west of the County to the north east of Hexham. The principal sand and gravel resources are found along the Tyne Valley and in the Coquet, Breamish, Glen and Till valleys. Quarries with planning permission for the extraction sand and gravel and crushed rock for aggregates uses are listed in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 Quarries in Northumberland with planning permission for the extraction of sand and gravel and crushed rock for aggregate uses

Resource	Quarry name	Reserves with planning permission (As at 31 December 2016)
Sand and gravel	Ebchester (Broadoak) Quarry Haughton Strother Hedgeley Quarry Hemscott Hill Beach Lanton (Cheviot) Quarry Merryshields Quarry Wooperton Quarry	6.1 million tonnes
Crushed rock	Barrasford Quarry Belford (Easington Crag) Quarry Cocklaw Quarry Cragmill Quarry Divethill Quarry Howick Quarry Keepersshield Quarry Longhoughton (Ratcleugh) Quarry Mootlaw Quarry Swinburne Quarry	82.9 million tonnes

- 11.23** The NPPF requires the preparation of an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) to assess the demand for aggregates and the options for their supply. The LAA for Northumberland has been prepared jointly with Durham County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority and the five Tyne and Wear authorities.

11.24 In terms of sand and gravel, the LAA forecasts an annual demand of 428,000 tonnes from Northumberland. Based on this forecast demand, the current reserves with planning permission for extraction would provide for 14.1 years of provision from the end of 2016. As summarised in Table 11.3, there would be a shortfall in supply to the end of the plan period. The following preferred areas have been identified in this plan to meet this forecast demand and are shown on the Policies Map:

- Land at Anick Grange Haugh (9 million tonnes)
- Land east of Wooperton Quarry (1 million tonnes)
- Land east of Lanton Quarry and west of Akeld Steads (1.7 million tonnes)

11.25 The allocations for sand and gravel seek to ensure that an adequate landbank of at least 7 years is maintained, provide productive capacity and ensure a balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland.

Table 11.3 Summary of balance between supply and demand of sand and gravel for aggregate uses in Northumberland

Reserves at 31 December 2016	6,045,000 tonnes
Annual demand forecast in LAA	428,000 tonnes
Demand from 2017 to 2036 (20 years)	8,560,000 tonnes
Landbank	14.1 years
Balance between supply and demand	-2,515,000 tonnes
Required landbank	At least 7 years / 2,996,000 tonnes
Outstanding balance required to maintain appropriate landbank	-5,511,000 tonnes

11.26 In terms of crushed rock, the LAA forecasts an annual demand of 1,451,000 tonnes from Northumberland. Based on this forecast of demand, the current reserves with planning permission would provide for 57.1 years of provision from the end of 2016, and as summarised in Table 11.4, there would be no shortfall against demand up to and beyond the end of the plan period. However, the LAA indicates that some flexibility is required in terms of the policy approach to ensure additional land to provide of crushed rock for aggregates uses is available over the plan period. This is to maintain productive capacity and a balance in supply between quarries in the north and east of Northumberland and those in the south and west of Northumberland in light of the following:

- The current planning permissions for five of the quarries producing crushed rock in Northumberland expire before the end of the plan period;
- The reserves with planning permissions for extraction within a number of the quarries are projected to be exhausted by the end of the plan period; and

- A large proportion of the permitted reserves are contained within a single site.

11.27 The following preferred areas have, therefore, been identified in this plan in order to maintain supply over the plan period and are shown on the Policies Map:

- Land at Belford Quarry (5 million tonnes)
- Land to the north and east of Divethill Quarry (6.6 million tonnes)
- Land to the east of Longhoughton Quarry (1.75 million tonnes)
- Land at Shiel Dykes (3 million tonnes)

Table 11.4 Summary of balance between supply and demand of crushed rock for aggregate uses in Northumberland

Reserves at 31 December 2016	82,917,000 tonnes
Annual demand forecast in LAA	1,451,000 tonnes
Demand from 2017 to 2036 (20 years)	29,020,000 tonnes
Landbank	57.1 years
Balance between supply and demand	+53,897,000 tonnes
Required landbank	At least 10 years / 14,510,000 tonnes
Outstanding balance required to maintain appropriate landbank	0

Policy MIN 6

Aggregate minerals

1. Provision towards a steady and adequate supply of aggregates to meet local and wider needs will be made by:
 - a. Making land available to meet the needs for crushed rock and sand and gravel for aggregate uses identified in the Local Aggregates Assessment;
 - b. Maintaining a landbank of permitted reserves of at least seven years for sand and gravel and at least ten years for crushed rock; and
 - c. Encouraging the use of recycled and secondary aggregates by supporting proposals that maximise the use of secondary and recycled aggregates;
2. Proposals for sand and gravel extraction for aggregate uses will be permitted where:
 - a. It is located within one of the following preferred areas:
 - i. Land at Anick Grange Haugh (9 million tonnes, 90 hectares)

- ii. Land east of Wooperton Quarry (1 million tonnes, 30 hectares)
 - iii. Land east of Lanton Quarry and west of Akeld Steads (1.7 million tonnes, 30 hectares)
 - b. It does not have any unacceptable adverse effects on local communities and the environment; and
 - c. Provision has been made for the timely and adequate restoration of the site and its subsequent aftercare.
3. Proposals for crushed rock extraction for aggregates uses will be permitted where:
 - a. It is located within one of the following preferred areas:
 - i. Land at Belford Quarry (5 million tonnes, 30 hectares)
 - ii. Land to the north and east of Divethill Quarry (6.6 million tonnes, 28.5 hectares)
 - iii. Land to the east of Longhoughton Quarry (1.75 million tonnes, 20.5 hectares)
 - iv. Land at Shiel Dykes (3 million tonnes, 36.6 hectares)
 - b. It does not have any unacceptable adverse effects on local communities and the environment; and
 - c. Provision has been made for the timely restoration of the site and its subsequent aftercare.
4. Planning permission for extensions to existing sites and new quarries outside of the above will be permitted where:
 - a. The proposal would help to maintain productive capacity to meet the required provision set out in criteria (1a and b) of this policy.
 - b. The proposal would assist in maintaining the balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland.
 - c. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
 - d. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.
5. Borrow pits to supply aggregate minerals for major construction projects will be permitted where:
 - a. The material cannot be practically supplied from existing quarries or from available waste materials;
 - b. The location of the proposal is well related to that of the construction project;
 - c. The material to be extracted is for use only in the specified project and the proposal is time limited to that of the construction project;
 - d. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
 - e. Provision has been made for the adequate and timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the borrow pit site.

11.28 The preferred areas identified in Policy MIN 6 (2) and Policy MIN 6 (3) are subject to further assessment and consultation. The next iteration of the Local Plan will identify policy requirements for each preferred area based on the key matters set out in Tables 11.5 and Table 11.6.

Table 11.5 The key matters which any planning application in the identified preferred areas set out in Policy MIN 6 (2) should address

Preferred area	The key matters any planning application would need to address include
Land at Anick Grange Haugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local amenity - There are residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site, including those south of the River Tyne and those at Anick north of the A69 road. ● Green Belt - The site is within the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. ● Agricultural land quality - The site contains Grade 2 agricultural land. ● The transport network - The effects on the junction with Ferry Road and the A6079. ● Flooding - The site is within Flood Zone 3.
Land east of Wooperton Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local amenity - There are residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site, along the A697 road. ● Landscape - The site is within an Area of High Landscape Value.
Land east of Lanton Quarry and west of Akeld Steads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilities infrastructure - An underground gas pipeline is located to the west of the site. ● Local amenity - There are dwellings on the boundary and within the vicinity of the site. ● The transport network - Access to the site from the A697. ● Nature conservation - The River Tweed SSSI and River Tweed SAC are to the south of the site. ● Cultural Heritage - West Akeld Stead Henge Scheduled Monument is on the site, there is an archaeological site within the site, and two listed buildings (South Lodge and Akeld Steads) in the vicinity of the site.

Table 11.6 The key matters which any planning application in the identified preferred areas set out in Policy MIN 6 (3) should address

Preferred area	The key matters any planning application would need to address include
Land at Belford Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local amenity - There are residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site, and a campsite is located approx 1 km to the east of the site. ● Agricultural Land Quality - There is a high likelihood that the site contains best and most versatile agricultural land. ● Public Rights of Way - A footpath crosses the site access road. ● Cultural Heritage - An archaeological site is within the existing quarry area. ● Landscape - The site is close to the Northumberland Coast AONB, Northumberland Heritage Coast and within a landscape character area judged as being highly sensitive to hard rock extraction.
Land north and east of Divethill Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local amenity - There are residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site. ● Public Rights of Way - A footpath, which is part of the St Oswald's Way long distance route, runs along the north eastern edge of the site. ● Nature Conservation - Much of the site is designated as a Local Wildlife and Geological Site due to the quality of the species rich grassland. Bavington Crags SSSI is located to the north east of the site. ● Cultural heritage - The site is within the vicinity of the Great Bavington Conservation Area.
Land to the east of Longhoughton Quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local amenity - The site is in close proximity to the village of Longhoughton, where there are a high number of residential properties and other sensitive uses including a church, primary school and community centres. ● The transport network - The effects on the C80 (Denwick to Longhoughton road) and the surrounding highway network. ● Public Rights of Way - A footpath runs across part of the site. ● Nature Conservation - Longhoughton Quarry SSSI is adjacent to the site, within the existing quarry. ● Cultural heritage - There are three archaeological sites to the south of the site. ● Landscape - The site is close to the Northumberland Coast AONB and the Northumberland Heritage Coast.
Land at Shiel Dykes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local amenity - There are residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site. ● The transport network - The effects on the A1 and in particular the access to the site.

Coal

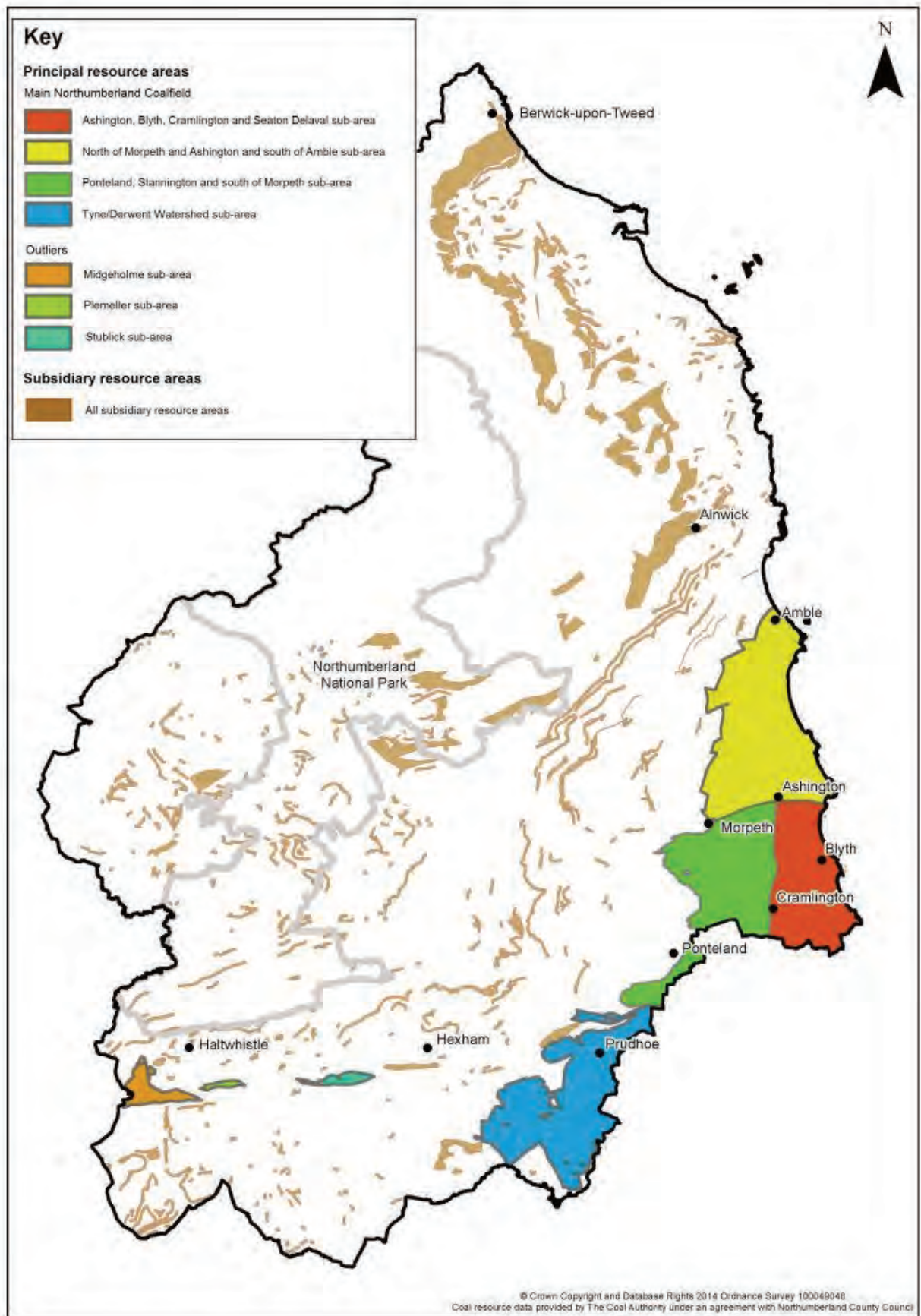
- 11.29** Northumberland has a long history of coal extraction and the surface mines in the County have made a significant contribution to meeting national demand for coal in recent years. The demand for coal has, however, reduced significantly in recent years as a result of government policies to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through encouraging the replacement of coal fired power stations with lower carbon alternatives by the mid-2020s. The Local Plan provides a policy to assess the acceptability of proposals for coal extraction, particularly in terms of potential adverse effects of the extraction operations on local communities and the environment. The effects arising from the use of coal following extraction is outside of the remit of the Local Plan policy.
- 11.30** The coal resource in Northumberland is found across extensive areas of the County and is shown in Figure 11.1. The resource has been divided into 'principal resource areas'⁽²¹⁾ and 'subsidiary resource areas'⁽²²⁾. The principal resource areas represent the most important resource areas in Northumberland due to the closely-spaced nature of the coal seams and the quality of the coal found in these areas.
- 11.31** All proposals for coal extraction in Northumberland will be assessed against the overarching policy test for coal extraction, which is set out in Policy MIN 7. The criteria in MIN 1 (Environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals) and Policy MIN 2 (Criteria for assessing the benefits minerals proposals) will be used to assess environmental acceptability of the proposals and the benefits arising from the proposals.
- 11.32** In addition, Policy MIN7 divides the principal resource areas into sub-areas, recognising the characteristics of these sub-areas and the specific issues associated with coal extraction in these areas⁽²³⁾, and identifies the key environmental issues within the principal resource areas that are particularly relevant to assessing acceptability of proposals for coal extraction in these areas.

