

# Northumberland Local Development Plan

## Core Strategy Preferred Options

Consultation Document: February 2013



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### Foreword

In summer 2012 the Council undertook extensive engagement on the Core Strategy Issues and Options document, which was the first stage of preparing the new set of planning policies for Northumberland. There was a significant public response to the consultation which illustrates that communities across Northumberland want to be engaged in shaping the future of Northumberland.

This is the second stage in producing the planning policies for Northumberland. This Preferred Options document has been informed by local opinions, together with further work. The document identifies preferred policy options for most topic areas. However, feedback from the Issues and Options consultation has highlighted that there is still further work to do in particular around housing numbers. Therefore, there will be further engagement on the results of this work in the summer.

We want to know your views on whether the draft policies or preferred policy approaches are appropriate for meeting future development needs, which fully take into account Northumberland's special culture and environment, now and in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read the document and I look forward to receiving your comments.

**Councillor Tom Brechany**  
**Executive Member for Planning, Housing and Regeneration**





## 1. Introduction

### What is the Core Strategy?

**1.1** Once adopted, the Northumberland Core Strategy will:

- Be the overarching spatial plan for the County, excluding the Northumberland National Park, guiding future development and land use planning decisions to 2030;
- Be the spatial interpretation of the [Sustainable Community Strategy \(SCS\) for Northumberland \(2011\)](#)<sup>(1)</sup> which aims to ‘make Northumberland a place that is resilient for the future’;
- Aim to maximise benefit for the community, the environment and the local economy through sustainable development;
- Establish the general scale and distribution of development and the Council’s approach to the key planning issues facing Northumberland;

**1.2** The statutory development plan for Northumberland currently comprises the North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) together with the adopted Core Strategies and saved policies of the Local Plans of the former local planning authorities that made up Northumberland prior to Local Government Review (2009). The Government has announced its intention to abolish regional spatial strategies, but until this happens the RSS remains part of the development plan.

**1.3** When adopted, the Core Strategy will provide the strategic policies of the Local Plan, which together with adopted Neighbourhood Plans will be used to determine planning applications. The Core Strategy will supersede:

- All policies in the Core Strategies adopted in 2007 for the former Alnwick, Blyth Valley and Tynedale Districts, and some policies in the former Blyth Valley Development Control DPD (2007);
- Some saved policies from the Local Plans of former planning authorities; and
- Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005).

**1.4** Further detailed policies and allocations of land for certain uses will be included within a Delivery Development Plan Document.

**1.5** The Core Strategy and its policies must be in conformity with national planning policy principles as set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), and reflect the needs and priorities of Northumberland’s communities. The Council will continue to support Neighbourhood Plans to shape and direct sustainable development in local areas. Neighbourhood Plans will need to be in general conformity with, and support the strategic policies of the Core Strategy, and the NPPF.

**1.6** The Core Strategy must be deliverable. A key element of the evidence base for the plan is an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will establish key infrastructure requirements across the county, such as transport, utilities, and community facilities. A baseline infrastructure needs assessment has informed this Preferred Options document, and a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be consulted on alongside the full draft Core Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sustainable Community Strategy, developed by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) sets out the County’s long term vision, considering the needs and aspirations of communities, to improve their quality of life.

## 1. Introduction

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**1.7** Recognising that the Core Strategy has a long timescale it is important that sufficient flexibility is incorporated. Therefore, the plan will be kept up to date through annual monitoring and as necessary review.

### **How has this Preferred Options document been prepared?**

**1.8** The Preferred Options document is the second stage of preparing the Core Strategy. The first stage, the Issues and Options document, was subject to extensive and wide ranging community engagement for 12 weeks from 23 May 2012 to 15 August 2012. During the engagement period, 33 public drop-in events were held across the county, together with a number of stakeholder and community workshops. In addition, the Council has continued to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, in particular Town and Parish Councils after the end of the 12 week period.

**1.9** Representations submitted to the Council, together with comments received during drop in events, workshops, as well as on-going engagement, have been considered and have helped inform this Preferred Options document. Issues and Options Consultation responses, and notes from the workshops can be viewed at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/CoreStrategy](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/CoreStrategy).

**1.10** Evidence used to inform the Issues and Options has in some cases been updated and some further work is being undertaken which will inform the next stage of the plan's development. Throughout the document, key evidence documents are indicated in footnotes and hyperlinks.

**1.11** The Preferred Options document has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal which is compliant with Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, a Habitats Regulations Assessment and an Equalities Impact Assessment. These documents are also available to comment on during the consultation period.

**1.12** In addition, the Council is required to work with neighbouring local planning authorities and stakeholders when preparing Local Plans - the 'Duty to Co-operate'. The Council is therefore having discussions with adjoining authorities and stakeholders regarding strategic issues which may have significant cross boundary impacts. A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed with the five Tyne and Wear authorities and Durham County Council regarding approaches to key issues such as population and housing, economic development, transport and infrastructure.