21 The 'Principal resource areas' comprise closely-spaced coals within the Coal Measures.

22 The 'Subsidiary resource areas' comprise much more widely-spaced coals in Lower Carboniferous.

23 The key matters identified have been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment, the Key Land Use Impact Study, the Environmental Considerations and Mineral Resources Study and the criteria in the existing policies in the Minerals Local Plan (2000).

Figure 11.1 Coal resource areas in Northumberland



Policy MIN 7

Coal

1. Planning permission for coal extraction shall not be given unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant that the proposal is environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or if not, it provides national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts.
2. Within each of the following sub-areas, proposals will be required to address the following key matters:
 - a. North of Morpeth and Ashington and south of Amble:
 - i. The cumulative effects arising from the proposals in the context of an area that has experienced widespread, large-scale surface coal extraction over a number of decades;
 - ii. The effects of the proposal on the enhancement or restoration of the character of the landscape in this area;
 - iii. The effects on the conservation and enhancement of the nature conservation interest and landscape character along the Druridge Bay coastal strip; and
 - iv. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt around Morpeth;
 - b. Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Delaval:
 - i. The extent to which the proposals contribute to the enhancement of the landscape in this area;
 - ii. The effects on maintaining the openness of the countryside between the settlements, including the impact on the openness of the Green Belt to the south of Blyth, Cramlington and around Seaton Delaval;
 - iii. The effects on the ability to attract inward investment to the area, including effects on the quality of the environment around key employment sites; and
 - iv. The effects on the significance of the historic features and historic landscape to the east of Seaton Delaval around Seaton Delaval Hall.
 - c. Ponteland, Stannington and south of Morpeth:
 - i. The extent to which the proposals contribute to the enhancement of the landscape in this area;
 - ii. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt to the south and east of Ponteland, around Stannington and around Morpeth;
 - iii. The effects on the nature conservation interests at Stannington Vale and along the River Blyth and at Prestwick Carr;
 - iv. The effects on the significance of the historic features and landscapes at Blagdon and St Mary's Hospital; and
 - v. The cumulative effects from surface coal extraction in the adjoining Newcastle Metropolitan Borough area.

- d. Tyne/Derwent Watershed:
 - i. The visibility of proposals from surrounding areas, particularly from the Tyne Valley, the North Pennines AONB and areas within and adjoining the Derwent Valley within County Durham;
 - ii. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt between Whittington, Stocksfield, Prudhoe and around Hedley on the Hill; and
 - iii. The effects on areas of ancient woodland and local wildlife sites in the north of the area and along the Derwent Valley.

- e. Midgeholme outlier:
 - i. The effects on the setting of the adjacent North Pennines AONB;
 - ii. The impact on the nature conservation areas that are found to the south and east of the resource area; and
 - iii. The effects on the adjoining areas within Cumbria and any cumulative effects from surface coal extraction in the area of the Midgeholme coalfield within Cumbria.

- f. Plenmeller outlier and Stublick outlier:
 - i. The effects on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the North Pennines AONB, with development for coal extraction subject to the policy tests for major development in a nationally important landscape; and
 - ii. The effects on the nationally and international important nature conservation sites within the North Pennines.

Clays

11.33 The clay resources that are found in Northumberland include fireclays, coal measures mudstone, brick shale and glacial clays. These resources have principally been extracted for use as a raw material in the manufacture of bricks, pipes and tiles.

11.34 Fireclay is particularly valued for its use in the manufacture of buff-coloured bricks and the extent of this mineral largely coincides with the coal resource. Fireclay deposits in Northumberland are relatively thin, which means that extraction on its own is not economically viable and it is extracted concurrently with coal at surface coal sites. The Local Plan will allow for the continuation of supply of fireclay to brickworks by supporting its extraction and recovery concurrently with coal. Given the economics associated with extraction and the relationship with coal, it is not possible to identify a landbank as required by the NPPF across Northumberland.

- 11.35** Glacial clay has previously been extracted from the Thrunton Brickworks site but has now ceased, along with the manufacture of bricks at the adjacent brickworks. Significant reserves of clay with planning permission for extraction remain at the site and it is proposed to safeguard this resource through Policy MIN 8.
- 11.36** Where clay is extracted as an ancillary mineral, any proposals for the stockpiling of material that cannot be used by brickworks at the time of extraction will be considered favourably where they comply with the criteria set out in Policies MIN 1 and MIN 2 and it does not delay site restoration.

Policy MIN 8

Clays

1. Proposals for new clay extraction sites will be permitted where:
 - a. It would enable a 25 year stock of reserves to be maintained;
 - b. The need for the clay cannot be met from existing reserves with planning permission, or a site closer to a brickworks;
 - c. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
 - d. Provision has been made for the adequate and timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.
2. Proposals for the extraction of brick-making clays, particularly fireclays, concurrently with coal will be permitted where:
 - a. The proposals meet the policy tests for coal extraction;
 - b. Site restoration can take place in a timely manner;
 - c. It will enable the efficient use of the clay resource; and
 - d. The proposals would ensure that the clay resource is not needlessly sterilised.
3. Proposals for the stockpiling of clay extracted as an ancillary mineral will be permitted where:
 - a. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
 - b. Provision has been made for the timely and adequate restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

Natural building and roofing stone

- 11.37** Sandstone from Northumberland is mainly used as a building material and has been quarried in the County for many years. Its use makes an important contribution to defining the character and appearance of the County's towns, villages, castles, country houses and farm steadings. Many of the building stone quarries in Northumberland are small-scale and are only worked intermittently, responding to demand from specific building or restoration projects where the material with those characteristics is specified. It is therefore difficult to predict future demand for building stone and consequent quarrying activity over the plan period as most of the demand arises from specific building or restoration projects. The Local Plan will however seek to ensure that a steady, adequate and diverse supply of building stone is maintained over the plan period whilst ensuring that the environmental effects from proposals are acceptable.
- 11.38** The strategy for natural building and roofing stone is that existing quarries will primarily meet demand during the plan period, with proposals for extensions to existing quarries (including historic quarries which do not have a current planning permission), and for new quarries, being permitted where this would help maintain a steady, adequate and diverse supply of materials and complies with the environmental safeguards set out in Policy MIN 1.

Policy MIN 9

Natural building and roofing stone

Proposals for the provision of building and roofing stone from new quarries, including historic quarries which do not have a current planning permission, and extensions to existing quarries will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:

- a. The proposal would assist in maintaining a steady, adequate and diverse supply of building and roofing stone or would provide material specifically for the repair of identified heritage assets;
- b. The proposal would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
- c. Provision has been made for the timely and adequate restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

Conventional and unconventional oil and gas

- 11.39** The policy for oil and gas extraction covers both conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons. Conventional oil and gas is where the reservoir is sandstone or limestone and unconventional hydrocarbons refers to oil and gas that comes from sources such as shale or coal seams which act as the reservoirs.

- 11.40** In terms of conventional oil and gas, the Carboniferous rocks in Northumberland are identified as having energy generating potential but this potential has not been realised during previous exploration for a viable resource. There are currently no licences for exploration, appraisal or production in Northumberland.
- 11.41** Northumberland also has potential for the recovery of gas from coal seams and coal mines and underground coal gasification. The prospects for exploiting these technologies within Northumberland are currently considered to be poor, due to the extensive previous working of the coal resource, and the methane content is considered to be too low to support commercial extraction. There is, however, the potential for underground coal gasification off the South East Northumberland coast, which is outside the area covered by this plan. This could result in proposals for onshore infrastructure to support the production boreholes offshore.
- 11.42** The geology of Northumberland has also been identified as having the potential for shale gas, which is able to be extracted using hydraulic fracturing (commonly referred to as 'fracking'). This potential resource is currently untested and it is not known whether an extractable resource is present in Northumberland.
- 11.43** The exploration, appraisal or production phase of oil and gas extraction can only take place in areas where the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have first issued a license. An operator must then obtain planning permission from the Mineral Planning Authority. However, a number of matters related to oil and gas development are regulated by other agencies, such as the Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive. Mineral Planning Authorities should not duplicate other regulatory regimes and should assume that these regulatory regimes operate as intended. The policies for oil and gas therefore focus on those matters of relevance to planning.
- 11.44** The policy for oil and gas extraction provides policy criteria to assess proposals which may come forward during the plan period. This is considered appropriate given the uncertainties regarding the future prospects for oil and gas extraction in Northumberland. Many of the planning issues associated with oil and gas development, such as potential pollution of land, air and water, disturbance from noise, visual impact and transportation issues, are similar to the environmental issues that proposals for other types of minerals raise and these matters will be assessed against the requirements of Policy MIN 1. Nonetheless, there are some specific planning matters that are relevant to oil and gas development proposals, including the need for exploration, appraisal and production phases of hydrocarbon development, which are covered in Policy MIN 10.

Policy MIN 10

Conventional and unconventional oil and gas

1. Proposals for exploration and/or appraisal will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:
 - a. The site and the associated equipment and facilities are appropriately sited to ensure they do not have unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects;
 - b. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure;
 - c. Operations are for an agreed, temporary length of time; and
 - d. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site, whether or not oil or gas is found.
2. Proposals for production will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:
 - a. The site and the associated equipment and facilities are appropriately sited to ensure they do not have unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects;
 - b. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure;
 - c. The proposal is supported by a full appraisal programme;
 - d. The proposal would facilitate the full development of the resource; and
 - e. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

Peat

11.45 Peat has traditionally been extracted from Northumberland for use in horticulture and as a fuel. The NPPF is clear that local plans should neither identify new sites nor extensions to existing sites for extraction. This is in line with wider Government policy, which seeks to protect peat habitats because of their nature conservation importance and their carbon storage role.

11.46 In line with the NPPF the approach is not to allow new sites for peat extraction and extensions to existing sites. Time extensions to previously worked peat extractions sites would be supported where the policy criteria are met with the merits of a proposal considered on a case-by-case basis having specific regard to the effects on nature conservation and climate change.

Policy MIN 11

Peat

1. Proposals for new peat extraction sites or extensions to existing peat extraction sites will not be permitted in order to protect peat habitats for their nature conservation value and their role as a carbon store.
2. Time extensions to previously worked peat extraction sites will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal:
 - a. Is necessary to enable appropriate restoration of the site and only peat physically required to implement that restoration is removed;
 - b. Provides enhancements for biodiversity and local ecological networks;
 - c. Would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
 - d. Will deliver clear benefits.

Vein minerals

- 11.47** The North Pennine Orefield extends into the south west of Northumberland. The industrial minerals, fluorspar, witherite and barite occur in veins with lead and zinc ores, and have been the principal minerals produced across the wider North Pennines in the latter part of the twentieth century. There has been no recent extraction in Northumberland.
- 11.48** Given that the occurrence of these resources in Northumberland overlaps with the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which extends into the neighbouring areas of County Durham and Cumbria, the proposed strategy for metalliferous and vein minerals is to consider proposals against the overarching policy for the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tests for major development within this area. The overlap of the resource with nationally and internationally important nature conservation designations in the North Pennines means that the effects on these designations will also be a key consideration in determining the acceptability of proposals. Proposals will also be guided by the overarching policies for minerals.

Introduction to waste

- 11.49** Waste is defined as material or an object which is no longer wanted and requires management. However, rather than being treated as something that needs to be disposed of, the waste is recognised as an important and valuable resource. The Local Plan, has an important role in providing opportunities for a network of facilities that will assist in continuing to move waste management in Northumberland up the 'waste hierarchy' (see Figure 11.2) and assist in recovering these resources rather than disposing of them. This will help to deliver the Local Plan objective to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources while producing less waste and minimising impacts on local communities and the environment.
- 11.50** The waste management sector also provides important opportunities for economic growth and employment through the development of new and enhanced facilities for waste re-use, recycling and recovery.

Figure 11.2 Waste Hierarchy



- 11.51** The management and disposal of waste is regulated by other public agencies and it is assumed that these regulatory regimes operate as intended. The policies relating to waste management and disposal facilities therefore focus on those matters of relevance to planning.

The amount of waste we need to plan for

- 11.52** Households, businesses and other institutions produce a range of wastes that require management and it is important to understand the amount of waste generated and requiring management. Tables 11.7 and 11.8 set out the tonnages of municipal waste (local authority collected waste) and commercial and industrial waste that are forecast to arise over the plan period and how these are likely to be managed.
- 11.53** It is recognised that the amount of municipal waste (local authority collected waste) currently collected is less than forecast and that this pattern of reduction is likely to continue over the plan period.

11.54 The forecasts show some increase in the waste arisings over the plan period. This is due to a projected increase in the number of households in Northumberland over this period, which in turn is projected to result in an overall increase in total arisings despite a decrease in the waste produced per household. Similarly, there is a projected rise in commercial and industrial waste arisings due to forecast economic growth and increased economic activity. It is projected that 8% of local authority collected waste will be managed by landfill throughout the plan period. This is a significant reduction from that managed by landfill prior to 2009, which was in excess of 100,000 tonnes per year. The proportion is assumed to remain at this level because it represents the minimum amount of waste that is either unable to be managed using alternative methods or that has to be managed in this way, for example, because the recovery facility is temporarily unavailable for maintenance purposes. Notwithstanding this, the recovery of local authority collected waste is therefore estimated to be around 92% over the plan period.

Table 11.7 Summary of projected arisings and management of local authority collected waste from Northumberland for selected years⁽¹⁾

Year	Projected waste arisings (tonnes)	Waste recycled (tonnes)	Waste recovered (tonnes)	Residual waste to landfill (tonnes)
2014/15	208,750	83,504	192,059	16,701
2019/20	220,113	92,447	202,504	17,609
2024/25	232,081	99,795	213,515	18,556
2029/30	244,698	110,114	225,122	19,576

1. Notes: Figures taken from Northumberland County Council's municipal waste management contract.

Table 11.8 Summary of projected arisings and management of commercial and industrial waste for Northumberland for selected years⁽¹⁾

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated re-use, recycling and recovery (tonnes)	Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)
2014/15	208,000	148,000	60,000
2019/20	202,000	164,000	38,000
2024/25	197,000	160,000	37,000
2029/30	193,000	157,000	36,000

1. Notes: Figures taken from the North East Waste Forecasting Study.

Table 11.9 Summary of projected arisings and management of hazardous waste for Northumberland for selected years⁽¹⁾

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated re-use, recycling and recovery (tonnes)	Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)
2014/15	21,000	18,000	3,000
2019/20	20,000	18,000	3,000
2024/25	20,000	17,000	3,000
2029/30	19,000	17,000	3,000

1. Notes: Figures taken from the North East Waste Forecasting Study.

11.55 Work has been undertaken in partnership with Durham County Council and four of the Tyne and Wear authorities to gather information on the generation of low level radioactive wastes in Northumberland. The study found that relatively low volumes of such wastes are generated in Northumberland, particularly compared with the volumes generated nationally. As the majority of such material can be managed alongside municipal, commercial and industrial waste the study recommended that local provision of specialist facilities for this waste stream is not required. The low level of local arisings is also unlikely to reach a critical mass upon which the development of specialist local facilities would be required.

Waste prevention and minimisation

11.56 Waste prevention and minimisation is at the top of the waste hierarchy and if achieved will reduce the amount of waste that requires processing and/or disposal.

11.57 There are a number of ways the amount of waste produced can be reduced, however many of the tools to do this are outside of the planning system and cannot be influenced by Local Plan policy. One way the Local Plan can help is to ensure that waste associated with the construction and occupation of new development is reduced as much as possible. Policy SDC 1 (Sustainable Design and Construction) encourages waste generated during construction to be minimised and space to be provided within developments to allow waste to be separated for re-use and recycling.

Provision for waste re-use, recycling and recovery capacity

11.58 It is recognised that Northumberland already has a well-established and appropriately distributed network of waste management facilities with significant capacity. There will, however, be opportunities over the plan period to improve recycling and recovery rates, particularly with respect to residual commercial and industrial waste. In respect of local authority collected waste, the Municipal Waste

Management Strategy identifies a long-term aspiration to provide household waste recovery centres to serve the Coquet valley, North Tyne valley and Amble areas, where access to facilities is currently poor. The Municipal Waste Management Strategy also identifies a need to replace the Seghill facility (which has now closed) in the Cramlington area. Funding to deliver these facilities is unlikely to become available but it remains an aspiration to improve the provision of household waste recovery centres, which should be acknowledged in the Local Plan.

- 11.59** The policy for the provision of new or enhanced waste recycling and recovery facilities is to focus provision on Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres. These locations represent the principal sources of waste generation in the County, given the size of their populations, their critical mass of commercial and industrial activity and focus for new development. Because of a concentration of existing facilities and good transport links, including rail links, West Sleekburn area is recognised as a strategically important location for waste management.
- 11.60** The development of waste recycling and recovery facilities outside these locations, in smaller settlements, will generally be smaller-scale facilities (in a Northumberland context a small-scale facility is considered to have an annual capacity of less than 10,000 tonnes), which will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they are located reasonably close to the source of the waste; and/or are to manage waste arising in a local catchment; and the transport network is adequate to accommodate the proposed import and export of material from the site.
- 11.61** The policy also sets out a sequential approach to selecting sites with the on-site management of wastes and the co-location with existing uses preferred ahead of other locations and greenfield sites the least preferred location. The policy recognises that sites identified for employment uses in the plan will be suitable for new or enhanced waste management facilities where the design is compatible with its location, is enclosed within a building, the proposal addresses any potential transport impacts and there are no unacceptable adverse effects on amenity or the natural and historic environment. The policy does not designate industrial estates in recognition that the individual industrial estates in Northumberland are not homogenous, which means a proposal may be acceptable on one part of a particular industrial estate but not acceptable on another part of the same estate depending on the type and characteristics of the development proposals.
- 11.62** On-farm locations will be most appropriate for the treatment of organic and agricultural wastes, including anaerobic digestion and composting. In addition, some waste management techniques, such as open windrow composting, can operate in an outdoor location and this is recognised in the policy.

Policy WAS 1

Principles for the location of waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities

1. Proposals for new or enhanced waste management facilities for re-use, recycling and recovery will be permitted where:
 - a. They are located within or close to one of Northumberland's Main Towns or Service Centres; or
 - b. They are located outside of one of Northumberland's Main Towns or Service Centres but would supplement the provision of an accessible network of local facilities and has suitable connections to the transport network.
2. Proposals should have regard to the locational sequential order of preference below:
 - a. On-site management of waste where it arises;
 - b. Co-location of sites with an existing waste management use and with complementary activities, including the extension of existing facilities, where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that there are no unacceptable adverse cumulative environmental effects from site operations or the transportation of waste; and
 - c. Sites identified for employment uses, previously developed land, active quarries for managing inert construction and demolition waste or redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages.
3. In respect to (2), the following locations will also be considered:
 - a. On-farm locations for small-scale facilities to manage agricultural wastes, including anaerobic digestion and composting, will be acceptable in principle where it is located within or is well related to an existing farm complex; and
 - b. Construction/demolition sites on active quarries to manage inert construction and demolition waste will be acceptable in principle for either the life of the construction/demolition project or quarry;
4. Facilities involving the recovery of energy from waste should also give preference to sites with the potential to utilise the energy and heat produced.

Policy WAS 2

Development management criteria for waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities

Proposals for new or enhanced waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities will be permitted where:

- a. The design is compatible with its location in terms of its siting, scale, mass, form and landscaping and contributes positively to the quality and character of the area where it is located;
- b. The facility is fully contained within buildings or enclosed structures, unless it can be demonstrated that any unacceptable adverse environmental effects can be effectively mitigated and/or it is a facility that genuinely requires an outdoor location;
- c. The proposal is well related to the transport network and, where practical, located and designed to enable transport by rail or water. Where road transport is proposed the applicant shall demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such effects can be suitably mitigated;
- d. The proposal helps to support a reduction in the distance waste is transported for management, whilst recognising the economics may mean facilities have to operate over large catchments;
- e. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse effects on the natural or historic environment, sensitive receptors or residential amenity as a result of noise, dust, lighting, vibration, odour, vermin and birds, litter and visual intrusion; and
- f. The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable adverse cumulative effects.

Waste disposal

11.63 In accordance with the waste hierarchy, waste disposal is viewed as the last option for managing waste. However, waste disposal will remain necessary over the plan period to manage waste which is not currently recyclable, including residues remaining after recycling and recovery has occurred. The projections of the tonnages of residual wastes requiring disposal over the plan period are presented in Table 11.7 and 11.8.

11.64 Landfill sites are split into three distinct categories: non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill and inert landfill. In Northumberland there is one non-hazardous landfill site at Ellington Road near Ashington. This site is recognised as a strategically important site for the disposal of residual waste arising in Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. The strategic role of this site will continue during the plan period due to its remaining capacity.

11.65 The preferred approach for waste disposal is to seek to minimise the volumes of waste disposed in this way, maximise the levels of recycling and recovery and plan for a reducing amount of disposal. The preferred approach recognises the strategic role of the Ellington Road landfill site and sets criteria to assess proposals which come forward over the plan period. For inert waste disposal, the preferred policy approach is to maximise construction and demolition waste recycling and where this is not feasible to encourage the positive use of material for the restoration of mineral extraction sites or for land reclamation and improvement schemes.

Policy WAS 3

Waste disposal

1. The strategy for hazardous and non-hazardous waste disposal is to:
 - a. Seek to minimise waste managed by landfill and maximise the use of solutions higher up the waste hierarchy;
 - b. Focus disposal and any further disposal capacity over the plan period at Ellington Road Landfill Site. Alternative locations will be considered where it can be demonstrated that these are more sustainable, particularly in terms of their proximity to the main sources of waste arisings, their transport connections and environmental acceptability; and
 - c. Encourage the positive use of inert waste material through the restoration of mineral extraction sites and for land reclamation and improvement schemes, where it is possible to do so.

2. Proposals for additional disposal capacity will be permitted where:
 - a. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the waste cannot be practically managed using solutions higher up the waste hierarchy;
 - b. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on local communities, sensitive receptors and the natural and historic environment;
 - c. The proposal would not result in the creation of excessive capacity which would lead to the unnecessary import of waste from outside Northumberland, whilst recognising that the economics and the specialist nature of some facilities may mean they operate over larger than local catchments;
 - d. The proposal is well related to the transport network and, where practical, located and designed to enable transport by rail or water. Where road transport is proposed the applicant shall demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such effects can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures;
 - e. It makes provision for the capture and use of landfill gas for energy generation, where the proposal involves the disposal of non-inert waste; and
 - f. The proposal is supported by a detailed restoration and aftercare scheme.

Safeguarding waste management facilities

- 11.66** Waste management facilities are important elements of Northumberland's infrastructure and are crucial for the sustainable management of waste in line with the waste hierarchy. It is, therefore, important to safeguard them to ensure their continued availability and to avoid the capacity they provide being lost unnecessarily.
- 11.67** The introduction of other types of development, such as housing and business uses that require a high quality local environment, in close proximity to waste management facilities can lead to conflict as a result of the potential effects on amenity arising from the operation of the facility.
- 11.68** The Local Plan will safeguard these facilities to ensure the need to maintain waste management infrastructure is considered during the determination of planning applications for development in their vicinity. Appendix D provides details on the waste management facilities to be safeguarded.

Policy WAS 4

Safeguarding waste management facilities

1. Existing waste management facilities (as shown on the Policies Map) will be safeguarded from development that would prejudice or prevent the use of the site for waste management uses.
2. Proposals within or in the vicinity of an existing waste management facility will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that:
 - a. The proposal will not prevent or unreasonably restrict the operation of the waste development;
 - b. There is no longer a need for the facility;
 - c. The continued use of the site for waste management purposes would be unacceptable in terms of its effects on local communities and/or the environment;
 - d. The current use of the site for waste management is temporary and unsuitable for continued future use for waste management;
 - e. A suitable alternative site for the waste management use is available and has planning permission; or
 - f. There is an overriding need for the proposed development that provides wider benefits that clearly outweigh those from the retention of the site for waste use.

Introduction to renewable and low carbon energy

- 11.69** Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to ensure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. The planning process has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure by supporting development in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable.
- 11.70** Northumberland has the potential to provide renewable energy from a number of sources, such as anaerobic digestion, biomass, heat pumps, hydro, onshore wind and solar.
- 11.71** The NPPF states that all communities have a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. However, the need for renewable and low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental considerations, such as landscape, heritage and local amenity, and the planning concerns of local communities. The Local Plan and subsequent planning decisions therefore need to balance the generation of renewable and low carbon energy with the need to protect Northumberland's environment and communities from any adverse impacts associated with development.

Assessing proposals for renewable energy development

- 11.72** Policy REN 1 is applicable to all renewable and low carbon energy development (including anaerobic digestion, biomass, heat pumps, hydro, onshore wind and solar photovoltaics) while additional policy requirements applicable to onshore wind turbine development are covered under Policy REN 2. This approach is proposed to ensure that the policy approach to onshore wind turbine development reflects the Written Ministerial Statement issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18 June 2015 (which is reflected in Paragraph 153 of the draft revised NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance.
- 11.73** Policy REN 1 sets out that renewable and low carbon energy proposals will be supported if applicants are able to demonstrate that the effects on the environment and local communities are acceptable or can be made acceptable. Policy REN 1 includes a number of policy criteria to assess the acceptability of proposed developments. Policy REN 1 and other policies in the plan, including those relating to landscape and the natural, built and historic environment, will be used to support the assessment of proposals against these criteria. The criteria within the policy seek to protect those environmental and cultural assets that are important to Northumberland, its communities, economy and visitors. The matters in the policy will be applicable to all relevant proposals but the level of information required in support of a planning application will be proportionate to the scale of the proposal, its location and its potential effects.
- 11.74** The NPPF advises Local Planning Authorities to consider identifying areas for renewable and low carbon energy development where this would help secure development of such resources. However, a criteria-based policy has been

developed and is considered to be the most appropriate approach to help guide and assess proposals for renewable energy developments other than wind turbines that may come forward over the plan period.

- 11.75** To provide additional detail on Policy REN 1 and how the policy criteria applies to different renewable energy technologies, a supplementary planning document will provide be prepared. It is intended that this document will provide guidance on best practice and also include positive guidance on how applicants would be expected to address the criteria in the policy in order to make successful planning applications.

Policy REN 1

Renewable and low carbon energy

1. Proposals for renewable energy and low carbon energy development will be supported in order to contribute to energy generation and a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases, including where decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems are to be used to supply energy to a development.
2. Positive weight will be given to proposals where there is clear evidence of them being community-led.
3. Through the development management process, applications will be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the environmental, social and economic effects of the proposal, individually or cumulatively, on local communities and the environment are acceptable or can be made acceptable. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to the following:
 - a. Landscape character and sensitivity and the sensitivity of visual receptors;
 - b. The special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - c. Internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation and geological sites and features, and protected habitats and species;
 - d. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and other internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets;
 - e. Air, and ground and surface water quality;
 - f. Hydrology, water supply and any associated flood risk;
 - g. Highways and traffic flow, transport networks, Public Rights of Way and non-motorised users, including the effects upon well-used recreational routes such as the National Trails, long distance routes and the national cycle network;
 - h. Amenity due to noise, odour, dust, vibration or visual impact;
 - i. The openness of the Green Belt and whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify otherwise inappropriate development;
 - j. The impact of any new grid connection lines and any ancillary infrastructure and buildings associated with the development;

- k. That appropriate provision has been provided for decommissioning and removal of temporary operations once they have ceased;
 - l. The predicted output of the proposal; and
 - m. The economic benefits of the proposal.
4. All proposals need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the scale of landscape and visual impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

Assessing proposals for onshore wind turbine development

11.76 Onshore wind energy is now an established and common technology for generating renewable energy in the UK. The availability of this technology for deployment, the previous availability of financial incentives and the presence of a wind resource in Northumberland has resulted in considerable development pressure for onshore wind turbine in the County in recent years.

11.77 A Written Ministerial Statement relating to planning for wind turbine development was issued by the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18 June 2015 (which has been included in the draft revised NPPF issued for consultation in March 2018). This statement sets out that when determining planning applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if:

- The development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan; and
- Following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.

11.78 The Statement also sets out that in applying these considerations, suitable areas will need to have been clearly identified in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. Whether a proposal has the backing of the affected local community is a planning judgement for the local planning authority. It is considered that the criteria in the policy will enable this judgement to be made.

11.79 The policy for onshore wind energy (Policy REN 2) reflects the policy tests in the Written Ministerial Statement (which are incorporated into the draft revised NPPF, March 2018) and the test regarding the acceptability of the planning impacts of renewable energy proposals in the NPPF.

11.80 Policy REN 2 refers to the requirement for the development site being located within an area identified as being suitable for wind energy development. The areas that are considered to be suitable for wind turbine development in Northumberland are shown on the Policies Map. Where a proposal is sited within a suitable area it would establish that development would be supported in principle but the proposal would

still need to satisfy a number of policy criteria with a view to ensuring that the effects on local communities and the environment are acceptable and the planning impacts identified by affected communities have been fully addressed. It is also important to note that there are a number of factors that have not been considered in identifying these suitable areas as they are matters for a more detailed assessment at the planning application stage.

- 11.81** The policy recognises that different scales of wind turbine development will have different planning impacts, which will in turn impact on the potential suitability of areas for development. For smaller scale wind turbines, which includes small turbines less than 25 metres in height and small to medium turbines 26 to 40 metres in height, areas are identified across large parts of Northumberland. This will ensure that there is a positive approach to smaller scale development that help individual residential homes and businesses meet their energy needs through decentralised, renewable energy and support smaller scale community-led proposals of this nature that may come forward in Northumberland over the plan period. For larger scale wind turbines (over 40 metres in height), areas to the same extent have not been identified. The Policies Map does, however, identify the existing wind turbine development sites as suitable areas for upgrading or repowering of wind turbines subject to the other requirements and the policy criteria in Policy REN 2 being met.
- 11.82** One of the main concerns expressed with respect to proposals for the development of wind turbines in Northumberland through the planning application process has been in relation to their impact on the County and beyond, which is recognised as an important asset to both residents and visitors. Onshore wind turbines have been recognised as a potential significant force for change on the landscape of Northumberland and a study to understand the landscape and visual effects of the current operational wind farms in Northumberland has been undertaken. The conclusions of this study identify the importance of considering the effects on long and medium range views from and to iconic landscapes and heritage assets and the outlooks for heritage assets. This is recognised in the policy.
- 11.83** Across Northumberland a significant amount of wind turbine development has either already taken place or been consented therefore cumulative impact is a key issue and this is a matter that will require careful consideration. In considering cumulative impact, account should be taken of existing development, including development under construction; approved development awaiting implementation; and proposals submitted as planning applications awaiting determination.

Policy REN 2

Onshore wind turbine development

1. Proposals for the development of single wind turbines or groupings of wind turbines will be permitted where:
 - a. the development site is in area identified as suitable for wind turbine development of the same scale as that proposed, as identified in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan; and
 - b. the applicant can demonstrate that the planning impacts of the proposal, both individually and cumulatively, are acceptable or can be made acceptable, and following consultation it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.
2. Through the development management process, the planning impacts will be assessed against the criteria in Policy REN 1 and the following criteria. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that:
 - a. There is sufficient separation from the proposed wind turbines to protect residential amenity as a result of noise, shadow flicker and visual intrusion. To protect visual amenity, there will be a presumption against development within a distance of six times the turbine blade tip height of residential properties unless it can be demonstrated that the presence of turbines would not have an unacceptable impact upon living conditions;
 - b. The proposals have addressed any potential adverse effects on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems;
 - c. Potential interference to television and/or radio reception and information and telecommunications systems will be avoided and/or mitigated;
 - d. The proposed site access arrangements and access routes will be suitable for the construction phase, including the delivery of turbine components and construction materials, the operational phase, and the decommissioning of the proposed wind farm;
 - e. The proposed wind turbines are located appropriate distances from highways, and railway lines to provide a safe topple distance. A minimum topple distance of the turbine height plus 10% is recommended as a starting point;
 - f. Provision has been made for the satisfactory decommissioning of the turbines and associated infrastructure once the operations have ceased and the site can be restored to a quality of at least its original condition;
 - g. The proposal will not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the landscape and the landscape has capacity to accommodate the proposed development;
 - h. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on long and medium range views to and from sensitive landscapes, such as the Cheviot Hills, Northumberland Sandstone Hills, Northumberland Coast AONB, North Pennines AONB, the Northumberland National Park and the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, and lines of sight between iconic landscape and heritage sites and features, particularly where one or more feature is within

the Northumberland Coast AONB, the North Pennines AONB or the adjoining Northumberland National Park;

- i. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on sensitive or well used viewpoints; and
- j. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on important recognised outlooks and views from or to heritage assets where these are predominantly unaffected by harmful visual intrusion, taking into account the significance of the heritage asset and its setting.

Sustainable design and construction

- 11.84** The sustainable design and construction of new development has an important role to play in terms of ensuring prudent use of natural resources and responding proactively to climate change. Consideration of how to minimise demand on resources, such as energy and water, as part of the design process is important for reducing running costs and improving efficiency. Improving the sustainability of building construction and use, and supporting small scale renewable and low carbon energy generation provides an opportunity to deliver the local strategic objectives of addressing climate change and managing natural resources.
- 11.85** Whilst Building Regulations address technical standards in buildings, the Local Plan seeks to ensure that development is environmentally sustainable and as such applications will need to demonstrate that considerations set out in Policy SDC 1 have guided the design process. This includes consideration of opportunities to incorporate passive design measures, for example the potential for solar gain and natural ventilation through the siting, orientation and layout of a development. Other key considerations include potential to connect to or incorporate district energy systems, renewable energy, water recycling and waste reduction.

Policy SDC 1

Sustainable design and construction

In order to minimise resource use, mitigate climate change, and ensure development proposals are adaptable to a changing climate, proposals will be supported where they, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide:

- a. Incorporate passive design measures which respond to existing and anticipated climatic conditions and improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting;
- b. Consider opportunities to incorporate locally sourced, recycled and energy efficient building materials;
- c. Consider opportunities to include small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation;
- d. Connect to an existing or approved district energy scheme where feasible and viable and in the case of major development proposals consider opportunities to incorporate a district energy network;
- e. Consider opportunities to include water efficiency measures such as the use of water recycling systems;
- f. Incorporate measures to reduce waste generated during construction, including the recovery of materials on-site, and ensuring there is appropriate provisions for recyclable and non-recyclable waste;
- g. Minimise vulnerability to flooding through use of materials, green and blue infrastructure and other design features as appropriate; and
- h. Flexible to allow for future modification, refurbishment and retrofitting.

12. Infrastructure, Implementation and Delivery

Planning for infrastructure to support sustainable development

- 12.1** Implementation of the Local Plan and its aspirations to achieve sustainable development to maintain, enhance and grow communities across the County can only be achieved if growth can be supported by adequate and necessary infrastructure in a timely manner. In the context of the planning system, infrastructure is defined generally in the Planning Act 2008 as meaning: roads and other transport facilities; flood defences; schools and other educational facilities; medical facilities; sporting and recreational facilities; and open spaces. The legislation confirms that this is not an exhaustive list. There may be a range of other services and facilities of various types and scales that could constitute infrastructure that is needed to support the delivery of a particular development, or the implementation of policies in the Local Plan.
- 12.2** Infrastructure needed to support local communities, which may also be subject to controls exercised through the implementation of planning policy, can include those services and facilities provided through the open market to meet the day-to-day needs of communities. In the majority of circumstances the provision of such services and facilities will be left to the market and it would not normally be appropriate for intervention through the planning system.
- 12.3** However, particularly in rural areas where national policy advocates support for a prosperous rural economy, provision exists for planning policy to promote the retention and development of local services in villages. In addition to supporting community infrastructure comprising cultural buildings, sports venues, meeting places and places of worship, national planning policy also promotes the retention of local shops and public houses. This is a matter of particular significance to communities in Northumberland where local village shops and pubs are often at the heart of the community providing for people's day-to-day needs. The Local Plan therefore seeks to address this issue in addition to matters concerning other physical, community, social and green infrastructure.
- 12.4** This Chapter sets out policies that:
- seek to secure development related infrastructure which is reasonably necessary to make new development sustainable;
 - guide other investment in infrastructure;
 - guard against the loss of important infrastructure; and
 - describe appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation for the impact of development, including impacts on infrastructure provision.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 12.5** The Council has been working collaboratively with a range of private sector bodies, utilities and infrastructure providers, adjoining local authorities and other organisations to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure across Northumberland, and the ability of that infrastructure to meet forecast demands arising from new development.
- 12.6** Implementation of the Local Plan will depend on the provision of infrastructure in a timely manner, particularly where any critical capacity constraints are identified. This in turn is reliant upon the coordinated activities and investment programmes of a number of agencies, organisations and developers. Preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is a mechanism for helping to define the infrastructure requirements needed to deliver the Local Plan by enabling and fostering successful partnership working with all those involved in the provision and management of development related infrastructure. In creating an IDP, which supports and is published alongside the Local Plan, the Council has sought to record known investment in infrastructure, and to define that infrastructure considered to be important in implementing the Local Plan.
- 12.7** The IDP covers a range of types and scales of infrastructure and considers capacity and needs by reference to three general categories of infrastructure:
- **Social and Community Infrastructure** including healthcare facilities, community centres, places of worship, and sports and leisure facilities;
 - **Physical Infrastructure** including transportation networks, energy supplies and connections, water, drainage and waste provision, and digital and wireless communications networks; and
 - **Green Infrastructure** which comprises the network of multi-functional open and green spaces, including formal parks, gardens, sports and playing fields, woodland, green corridors, waterways, railways and highway verges.
- 12.8** The Council will continue to work with partner organisations, infrastructure and utilities providers, and local communities across the County to ensure that the current and future infrastructure needs of communities in Northumberland are considered and planned for properly in all plan-making and in taking decisions on planning applications.
- 12.9** Recognising that infrastructure investment planning is fluid and continually changing in light of varying priorities and the availability of funding, the IDP will be reviewed on an annual basis. Reviewing the IDP will be an important opportunity to re-engage with stakeholders. Whilst the Local Plan does not intend to prescribe the phasing of growth, the timing of delivering new or improved infrastructure could indirectly dictate or at least influence the phasing of new development over the plan period. For this reason, it is important to regularly review progress on delivery of development related infrastructure.

Delivering infrastructure

- 12.10** The Local Plan seeks to provide policies that describe and promote mechanisms available within the planning system for protecting and safeguarding against the loss of existing infrastructure, supporting the provision of additional infrastructure that improves the health and well-being of communities and securing new infrastructure reasonably required to serve new development.
- 12.11** New development will be expected to make best use of existing infrastructure where capacity exists to accommodate needs arising from development. In all cases, new development will be expected to meet the costs of providing development related improvements to existing infrastructure, and the cost of providing additional services, facilities and infrastructure the need for which are expected to arise from that development.
- 12.12** Development proposals will be required to clearly demonstrate that infrastructure can be provided, and phased as necessary, to support the needs of the development. Proposals will need to take into account the relevant business plans and programmes produced by infrastructure and service providers to demonstrate how provision will be brought forward to ensure development can be appropriately phased in relation to planned investment in infrastructure improvements. In assessing infrastructure and service requirements, the Council will have regard to the cumulative impact of developments in the vicinity of the proposal and across the County where relevant.

Development related infrastructure

- 12.13** The County Council will seek to secure the provision of all necessary physical, community, social and green infrastructure required to support development, including necessary upgrading of existing infrastructure, in a timely manner to support that development. Policy INF 1 seeks to ensure that such provision is secured at the time planning permission is granted and that all necessary infrastructure is provided to serve development when it is needed. The provision or improvement of all types and scales of infrastructure needed to support development will be secured through the use of planning conditions attached to a planning permission or by planning obligation where this is appropriate in accordance with Policy INF 6.
- 12.14** Where there are known infrastructure capacity constraints and these are identified as critical in serving the needs of development, including those identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Council will endeavour to work with partners to find solutions to remove those constraints to ensure that development is delivered to meet the objectives and policies in the Local Plan, thereby securing implementation of the Local Plan.

Development viability

- 12.15** The Local Plan is supported by a Whole Plan Viability Assessment which considers the viability of development typologies generally, and considers the impact of policy related costs including those arising from the Local Plan. The purpose of undertaking that Assessment is to demonstrate that, taking account of normal development costs and mitigation, the cost of any requirements likely to be applied to development as a result of policies in the Local Plan are unlikely to mean that the development planned or supported though the Local Plan would not be viable. However, the Council recognises that there may be occasions where exceptional costs may impact on the ability of a development scheme to meet all planning policy expectations in relation to the delivery of infrastructure required to meet the reasonable needs of that development.
- 12.16** In circumstances where viability is claimed to be challenging, applicants will be required to provide an economic viability assessment of their scheme which will be independently verified by the Council at the expense of the applicant. Where, following the review of an independently verified economic viability assessment, the Council is satisfied that there are overriding viability concerns that prohibit the delivery of infrastructure necessary to support the development, the Council may grant planning permission subject to securing the delivery of any reasonably necessary infrastructure if viability improves before completion of the development permitted. For larger-scale development proposals the Council will require planning obligations that establish a periodic review mechanism. Such review mechanisms will be designed and enforced to ensure the fullest possible compliance with Local Plan policy where the viability of the scheme improves before completion of development.

Policy INF 1

Delivering development related infrastructure

1. To ensure that development is acceptable in planning terms, and unacceptable impacts are properly mitigated, proposals must demonstrate that there is sufficient appropriate physical, community, social and green infrastructure capacity, both on and off-site, to support the needs arising from the development, or that such capacity will be delivered to an appropriate standard and in a timely manner by the proposed development.
2. It must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, through the submission of suitable evidence, that the capacity of all infrastructure required to make the development acceptable in planning terms will be sufficient and sustainable over time both in functional and financial terms.
3. Where infrastructure necessary to serve new development is not available, or where existing infrastructure requires improvement due to capacity or other constraints associated with the impact of that development, planning permission

will only be granted where suitable enforceable measures are put in place to secure the provision and maintenance of that new or improved infrastructure in a timely manner and prior to it first being needed to serve the development.

4. Exceptionally, development may be supported if:
 - a. it can be demonstrated that the benefit of the development proceeding without full mitigation through the provision of necessary infrastructure outweighs the harm; and
 - b. a viability assessment, with supporting evidence, which is transparent and complies with any relevant national or local guidance applicable at the time, demonstrates that the cost of meeting all mitigation renders the development unviable; and
 - c. it can be demonstrated that a full and thorough investigation has been undertaken to find innovative solutions to make the necessary provision of infrastructure and all possible steps have been taken to minimise the residual level of unmitigated impacts; and
 - d. planning obligations are entered into by the developer, landowner and any interested parties that provide for appropriate additional mitigation in the event that viability improves prior to completion of the development.
5. Where a viability assessment has been submitted the Local Planning Authority will commission an independent review of that assessment for which the applicant will bear the full cost.

Community facilities and services

- 12.17** Having regard to national policy and guidance, the Local Plan seeks to support the provision of new and enhanced community infrastructure and to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the ability of local communities in Northumberland to meet their day-to-day needs.
- 12.18** Given the important role of community infrastructure in supporting growing sustainable communities the Local Plan sets out the requirement for new development to provide, or make reasonable and necessary contributions towards the provision of, community facilities as part of the development unless the developer can clearly demonstrate that this would not be financially viable. Such provision would be required through Policy INF 1.
- 12.19** Separately, Policy INF 2 seeks to ensure important and valued community facilities that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community are protected and not lost unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer need for the facility. It also supports the improvement of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities, particularly where this would address deficiencies in provision.

Healthcare, education and leisure services

- 12.20** The provision of healthcare, education and leisure services are all essential community services requiring a range of facilities and built infrastructure. The perceived lack of capacity to deliver or provide healthcare and education services in particular to growing communities is regularly identified in engagement with local communities both through the County Council's planning and service delivery activities and through neighbourhood planning.
- 12.21** Areas of constrained capacity will be identified through the infrastructure planning process and published in the IDP. Currently no areas of 'critical' constraint are identified in the IDP for any of these types of infrastructure. However there are areas where investment in infrastructure may be necessary to ensure that development comes forward in as sustainable way as possible. The IDP also identifies 'place shaping' infrastructure⁽²⁴⁾ which it would be desirable to see provided due to its role in strengthening the ability of communities to meet their various needs. Policy INF 2 supports such investment subject to normal planning controls over location, siting, design, access, appearance and environmental impact.
- 12.22** These areas of infrastructure provision have seen significant change over recent years, particularly through reorganisation and rationalisation of healthcare arrangements with new larger GP practices providing a wider range of primary and community care services; the creation of the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital at Cramlington; the recent completion of a proton beam cancer therapy centre in Bomarsund; the reorganisation of many school partnerships around the County, including moves from three tier provision of education to a two tier primary and secondary school system; and the creation of new combined leisure, library and customer contact facilities by the County Council.
- 12.23** Changes are expected to continue throughout the Local Plan period. Over the Plan period models of healthcare delivery in the County may change, and further advances in technology may lead to opportunities to provide new healthcare infrastructure to serve the needs of communities across Northumberland.
- 12.24** NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is currently working with partners at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Northumberland County Council to consider alternative healthcare arrangements in Berwick-upon-Tweed. This includes the possibility of a new hospital being constructed as part of an integrated development providing health, social care and leisure services.
- 12.25** Access to high quality education is an important element of building and supporting sustainable communities and promoting economic prosperity. Over the plan period it is anticipated that models of education provision in the County will continue to change. The Council is currently consulting on the potential restructure of the education system in the west of the County including schools in the Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships. The outcomes of this consultation are not expected until summer 2018.

24 Important projects, addressing the needs of Northumberland's people and places whilst contributing to local distinctiveness.

Policy INF 2

Community services and facilities

1. The loss of community services and facilities, that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure or cultural needs of the community will not be permitted unless:
 - a. appropriate alternative provision is made; or
 - b. suitable and sufficient evidence can be provided to demonstrate that there is no longer a need for the facility to serve the community; or
 - c. suitable and sufficient evidence can be provided to demonstrate that its continued current use is no longer viable.
2. Improvement in the quantity, quality, accessibility and range of community services and facilities, and the provision of new services and facilities where these will meet an identified need will be permitted, subject to conformity with policies elsewhere in the Local Plan, and any neighbourhood plans, which seek to ensure any significant adverse effects on the environment, habitats, heritage assets and local amenity can be avoided through good design and siting of development or that those effects can be suitably compensated for or mitigated.
3. Where opportunities arise through new development and changes of use, the shared use of facilities, including community use of educational facilities where appropriate, will be supported and secured through planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate.

Local village convenience shops and public houses

- 12.26** Infrastructure needed to support local communities includes those services and facilities provided through the open market to meet the day-to-day needs of communities. Meeting those needs can be particularly challenging in more rural areas of Northumberland. National policy and guidance recognises that the planning system has a role to play in supporting rural communities in particular by safeguarding and promoting the retention and development of local services in villages.
- 12.27** In addition to supporting other community infrastructure, national planning policy also promotes the retention of local shops and public houses. This is a matter of particular significance to communities in Northumberland where local village shops and pubs are at the heart of the community providing for people's day-to-day needs. The Local Plan therefore seeks to address this issue in addition to matters concerning other physical, community and green infrastructure. Policy INF 3 creates the planning policy framework to ensure all available measures are taken to prevent the loss of valued local village shops and public houses.

Policy INF 3

Local village convenience shops and public houses

1. Proposals that result in the loss through demolition, redevelopment or change of use of local convenience shops and public houses in villages will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a. equivalent accessible provision is available locally; or
 - b. the continued use of the shop or public house for its current use is no longer needed to meet community needs; or
 - c. the continued use of the shop or public house for its current use is no longer viable.
2. In applying the tests established in this policy regarding the need for, or viability of the continued use of the building for its current use it will be necessary to demonstrate, with sufficient documentary evidence, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the building has been marketed at a price reflecting its current or last use for a period of not less than six months prior to the date of submission of any planning application for its demolition, redevelopment or change of use, and that no reasonable offers have been received to continue the current use of the building.

Assets of Community Value

12.28 Many communities across Northumberland have buildings and land that are valuable to them. It is recognised that buildings and land that accommodate community facilities often compete with other uses which can command a higher land value and are therefore subject to development pressures. This can put existing facilities under pressure and it is therefore necessary to have mechanisms to ensure that appropriate weight is given to the need to protect such community assets from loss when they are placed under threat. Guarding against the loss of such valued community assets is a matter advocated through national policy and guidance.

12.29 The Localism Act 2011 gives local communities the right to identify and protect facilities that are important to them from immediate disposal through local listing associated with the Community Right to Bid process. Buildings, land or services included in the list are called “Assets of Community Value”. Confirmation of listing of such assets introduces a moratorium on the disposal of listed land and buildings for a defined period of time. However, while the process allows community organisations the opportunity to bid to buy listed assets, there is no obligation on owners to sell their asset to a community organisation, and ultimately no control exists over who may take ownership.

12.30 The impact of any development proposal on a registered Asset of Community Value is a recognised material planning consideration. The purpose of Policy INF 4 is to ensure that, notwithstanding ownership, assets registered as being of particular

value to local communities are safeguarded through the planning system to prevent their loss through demolition or redevelopment, or a change of use arising, unless steps are taken to demonstrate that there is no longer a need for the services provided by the asset, or that their continued use is no longer viable. In fulfilling this requirement to demonstrate any lack of need, or that provision or retention of the asset is no longer viable, applicants will be required to provide sufficient reliable and verifiable documentary evidence showing that the asset has genuinely been made available on the open market at a price that reflects its current or last use providing community benefits for a reasonable period of time which should be not less than six months prior to seeking planning permission for development.

- 12.31** For the purpose of interpreting what constitutes a valued community facility in relation to Policy INF 4, only buildings listed as an Asset of Community Value in accordance with provisions created in the Localism Act will be covered. The policy sets out how applications for demolition, redevelopment or change of use of Assets of Community Value will be assessed.

Policy INF 4

Assets of Community Value

1. Proposals that involve the loss, redevelopment or change of use of any registered Assets of Community Value, or any part of that asset, will not be supported unless:
 - a. alternative equivalent provision of the services and facilities provided by the asset is secured to meet community needs; or
 - b. it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the asset for its current use is no longer needed to meet community needs; or
 - c. it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the asset for its current use is no longer viable.
2. In applying the tests established in this policy regarding the need for, or viability of the continued use of the asset it will be necessary to demonstrate, with sufficient documentary evidence, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the asset has been marketed at a price reflecting its current or last use as a registered Asset of Community Value for a period of not less than six months prior to the date of submission of any planning application for its demolition, redevelopment or change of use, and that no reasonable offers have been received to continue the current or last use of the asset.

Delivering well-designed places

- 12.32** The design process should grow from a robust analysis of both the immediate context and the wider locality. How a design evolves and the way in which the designer has responded to the key considerations set out in local design requirements should be demonstrated within a Design and Access Statement as part of a planning application. Clarification of the design process, using drawings, models and written description, is vital to the assessment of a development proposal as it demonstrates how key design principles have been considered. Although Design and Access statements are not a requirement of all planning applications, the local design requirements set out in the Local Plan and adopted guidance should inform the design process of all development and should be embodied in the final proposal.
- 12.33** The proposed Northumberland Design Guide will set out local design guidance and should inform the design process. In addition, consideration should also be given to character assessments and locally-specific design policies adopted by Neighbourhood Planning groups, where applicable.
- 12.34** There are a number of specific design processes and tools which can be valuable to the development of a scheme and improve the quality of the final proposal. The Council will encourage the appropriate implementation of design tools and in particular, the use of master planning, design briefs, frameworks and codes, and design review will be supported.
- 12.35** Early discussions and consultation in relation to the design of any proposed development will be regarded as extremely valuable to achieving the best possible design outcomes and will be encouraged where possible.

Policy INF 5

Delivering well-designed places

1. Proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other adopted design guidance.
2. Proposals are expected to include an assessment of context and character and must incorporate a response to any character assessments that form part of or support the plan.
3. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:
 - a. How the proposal has responded to relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide and any other design guidance within the plan as an integral part of the design development process;
 - b. A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;

- c. The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and
 - d. How consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.
4. Adjacent sites that are anticipated to be delivered within related timescales will require a comprehensive masterplan.
 5. Early design discussions, design review and design coding will be supported, facilitated and recommended by the Council where appropriate.

Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

Provision and maintenance of recreational open space

- 12.36** Good quality open space, sport and recreational facilities provide recreational benefits for communities and help to promote social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well-being. Many open spaces also make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the built and natural environment. Ensuring the right level of open space provision is, therefore, an important planning consideration. New areas of housing need new open space, sport and play provision unless there is a surplus of accessible existing facilities.
- 12.37** Town and Parish Councils now provide, manage and maintain many outdoor assets including allotments and children's play areas; and in some cases they manage some larger outdoor facilities, such as playing fields, parks and cemeteries. Town and Parish Councils are therefore an important stakeholder in supporting infrastructure required for outdoor recreation, sports and play.

Identifying what recreational open space is there and what is needed

- 12.38** The range of recreational open space assets was measured through the 'Northumberland PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment - 2011' and is currently being reviewed through work being undertaken to prepare a revised 'Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy'. The PPG17 Assessment showed a significant imbalance in the quantity of provision across Northumberland, such that some areas would have a severe shortage, if nationally recommended standards were applied, while others might be judged to have an over-provision.
- 12.39** The quality, quantity and accessibility of infrastructure provision for recreational open space, including ancillary facilities, may vary across areas. National policy and guidance encourages the use of localised standards for the provision of recreational open space. These would form the basis of securing development related improvements in the quantity and quality of infrastructure provision. This matter will be addressed through the new Playing Pitch Strategy.

12.40 The Local Plan proposes a flexible approach in establishing the extent of demand and need for additional or improved recreational open space infrastructure arising from development. This will involve taking into account up-to-date local evidence of demand and need for facilities. It is proposed that policy in the Local Plan should take account of evidence based assessments and that, to support Policy INF 6, the Council will consider preparing relevant Supplementary Planning Documents to assist in defining appropriate local standards of provision.

Strategy for recreational open space

12.41 National policy and guidance advocates the creation of policies that guard against the unnecessary loss of recreational open space and associated facilities based on evidence of the continuing need for the infrastructure. The Council will continue to monitor use and provision and review the extent of evidence of need for improvements and provision of additional infrastructure periodically and as appropriate.

12.42 New open space and related facilities, including for sport, play and less formal recreation, should be secured through the planning system where necessary to serve needs arising from new development. This may include qualitative improvements where that would allow for more intensive use of the infrastructure. Where new recreational open space and associated facilities are provided, either as a result of needs arising from new development or through investment from Town and Parish councils, the County Council, sports and recreation clubs or other organisations, consideration will be given to securing the shared use of space and facilities to seek maximum value from the investment.

Protected open space

12.43 Development plan policies covering the former local authority areas of Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck provide specific protection to defined areas of open space. The Council recognises that these designations accord generally with national planning policy and guidance. The Local Plan therefore provides continued protection to these areas by creating a specific designation of Protected Open Space. These are defined on the Policies Map. Consideration of development proposals will be expected to follow requirements established in Policy INF 6.

12.44 The Council does not currently propose to define additional areas of Protected Open Space through the Local Plan. However, support will be given to Town and Parish Councils who may wish to pursue this or similar designations through the preparation of neighbourhood plans, provided the designation is suitably evidenced.

Policy INF 6

Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

1. In assessing development proposals, the provision of sports facilities, recreational open space for outdoor sport, children's play, and less formal recreational activity will be sought, as necessary for the development. The need and demand for the provision will be assessed in accordance with the relevant available evidence, applying locally defined standards where necessary including local assessments of need.
2. Consideration will be given to how development proposals:
 - a. Enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments by protecting and enhancing existing recreational facilities and services and/or providing new ones;
 - b. Guard against the unnecessary loss of Protected Open Space (as shown on the Policies Map), recreational facilities and services by considering up to date evidence of local need and the need to replace facilities and services when they reach the end of their useful life;
 - c. Ensure that new and established recreational facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and they are retained for the benefit of the community; and
 - d. Encourage and facilitate the increased use of facilities, including the shared use of playing space in educational establishments.
3. The following will be required:
 - a. Where the development is large enough, that provision is on-site unless this is demonstrated to be impracticable;
 - b. That any off-site provision is on an appropriate site that provides a level of accessibility considered reasonable for the facility being provided;
 - c. That the future use and maintenance arrangements have been secured, taking full account of the views of Town and Parish Councils or others who may be responsible for the facilities, once in place; and
 - d. Where it is argued that the provision would compromise the viability of the development, that this can be satisfactorily demonstrated.
4. Development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use or the loss of Protected Open Space (as shown on the Policies Map) will not be permitted unless:
 - a. They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or
 - b. An excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated.

Planning conditions and planning obligations

- 12.45** The Council will attach conditions to planning applications where these are necessary to achieve sustainable development provided they meet all relevant tests set out in Policy INF 7.
- 12.46** Where it is not appropriate to use planning conditions the Council will seek to create Planning Obligations under the provisions of section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to prescribe, compensate, and/or mitigate the impact of a development. This may include:
- securing the provision of all infrastructure, including community, education, health and leisure services and facilities needed to support the development in accordance with Policy INF 1;
 - securing the delivery of affordable housing in accordance with Policy HOU 5 (Affordable Housing Provision); and
 - securing a range of other measures necessary to accommodate growth, compensate for and mitigate impacts of development where these are appropriate and meet necessary statutory tests.
- 12.47** Planning obligations will broadly be limited to site specific matters and affordable housing. Planning obligations will also be sought to secure ongoing management and maintenance arrangements where it is deemed appropriate.
- 12.48** The Council will consider providing further more detailed guidance in relation to planning obligations through a Supplementary Planning Document to support policies in the Local Plan. This will ensure the range and level of contributions necessary to support growth are kept up to date in accordance with requirements, demand and need.

Policy INF 7

Planning conditions and planning obligations

1. Where measures are required to address any unacceptable impacts of development, thereby making otherwise unacceptable development acceptable, these should normally be secured through planning conditions attached to a planning permission. Such planning conditions must be:
 - a. necessary;
 - b. relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted;
 - c. enforceable;
 - d. precise; and
 - e. reasonable in all other respects.
2. Where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition a planning obligation may be created, where appropriate, to overcome those impacts. Planning obligations will only be sought where they are:

- a. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b. directly related to the development; and
 - c. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development
3. Where necessary, the timing of provision of infrastructure will be linked directly to the phasing of development, taking account of viability. This will be secured either through planning condition, or where this is not appropriate, by planning obligation, to ensure that all necessary infrastructure is available to serve the development at the time it is first required.
 4. Maintenance of infrastructure and facilities that are required or provided to serve or support development will be ensured through planning conditions or planning obligations, as appropriate, for a reasonable period following first use or occupation of the development or that part of the development for which the infrastructure and facilities make provision.

Future infrastructure funding opportunities

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 12.49** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities can choose to impose on development. It is a discretionary charge that can be introduced to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects. CIL can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure required to support development across the local authority area. It is not constrained in the way planning obligations that secure funding are limited by reference to a specific development. CIL may be spent on any infrastructure type or project anywhere in a local authority area.
- 12.50** CIL was devised and introduced into legislation in 2010 to implement successive government's intentions to ensure that development contributes at least a reasonable proportion of funding towards of the cost of infrastructure needed to support implementation of Local Plans. In addition, legislation allows local communities to benefit directly from a share of any CIL charge received since a proportion of the Levy must be given to Town and Parish Councils in those locations where development occurs. That proportion increases in locations where a neighbourhood plan has been made.
- 12.51** The Levy is viewed by the Council as a positive tool which can help support the delivery of the Local Plan and more particularly unlock opportunities for growth by helping to fund infrastructure required to support sustainable development. It can offer a fair, fast and transparent system for developers by giving certainty about development costs.
- 12.52** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies, where known, the funding required to deliver certain infrastructure projects including those necessary to secure implementation of the Local Plan. Notwithstanding the projects and investments for which costs and likely available funding sources are unknown, it is apparent

that there is a shortfall between the funding required to deliver infrastructure and that which is available, generally referred to as a funding gap. It is a prerequisite to the introduction of CIL that a funding gap can be demonstrated.

- 12.53** Introduction of a CIL should help address the identified funding gap. Preparation of a CIL charge is subject to separate consultation, assessment and examination procedures which require the justification for introducing a CIL to be demonstrated using appropriate available evidence. The CIL charge achieved is calculated as a £ per sq. metre rate with that rate being set based only on an assessment of development viability, which may vary across an area. CIL can only be introduced where it is demonstrated that it is viable to do so without threatening the delivery of the Local Plan. It cannot be used as a policy tool to influence how, whether or where development takes place.
- 12.54** A provisional appraisal on the possibility of introducing CIL has been included in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment that supports the Local Plan. The Council will continue to investigate the viability and benefit of introducing CIL and would anticipate progressing with this matter following adoption of the Local Plan.

Implementation

- 12.55** To ensure the vision and objectives set out in the Northumberland Local Plan are realised, various mechanisms exist to guide and manage implementation of the policies and proposals in the Plan. The main purpose of Local Plans is to address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change. National policy requires that Local Plans should set out the opportunities for development and create clear policies on what will or will not be permitted and where. Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the Local Plan. The plan has been prepared in conformity with this requirement.
- 12.56** It follows that the most apparent means by which the Local Plan will be implemented is through the Development Management process. The Local Plan, once adopted, will be the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications. It will sit alongside any made neighbourhood plans which have equivalent status in the decision making process.
- 12.57** The Planning Acts require that, to the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is a well established principle which recognises the primacy of the development plan in our plan-led system.
- 12.58** The Northumberland Local Plan provides a comprehensive set of planning policies to guide decisions on planning applications. Where appropriate, the Council may consider preparing more detailed guidance on certain topics through the creation of Supplementary Planning Documents. However, for the most part, it is expected that the policies in the Local Plan will provide sufficient clarity and precision, when read alone and when the Local Plan is read as a whole, such that they provide a

practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency, in conjunction with any made neighbourhood plans, as required through national policy.

- 12.59** Whilst the express purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, the creation, management, maintenance, support and care required to foster sustainable communities requires much more than the delivery of sustainable development. It requires input from a wide range of organisations, agencies, businesses and individuals.
- 12.60** Accordingly, in addition to its role in shaping decision making, the Local Plan has been prepared in part to complement many existing and emerging strategies, policies and projects at a national and local level, outwith the town planning framework, and as a means of influencing the review of those strategies. These include the Northumberland Local Transport Plan, the Northumberland Economic Strategy, and the North East Strategic Economic Plan.
- 12.61** Effective and efficient implementation of policies in the Local Plan which are intended to support sustainable communities will depend upon continued management and coordination of activities and roles across a range of organisations, agencies and businesses. Northumberland County Council has a key role to play in this regard. As well as delivering and supporting the development of a comprehensive planning policy framework, the Council will work with stakeholders to proactively support the delivery of sustainable development. This will include working with: local communities; developers; landowners; service, utilities and infrastructure providers; and the Northumberland Development Company.
- 12.62** Supporting sustainable communities may involve securing the prudent use, and if necessary disposal, of Council owned land and assets to facilitate the rationalisation of service provision, for example: through the shared use of buildings for leisure and customer services. It may also involve direct delivery by the Council of appropriate development and supporting infrastructure. In exceptional circumstances the Council may use its powers of compulsory purchase to acquire land and premises where the purpose would align with the strategy and policies set out in the Local Plan and it is in the public interest to do so.
- 12.63** In the case of delivering development on large scale sites, the Council will seek to work with developers to prevent piecemeal development and ensure sites are developed comprehensively with coordinated delivery of infrastructure at the time it is needed to serve the development.
- 12.64** To support and secure implementation of the Local Plan the County Council will commit to undertake those actions identified below as implementation commitments:

Implementation commitments:

The County Council will work proactively to bring about the delivery of the Northumberland Local Plan by seeking to:

1. Align its own plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities to deliver the vision and objectives set out in the Local Plan;
2. Collaborate to influence the plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities of other public bodies, infrastructure providers and other organisations to seek alignment with the Local Plan;
3. Support comprehensive and coordinated development of sites, including through masterplanning;
4. Support communities, through their Town and Parish Councils, who wish to develop neighbourhood plans or use other neighbourhood planning tools provided these are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Northumberland Local Plan, contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development, and help shape the growth and development of neighbourhoods in a positive way;
5. Make use of its legislative powers, including where necessary through land acquisition and compulsory purchase, where there is an identified need, to bring about development to meet the vision, objectives, strategy and policies of the Local Plan;
6. Influence and use public and private funding opportunities to maximum effect to deliver the Local Plan;
7. Monitor the implementation and achievements secured through the Local Plan throughout its existence at least annually; and
8. Through the monitoring process, and by maintaining an up-to-date evidence base, the County Council will implement appropriate measures to address any policies or proposals that fail to deliver anticipated outcomes or that become obsolete.

Monitoring

12.65 The Council is committed to ensuring robust monitoring of the implementation of the Local Plan. The aim will be to ensure the successful and timely delivery of the plan and to instigate appropriate actions or measures to address any ineffective policies and proposals.

12.66 The Local Plan has been devised in such a way to be flexible over the plan period. It can adjust to changes such as, the emergence of new neighbourhood plans, shifting demographics and variable economic conditions. However, there may be circumstances or unexpected external factors that render certain policies less effective or out of date. Monitoring will help identify any such issues and appropriate actions. Actions could include adjusting the implementation of the policies or a partial or full review of the Local Plan or other supporting plans.

Monitoring and evaluation implementation framework

- 12.67** A Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Framework has been developed which identifies indicators and targets for the implementation of the Local Plan as a whole and to measure the implementation of specific policies. It also identifies triggers at which it is appropriate to address any issues emerging.
- 12.68** The framework optimises the use of other monitoring systems the Local Planning Authority has such as Planning Application Monitoring. It also seeks to make use of other Council Departments and other organisations monitoring systems.

Glossary

Active street frontage: The high street frontage of a building that presents a window display, at least during opening hours, and an entrance way, and less than 25% blank wall.

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

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute at the time of plan preparation or decision-making. Income restrictions should be used to limit a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those who have maximum household incomes of £80,000 a year or less (or £90,000 a year or less in Greater London)

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Aggregates / aggregate minerals: Hard, granular materials, including sand, gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used on their own or with the addition of cement, lime or a bituminous binder in the construction.

Amenity: A positive element or elements that contribute to the positive character of an area, such as lack of noise and disturbance, openness, landscape, townscape, opportunities for recreation etc.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Northumberland has the Northumberland Coast AONB and part of the North Pennines AONB.

Asset of Community Value: A local authority maintained list of land in its area that is land of community value. A building or other land would be of community value if in the Council's opinion, its main use contributes to the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and it is realistic for this to continue, (possibly involving a different community use of equal value). This is set out in section 87 of the Localism Act 2011.

Basic Conditions: Only a draft neighbourhood Plan or Order that meets each of a set of basic conditions can be put to a referendum and be made. The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004. Further details regarding the basic conditions can be found in National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) Paragraph 65⁽²⁵⁾.

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Higher quality land falling within Grades 1, 2 and 3a under the Defra system of Agricultural Land Classification, whose long-term capability should normally be safeguarded as a resource for the future.

Biodiversity: The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

Biomass: A form of renewable energy which often refers to plant-based material and can include virgin wood, energy crops, and agricultural residues as well as some food and industrial waste.

Blue-Green Infrastructure: An approach whereby development is sympathetic to the natural water cycle, locally and more widely, contributing to flood alleviation and amenity by bringing together water management and Green Infrastructure.

Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area: Spanning the north and south banks of the River Blyth, this proposed strategic employment area will provide 189 hectares of available land, as a strategic allocation for specific emerging employment sectors, requiring large amounts of land.

Borderlands Initiative: A collaboration between Northumberland County Council, Scottish Borders, Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, and Dumfries and Galloway Council, to promote the economic growth and competitiveness of an area that straddles the England-Scotland border.

Brownfield land: See 'Previously developed land'.

B-Class Uses: The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. Part B of this Order covers those employment uses that normally require dedicated land or buildings. They are split into: "Class B1 Business", consisting of offices, research and development

25 www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum

and light industry; "Class B2 General industrial", covering most industries not within Class B1; and "Class B8 Storage or distribution" covering warehouse-type uses as well as open air storage of products and equipment.

Certificate of Lawfulness: Applied for in order to check that a development or use (either existing or proposed is (or would be) lawful.

CIL: – See 'Community Infrastructure Levy'.

City-Region: An area including and surrounding a major city or cluster of cities, generally defined in terms of the influence of the city – e.g. the area from which the city draws its labour force or attracts regular shoppers.

Climate change: Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. It is now accepted as partly attributable to increased carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, such as those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, power stations, factories and homes.

Climate change adaptation: Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Coalescence: The situation where the built-up areas of two or more towns or villages spread out and merge with each other.

Coastal change: Physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

Commercial and industrial waste: Controlled waste arising from premises, used wholly or mainly for industry and commerce of various kinds.

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

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Community Right to Build Order: An order made by the Local Planning Authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Comparison shopping: The provision or purchase of items not bought on a frequent basis and where potential purchasers often wish to compare different goods or providers. Comparison goods are mainly durable and include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

Conditions (or 'Planning Conditions'): Requirements attached to a planning permission to limit or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.

Conservation Area: Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Construction and demolition waste: Controlled waste arising from the construction, repair, maintenance and demolition of buildings and structures.

Convenience shopping: The provision or purchase of everyday essential items, such as food, drink, newspapers etc.

Corporate Plan: The Corporate Plan sets out the vision, strategic aims and priorities of Northumberland County Council. The current Corporate Plan was approved in February 2018 and covers the period 2018-2021.

Delivery Area: An area defined for planning purposes, based on common characteristics or linkages such as housing market areas, social, economic and cultural characteristics, catchment areas or patterns of movement between places.

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

Designated area: An area defined by a line on a map which, by virtue of statute, enjoys a degree of protection from development that would impact adversely on the wildlife, landscape or other natural asset within its boundary. There are also built heritage designations such as Conservation Areas.

Design Code: Detailed design guidance that is specific to a particular development site. Design codes may vary in terms of how prescriptive they are but will generally set out certain parameters for the the design of buildings and spaces, such as the pattern of development and the choice of materials.

Design Review: Independent and impartial evaluation process in which a panel of experts on the built environment assess the design of a development proposal.

Development: Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission (see also "permitted development").

Development management: The process through which a local planning authority considers a planning application and whether it should be given permission.

Development Plan: The complete set of statutory land use policies and proposals for an area, used in making planning decisions. It includes adopted council development plan documents such as Local Plans, Core Strategies and neighbourhood plans.

Duty to Cooperate: Collaborative working with adjoining authorities, and other public bodies, regarding strategic issues which may have significant cross boundary impacts, during the preparation of Local Plans.

Ecosystem approach: An approach to planning that focuses on protecting and restoring the structure, function and processes of ecosystems as a whole, recognising that natural assets and human environments, traditionally planned for and managed separately, interact continually, in numerous ways and with cumulative impacts.

Ecosystem services: The benefits obtained from ecosystems, such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

Employment land: Land allocated / reserved for industrial and business use.

Employment Land Review (ELR): Study identifying the level of employment land required, considering past levels of employment land take up and other factors. It also identifies parts of the County with an over- or under-supply of employment land.

Enterprise Zone: An area where Central Government aided by Local Government wishes to stimulate development and investment through business rate relief, financing and regulation incentives, which may include simplified planning guidance specified in a Local Development Order.

European Geopark: A defined area with a particular geological heritage that may also be archaeological, ecological, historical or cultural and where the development of geotourism may take place. The North Pennines AONB has been designated as such.

European Marine Site (EMS): A sub-tidal and/or inter-tidal area of European importance for marine and coastal habitats and species, including any area that is the subject of SAC or SPA status that is also covered by tidal water. The whole of the Northumberland coastal area north of Alnmouth forms part of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland EMS.

Evening economy: The representation in a town centre of facilities such as restaurants, bars and nightclubs, which would bring spending and vibrancy to the centre after normal shop opening hours.

Evidence base: The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development.

Five Year Housing Land Supply: An identified supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to meet housing requirements over a specified five year period, collated annually.

Floorspace: The floor area (on all floors) of a building or set of buildings. Gross floorspace includes areas ancillary to the main use. Net floorspace excludes ancillary areas.

Geo-diversity: The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green Belt: A land designation with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in paragraph 80 of the NPPF are: to check the restricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and, assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Green Infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Greenfield land or site: Land which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

Groundwater: An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.

Gross Value Added (GVA): An economic measure of the value of goods and services in an area, namely the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities: (for planning purposes) Communities consisting of persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

Habitat: An area or natural environment in which an organism, species or population normally lives. Habitats take many forms and should not be considered in isolation as they are linked and overlap with each other.

Habitats Regulations: A set of government regulations (currently the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), which sets out requirements within England regarding the protection and enhancement of important natural assets, giving expression to various European Directives, international Conventions and national statutes.

Hazardous waste: Waste which has the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment, for example contaminated soil.

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

Heritage Coast: Areas of largely undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors. Northumberland's Heritage Coast stretches from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border.

Hinterland: A term used to describe the area which falls within the influence of a town –especially the area from which the town draws most of the people who work there or use its services.

Household: A person living alone or a group of people living together at the same address and with common housekeeping.

Housing – Optional Technical Standards: An approach for the setting of technical standards for new housing. This rationalises the many differing existing standards into a simpler, streamlined system which will reduce burdens and help bring forward much needed new homes.

Inclusive Environment: Buildings and spaces that can be accessed and used by everyone.

Independent Examination: The process by which an Independent Planning Inspector publicly examines a Development Plan Document to ensure that it is 'sound' in terms of factors such as the evidence on which it is based, national policy, consultations undertaken Etc.

Infill development: Building on a relatively small site between existing buildings.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT): (for planning purposes) Telecommunications networks such as telephone lines, mobile phone masts and broadband infrastructure.

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

Infrastructure Delivery Plan: This document will identify the infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the Local Plan and how this will be funded, linked with other programmes and actually provided, as well as examining possible risks and associated contingency measures.

iNorthumberland: The iNorthumberland programme relates to the rollout of fibre broadband in Northumberland. The first phase of the programme aims to reach around 90% of homes by December 2015. The programme is being delivered by Northumberland County Council. The programme is funded by Department for Culture Media and Sport via BDUK, Northumberland County Council, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Defra's Rural Community Broadband Fund and BT.

Inset: A term used to describe a town or village that is surrounded by the Green Belt but is not itself covered (or "washed over") by the Green Belt designation. This means that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within the settlement concerned in the area defined by the inset boundary.

Internet of Things (IoT): The interconnection via the Internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects, enabling them to send and receive data.

Key Shopping Frontages: Street frontages within the Primary Shopping Area, where it is sought to keep the majority of the frontage in retail use.

Landfill (including land raising): The permanent disposal of residual waste into the ground, by the filling of man-made voids or similar features. The construction of land forms above ground level is called land raising.

Landscape Character: The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identified 44 landscape character types, and 108 landscape character areas with similar characteristics within the plan area.

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

Legible Environment: A place that is easy to understand and navigate.

Lifetime neighbourhoods: Places where most people would be able (and choose) to live and stay throughout their lives. They are safe places that offer everyone the best possible chance of health, well-being and social, economic and civic engagement regardless of their age, gender, culture or disability. They do not exclude people as they age, their circumstances change, nor as they become more frail, disabled or less mobile.

Limited infilling: Infill development which is particularly small in scale, occupying a small gap between buildings –on the scale of one or two, (rather than several) dwellings. Listed building: A building of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II.

Local Development Order: A mechanism to simplify planning guidance to encourage economic growth by allowing certain forms of development to be undertaken without the need for planning permission, subject to specified conditions and design guidance. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of protecting and improving conditions for economic growth in an area. Also see 'North East Local Enterprise Partnership'.

Local Green Space: A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans. Local Nature Partnership (LNP): Local partnerships of organisations and communities with the role of helping the management of the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions, for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.

Local Nature Reserve: Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.

Local Plan: The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area such as Northumberland. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Local Transport Plan (LTP): The Council's fifteen year strategy for maintaining and improving highways and transport, including key goals and challenges and how these should be addressed through policies, programmes and schemes.

Local Wildlife and Geological Site (LWGS): A defined area within which there are habitats, wildlife or geology which is considered, locally, important to protect and manage. Includes sites formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) and Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs).

Low Carbon Energy Generation: Low carbon energy comes from processes or technologies that produce power with substantially lower amounts of carbon dioxide emissions than conventional fossil fuel power generation. Low carbon energy sources include wind power, solar power and hydropower.

Main Towns: Settlements with a key housing, employment and service role, often across wide areas. They are Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

Main Town Centre Uses: The uses that should normally be found within defined town centres, i.e. retail development, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Management Plan: A document setting out goals, methods and a programme of actions over a period of 3 to 5 years, covering areas where management of the environment is essential in order to retain the integrity of the area / assets within it. Areas with management plans include the two AONBs and the Hadrian's Wall WHS.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO): A public body established and given powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, which brings together key marine decision-making powers and delivery mechanisms. It acts as an "enabling marine regulator" to help marine industries grow wherever possible, while following the principles of better regulation.

Masterplan: A detailed plan setting out how a particular area is developed, mapping the phasing of the development, (i.e. the order in which different parts of the development are to be built) and setting out an action plan explaining how, when and by whom different requirements are triggered / funded.

Material consideration: A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

Mineral resource: A potential mineral deposit where the quality and quantity of material present has not necessarily been tested – see also "Resource Area"

Minerals reserves: Mineral deposits which have been tested to establish the quality and quantity of material present and which could be economically and technically exploited.

Mineral Safeguarding Areas: An area designated by the Minerals Planning Authority (i.e. the County Council), which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to keep safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Municipal waste: Household waste and any other waste, such as fly-tipped waste, food waste from restaurants etc. collected by the Waste Collection Authority (Northumberland County Council).

National Character Area (NCA): A Nationally Defined Landscape Character Area. Nine NCAs fall within Northumberland and form the basis for the defining of the Northumberland LCAs.

National Nature Reserve (NNR): Area designated with the aim of securing protection and appropriate management of the most important wildlife habitat, and to provide a resource for scientific research. All NNRs are Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): A Government document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan by a Parish or Town Council – the "qualifying body" – for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

Network Rail GRIP: The Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) describes how Network Rail manages and controls projects that enhance or renew the national rail network. It covers the project process from inception through to the post-implementation

realisation of benefits. It divides a project into eight stages and examines the project at critical stages in its lifecycle to provide assurance that it can successfully progress to the next stage.

North East Combined Authority (NECA): A new legal body that brings together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

North East Local Economic Partnership (or 'NELEP'): A business-led strategic organisation, spanning the North East, apart from the Tees valley area, responsible for promoting and developing economic growth and funded by the seven local authorities and Central Government.

North East Strategic Economic Plan ('SEP'): A strategic economic plan for the area of the North-East LEP, with the supplementary title "More and Better Jobs" and dated March 2014.

North of Tyne Combined Authority: A new body that brings together Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Councils

Northumberland County Council: The unitary authority for Northumberland as of 1 April 2009.

Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan: A development plan document prepared by the former Northumberland County Council that covered strategic matters including the definition of the general extent of the Green Belt around Morpeth.

The Northumberland Line: This railway line, formerly referred to as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, connects Ashington with Tyneside via western Blyth and has a link to Morpeth. It is currently used as a goods-only line but there is a long and widely held ambition to reintroduce passenger services to the line.

Northumberland National Park: Designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, the designation seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The Park sits entirely within the boundary of Northumberland but is a separate local Planning authority area.

Northumberland Dark Sky Park: A defined area of the borders, encompassing Kielder Forest where efforts are made to prevent any additional light pollution and promote the area for this reason. It is currently the largest area of protected night sky in Europe.

Obligation: A Planning Obligation is a legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Open market residential development: Housing for sale or rent on the open market, without any restrictions regarding occupation or price.

Open Space: Usually used in relation to built-up areas. Refers to all open areas of public value, which can offer opportunities for sport, and recreation, as well as a visual amenity and haven for wildlife. Public open space is where public access may or may not be formally established.

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV): Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

PDL: See 'Previously Developed Land'.

Parade of shops: A cluster of three or more shop front units, not within a defined town centre, that serves a residential area.

Permitted Development: Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed (under Permitted Development Rights, applying the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order) without the need to make an application for planning permission.

Photovoltaics (PV): A method of generating electrical power by converting sunlight into direct current electricity using certain semiconducting materials. A photovoltaic system employs solar panels composed of a number of solar cells to supply usable solar power. Groupings of solar panels are called solar farms.

Planning Condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation: A legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Portfolio of sites: Normally referring to the range of employment sites across a defined area, covering the range of sizes and qualities of sites, the types of location they are in and what they are capable of accommodating.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) or 'Brownfield' Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Primary Shopping Area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated and within which it will be sought to locate any new large scale retail development. The Primary Shopping Area can also include other uses appropriate to town centres but may include key shopping frontages, where it is sought to keep the majority of the frontage in retail use.

Ramsar sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Regeneration: The economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of rural and urban areas.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): The former regional tier of the development plan (the RSS for the North-East, 2008), which was abolished in 2013, using powers in the Localism Act 2011. Instead, Councils across the region now have a duty to cooperate on strategic planning issues.

Registered Battlefields: An area designated in the English Heritage Register of Historic Battlefields, the purpose of which is to offer them protection and to promote a better understanding of their historic significance.

Registered Parks and Gardens (Historic Parks and Gardens): An area designated by English Heritage for its value as a historic planned landscape or garden. As with Listed Buildings they can be graded I (highest quality), II* or II.

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Residual waste: Waste remaining after materials for re-use, recycling and composting have been removed.

Resource area: An area within which a particular mineral, or energy resource occurs.

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

Safeguarded land: Undeveloped land on the outskirts of an inset settlement within the Green Belt. The safeguarded land is not itself designated as Green Belt but, instead, remains as a long term allocation or as "White Land" that is safeguarded for the future expansion needs of the settlement concerned.

Safeguarding: The protection of valuable areas of land from disturbance and/or development, due to the presence of natural assets, mineral resource or possible future proposals (such as a bypass line).

Scenarios: Different possible outcomes – in this case regarding the growth and health of communities – depending on different 'inputs' – in this case the amount of land allocated for housing and employment and the ability for those houses and workplaces to be delivered on the ground.

Scheduled Monument: Sites that contain deliberately created structures, features and remains that are of national importance and for which scheduling is the best means of protecting them.

Sequential approach: A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before the consideration of others. For example, (for housing) low flood risk before higher; or prioritising brownfield land before greenfield; or (for shops and certainty types of services) preferring town centres before out of town locations.

Service Centres: The second tier of settlements, below Main Towns, which provide local services to their surrounding areas and have a housing and employment role. They were defined at the previous consultation stage, following an audit of services and facilities within the settlements across the County. They are Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler. The term 'service centre' is also used to refer to the cluster of shops and services at the centre of a Service Centre settlement.

Service Village: The third tier of settlements with at least one key local service (e.g. a school) and a level of population which may support the retention of these services and the provision of others. An appropriate level of housing in these settlements is supported in the plan.

Setting: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Defined area containing nationally important wildlife or geology designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Site thresholds (affordable housing): The minimum size that a market housing site must be (in terms of its area or the number of dwellings proposed) in order to trigger a requirement for affordable housing to be provided as part of / in association with the development, (assuming that a local need for affordable housing has been identified in an up-to-date assessment). The provision is secured through a legal agreement following negotiation between the Council and the developer, which must take account of viability.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Areas (SPA): Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): The Council's approach to involving the community in the planning process and development management decisions.

Sterilisation (minerals): When development or land use changes prevent the possible future extraction of an underlying mineral resource.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA): An assessment of sites put forward as having potential for new housing, examining their constraints, marketability etc. and arriving at a possible yield of new houses (if any), with a view to achieving a five year supply of deliverable housing land.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): An assessment of the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that an area (in this case Northumberland) is likely to need over the plan period in order to meet household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change.

Strategic Road Network (SRN): The trunk road network, managed by Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency). In Northumberland, this is the A1, A19 and A69.

SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems): A sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water in a manner that will provide a more sustainable approach than more conventional practices, such as routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse.

Superfast: Where this refers to broadband, this refers to speeds of 30M/bits per second or more.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): Non-statutory documents which add further detail to the policies in statutory documents such as the Local Plan – e.g. providing guidance on design in general or on the development of specific sites. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration but do not form part of the development plan.

Supply chain: The sequence or network (across space and time) of people, businesses or other organisations involved in moving products or services from suppliers to customers. The customers may themselves be manufacturers or service industries supplying consumers with products or services.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): The process of weighing and assessing policies for their global, national and local sustainability implications in relation to the environment, the economy and society, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with EU Directive 2001/42/EC.

Sustainable development: Defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The Government makes clear that sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions which are further explained in the NPPF.

Sustainable transport modes: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Tenure (housing): The ownership or rental status of dwellings – i.e. whether they are owner-occupied (owned outright / being bought with a mortgage), privately rented, rented from housing associations or rented from local authorities.

Town Centres: The defined areas of town or service centres, within which most town centre uses should be concentrated. Sub-divided into main town centres, for the larger towns (containing a smaller 'Primary Shopping Area' for retail uses); and smaller town centres, for other main towns and some service centres, covering all town centre uses.

Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order: The national statutory instrument that allows for certain types of development without the need to apply for planning permission – i.e. Permitted Development Rights.

Ultrafast: Where this refers to broadband, this relates to speeds of 300 M/bits per second or more.

Viability Assessment: Compares the likely broad value of planned development likely to come forward over the plan period with the likely costs and constraints, in order to understand the deliverability of the plan and provide certainty and sustainability.

Village green (or town green): Under the Commons Act 2006, a village or town green is defined as a local space within a village or other settlement that has been used by people over a period of time for recreational activities and has protected status.

Washed-over: A term that refers to any village or hamlet or grouping of buildings which is itself part of the Green Belt designation – i.e. 'washed-over' by the Green Belt rather than inset within it – by virtue of their open character and/or important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. Green Belt restrictions apply within these places with the exception that limited infilling may be permitted within the built-up area, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.

Waste streams: Sub-divisions of waste, such as household waste, commercial waste, hazardous waste etc., which will be dealt with in different ways.

Windfall: A site proposed for development without having first been identified or allocated through a local plan. Assumptions can be made as to how much these will contribute to overall development requirements and criteria-based policies can be set out to deal with them.

Wireless telecommunications: For the purposes of the Local Plan, this is a broad term intended to cover cellular (3G, 4G and 5G), fixed wireless (microwave etc), low power Internet of Things (IoT) technologies and WiFi, as well as future technologies.

World Heritage Site (WHS): A cultural or natural site of outstanding universal value, designated by an international council of experts, Hadrian's Wall being the only example falling within Northumberland.

Appendix A: Housing Requirements and Neighbourhood Planning Areas

Table A.1 Indicative Housing Requirements for Designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas (at May 2018)

Neighbourhood Area	Indicative Housing Requirement	Neighbourhood Plan Status	Housing Allocations
South East Delivery Area			
Choppington	340	Designated	
Cramlington	2,500	Designated	
Ellington & Linton	210	Designated	
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	300	Designated	
Seaton Valley	600	Designated	
West Bedlington	730	Designated	
Central Delivery Area			
Acomb	45	Submitted	
Corbridge	170	Designated	
Hexham	530	Pre-Submission	
Longhorsley	96	Post-Examination - Referendum	
Morpeth	1,700	Made (2016)	67 units
Ponteland	530	Made (2017)	Yes - Number of units not indicated in NP
Stannington	425	Post-Examination - Referendum	
Thirston	22	Designated	
North Delivery Area			
Acklington	32	Designated	
Alnwick & Denwick	1,100	Made (2017)	482 units
Belford	80	Designated	
Berwick-upon-Tweed	540	Designated	

Appendix A: Housing Requirements and Neighbourhood Planning Areas

Ellingham	30	Designated	
Embleton	65	Designated	
Lesbury	39	Designated	
Lowick	22	Designated	
Mid Coquetdale	216	Designated - Formally Suspended	
Norham & Islandshire	141	Designated	
North Northumberland Coastal Area	152	Post-Examination - Referendum	
Tillside	30	Designated	
Wooler	170	Designated	
West Delivery Area			
Allendale	100	Made (2015)	
Tarset & Greystead	-	Withdrawn (2017)	
Whittington	25	Submitted	19 units

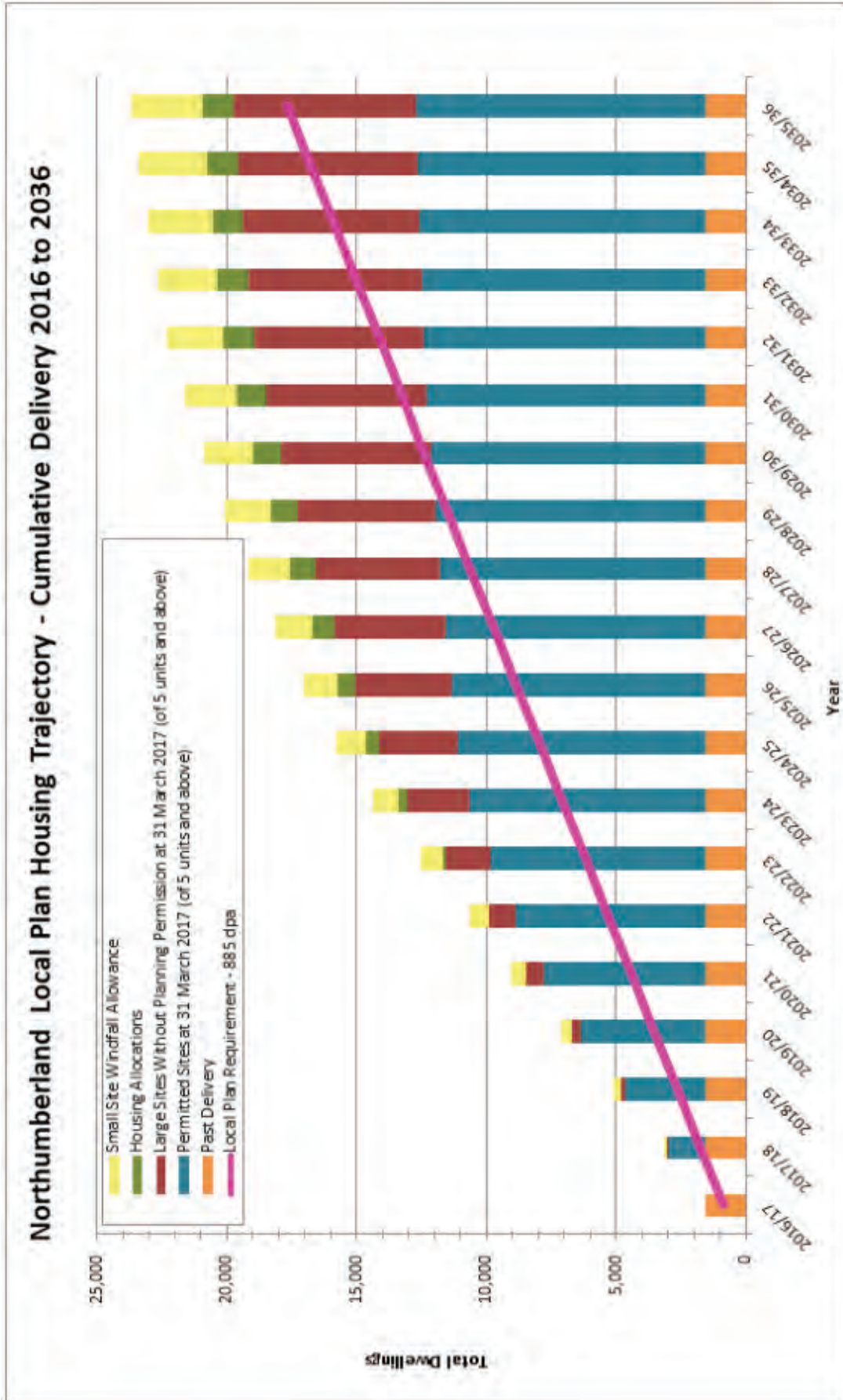
Appendix B: Neighbourhood Plan Housing Site Allocations

Neighbourhood Plan Housing Site Allocations

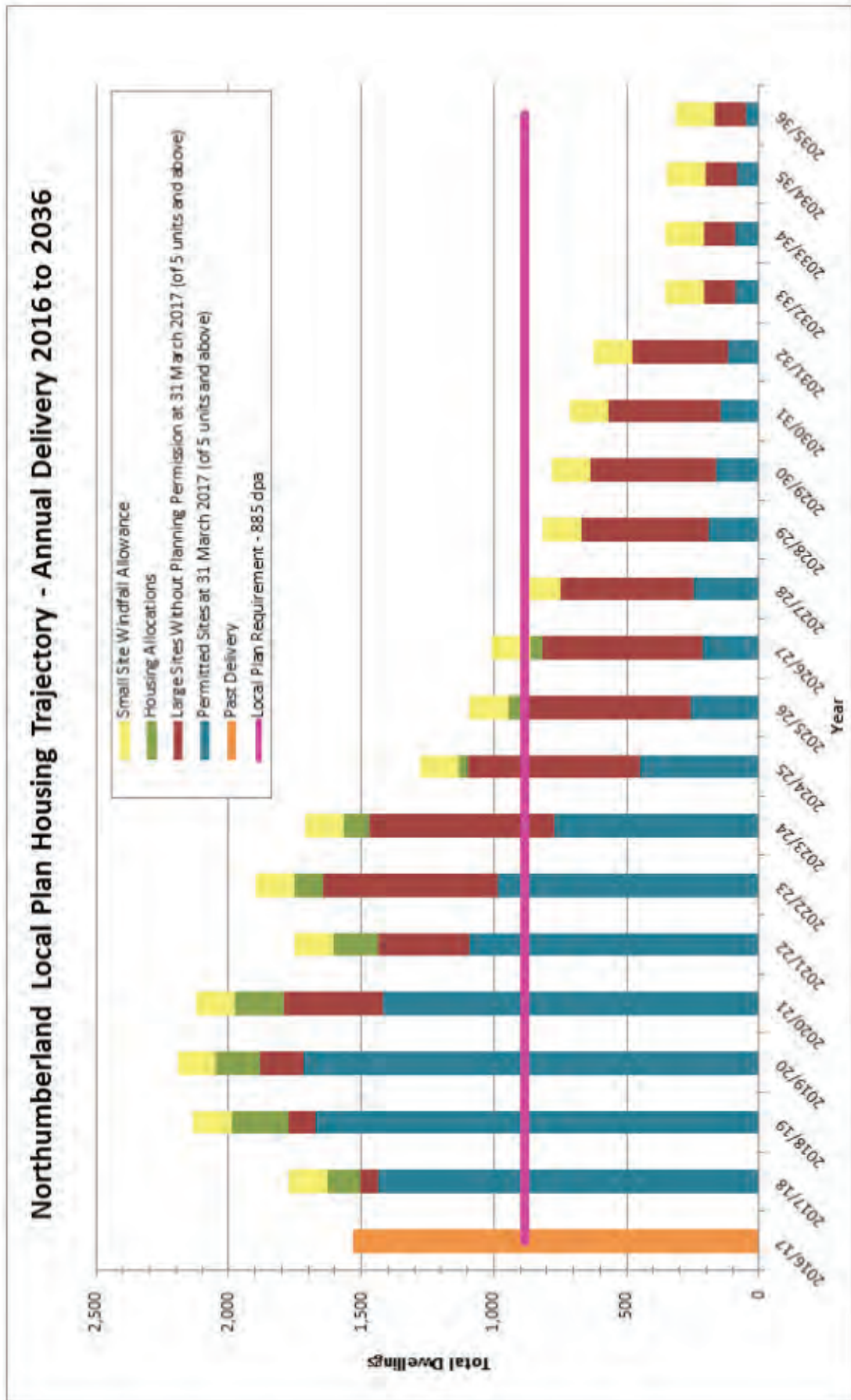
Neighbourhood Plan Area	Site Name	Indicative Net Additional Dwelling Capacity
Central Delivery Area		
Longhorsley (Submission Draft - November 2017)	Shoulder of Mutton site, East Road, Longhorsley	55
	Normandy Terrace, Longhorsley	12
Morpeth (‘Made’ - May 2016)	North Morpeth, former St. George’s Hospital	Not indicated in NP
	North of Longhirst Road, Pegswood	Not indicated in NP
	North of Hebron Avenue, Pegswood	Not indicated in NP
North Delivery Area		
Alnwick & Denwick (‘Made’ - July 2017)	Land east of Allerburn Lea, Alnwick	270
	Land south west of Ravensmount and Alnmouth Road, Alnwick	70
	Duchess’s High School, Howling Lane, Alnwick	60
	Allerburn House, Denwick Lane, Alnwick	20
	Land at former Thomas Percy School, Blakelaw Road, Alnwick	15
	Former Fire Station, South Road, Alnwick	15
	Former bus garage, Lisburn Terrace, Alnwick	10
	Land adjoining Old Vicarage, Ratten Row, Alnwick	6
	Roxburgh Place, Alnwick	10
	Bank Top, Rugley Road, Alnwick	6
West Delivery Area		
Whittington (Submission Draft - February 2017)	Rose Hill, Great Whittington	9
	Land west of the village hall, Rose Hill, Great Whittington	10

Appendix C: Housing Trajectory

Housing Trajectory Cumulative Delivery 2016-2036



Housing Trajectory - Annual Delivery 2016 to 2036



Notes:

The Local Plan Housing Trajectory sets out house building since the start of the plan period (1 April 2016) and forecasts future delivery over the plan period based upon the latest evidence⁽²⁶⁾.

The delivery outlined includes that from the following categories of site:

- Past Delivery – Completions in the first year of the plan period 2016/17;
- Permitted Sites at 31 March 2017 (of 5 units and above) – Delivery is directly informed by that set out in the latest Five-Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Sites Report (November 2017);
- Large sites without planning permission at 31 March 2017 (of 5 units and above) - Includes sites permitted from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and sites 'minded to approve'. Some of these sites were included in the latest Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites report.
- Housing Allocations - Sites allocated for housing in policy HOU 3 of the plan, identified from the SHLAA and updates from the 'call for sites';
- Small Site Windfall Allowance – Delivery based on analysis of past trends based on the methodology outlined in the latest Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites.

The figures include all current delivery as set out in the above categories. Over the course of the plan period it is anticipated that sites not identified in any of the above categories will continue to come forward. There are a significant number of other developable sites within the SHLAA. Should sites within the above categories not deliver as anticipated, there is sufficient capacity in the supply of land to deliver the housing requirements on alternative sites if required.

26 This comprises the Five-Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Sites (November 2017), the Council's planning application database, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (February 2017) and the updated site assessments which have been undertaken following a 'call for sites' in spring 2018 which will inform an update to the SHLAA in 2018.

Appendix D: Existing Waste Management Facilities

Site Name	Facility Type	Easting	Northing	Site Postcode
Cockle Park Anaerobic Digestion Plant	Anaerobic digestion	420300	591350	NE61 3EA
Hexham Anaerobic Digester	Anaerobic digestion	395023	564221	NE46 4JR
Anick Grange Farm Composting Facility	Composting facility	395778	565383	NE46 4LP
Codlaw Farms	Composting facility	395400	567600	NE46 4HF
Ellington Road Composting Facility	Composting facility	425800	589200	NE63 9XS
Harecrag Composting Site	Composting facility	417400	608000	NE66 2JD
Lane End Farm	Composting facility	424800	581100	NE22 6AA
Allendale Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	384300	556000	NE47 9LQ
Bebside Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	427926	581369	NE24 4HN
Haltwhistle Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	371200	563800	NE49 0ET
Kirkley West Thorn Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	413866	575948	NE20 0AG
Morpeth Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	421066	586877	NE61 3AB
North Seaton Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	429172	585868	NE63 0YB
North Sunderland Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	420960	631610	NE68 7UP
Prudhoe Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	410654	563502	NE42 5EJ
Wooler Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	399970	627780	NE71 6QG
Former Shadfen Park Drift Mine	Inert landfill	422106	585629	NE61 6NT

Appendix D: Existing Waste Management Facilities

Hollings Hill Quarry Landfill	Inert landfill	409549	557290	DH8 9JQ
Merrysields Quarry	Inert landfill	406477	561783	NE43 7NS
Lynemouth Power Station Ash Lagoons	Landfill	430400	589700	NE63 9NW
West Sleekburn Composting & Recycling Centre	Materials recycling and composting facility	427960	584670	NE22 7LQ
West Sleekburn Materials Recycling Facility	Materials Recycling Facility	427700	584700	NE22 7LQ
Howford Quarry Recycling Facility	Materials recycling facility - inert wastes	391900	566300	NE46 4RY
Longhoughton Quarry	Materials recycling facility - inert wastes	423100	615300	NE66 3AE
Steven Arkle Groundworks	Materials recycling facility - inert wastes (soils)	428594	582096	NE24 4RT
As New Auto Recyclers	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	429687	575927	NE25 0PP
Barrington Auto Salvage	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	426331	583650	NE22 7DQ
Battle Bridge	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	411600	612000	NE66 2BB
Hancock Scrapyard	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427000	583400	NE22 7AW
Haugh Head	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	400211	626274	NE71 6QP
K C Forrest Scrapmetal Merchan	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	428000	584800	NE22 7LQ
Orchard Car Dismantlers	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	393612	564529	NE46 3PU
Portland Industrial Estate	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	426203	588408	NE63 8TU
Robinson Scrapyard	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427820	584830	NE22 7LQ
West Sleekburn Autos	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427746	584802	NE22 7LQ

Appendix D: Existing Waste Management Facilities

Yard 3 & 4	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427878	584818	NE22 7LQ
Ellington Road Landfill	Non-hazardous landfill	426220	589280	NE63 9XS
Blyth Valley Skips	Transfer station	429330	582046	NE24 4RF
Cowley Road Depot	Transfer station	429850	582200	NE24 5TF
Low Prudhoe Waste Reclamation & Transfer Station	Transfer station	410100	564000	NE42 6PL
Moscrop Bros	Transfer station	427700	584700	NE22 7LQ
R Thornton & Co Ltd	Transfer station	426200	591400	NE61 5SD
Recycling Centre	Transfer station	399200	654900	TD15 1UN
Sanders Plant & Waste Management Limited	Transfer station	423347	587602	NE61 6UU
Alnwick Transfer Station and Household Waste Recovery Centre	Transfer station and household waste amenity site	419860	611640	NE66 2HT
Amble Skips	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	426537	604080	NE65 0PE
GS Skip Hire	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	410100	563931	NE42 6PL
Hadston Recycling Centre	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	425035	600509	NE65 9YG
Stephenson Way	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	426430	583660	NE22 7DG
Coopies Haugh - Clark	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	421323	585306	NE61 6JN
Lynfield Park - Clark	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	429169	590141	NE63 9YH
Old Stone Road	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	428696	575967	NE23 6XW
Scotts Yard	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	398280	627820	NE71 6PB

Appendix D: Existing Waste Management Facilities

Thornbrough Quarry	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	400870	563700	NE45 5LX
Unit 9 - West Sleekburn Ind Est	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	427772	584747	NE45 5LX
Former Four Rivers Site	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	429180	585050	NE22 7DB
Prestwick Pit Waste Facility	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	417600	571100	NE20 9TS
Berwick Transfer Station and Household Waste Recovery Centre	Waste transfer station and household waste amenity site	399300	655300	TD15 1UN
Hexham Transfer Station and Household Waste Recovery Centre	Waste transfer station and household waste amenity site	394458	564881	NE46 4DL



Planning Policy

Northumberland County Council
County Hall, Morpeth
Northumberland NE61 2EF

T: 0345 600 6400

E: planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk

W: www.northumberland.gov.uk