### **What is the purpose and scope of the Preferred Options document?**

**1.13** The purpose of the document is to seek feedback on updated policy approaches, as well as draft policies. However, for some areas the Council is not in a position to identify draft policies for consultation at this stage. As a result of the level of interest in the Core Strategy it was considered important to undertake further consultation on the emerging policies in advance of the Local Government Elections in May 2013, with additional opportunities for engagement after this.

**1.14** Feedback on the Issues and Options document highlighted that the Council needed to undertake further work in some areas. An area where the Council considered a substantial amount of further work was needed was around housing. As a result, the

Council has commissioned population and household modelling work together with an update to its long term employment forecasts. These will test a series of different growth based scenarios. The Council is also undertaking the following work:

- Further analysis of the housing needs survey to identify the types and levels of affordable housing required at lower levels;
- A review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will also be undertaken during 2013; and
- An update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

**1.15** The findings of these evidence base studies will inform the scale and distribution of housing required and will inform the need for any reviews to the existing Green Belt. Further engagement on the results of this work will take place in summer 2013.

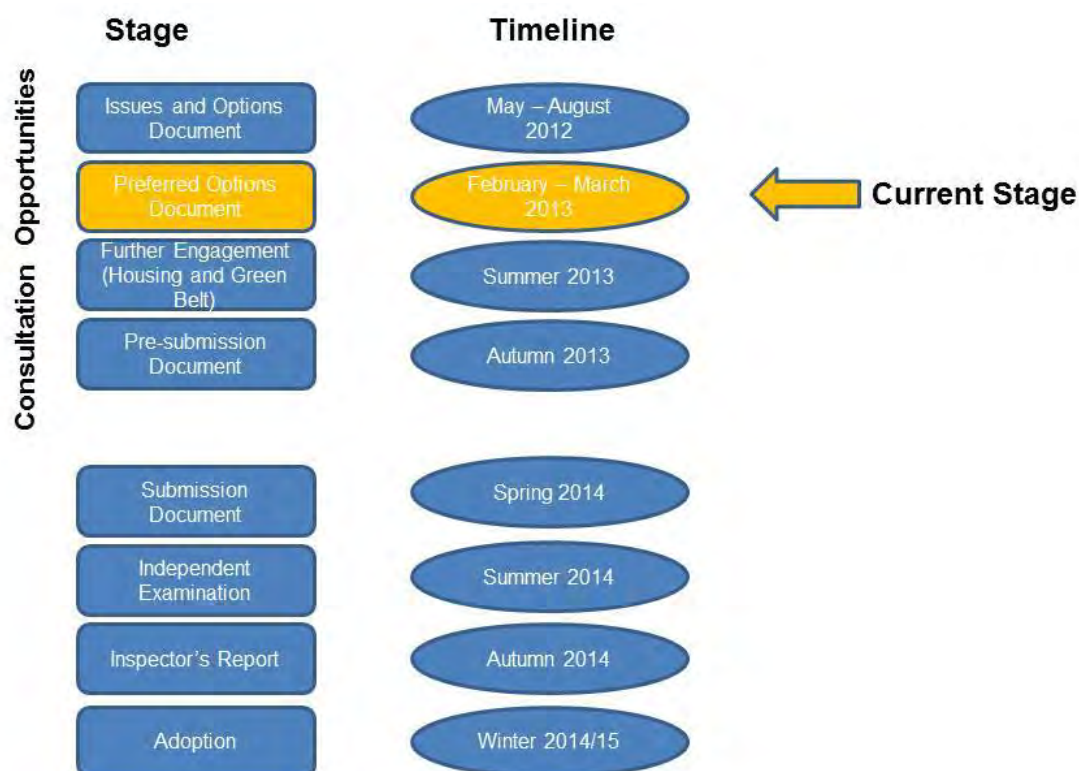
## Engagement opportunities and next steps

**1.16** It is essential that the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy is informed through wide community engagement. The [Statement of Community Involvement](#) indicates the Council's commitment to engage with as many residents, local groups and interested parties as possible. Figure 1.1 highlights the engagement opportunities and next steps.

**1.17** The Preferred Options consultation period is taking place from **6 February 2013 to 20 March 2013**. Information on events during this period and on how to comment upon draft policies and preferred approaches will be available on the Council's website, via posters and leaflets and in the local press.

**1.18** The Council is encouraging people to submit comments online at: [http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cspo](http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cspo)

**Figure 1.1 Key stages of Core Strategy preparation and engagement opportunities**



## 1. Introduction

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**1.19** If you submitted comments during the Issues and Options consultation, please use the same log in details you used previously. If you have not previously submitted comments, you will need to complete a short registration process.

**1.20** Responses by e-mail or post will be accepted and should be directed to:

Spatial Policy and Delivery Team  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

E-mail: [PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk)

**1.21** The Council will report on the Preferred Options responses received at the next consultation stage. These will be available to view at the Core Strategy web page.

**1.22** For further information on how to take part in the consultation, please contact [PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk) or telephone 01670 623631.

### 2. A spatial portrait of Northumberland

**2.1** Northumberland is England's northernmost county, stretching from the Scottish Border in the north 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, is also the most sparsely populated in England with only 63 people per square kilometre. Home to around 316,000 people, Northumberland remains largely rural, with no settlements being home to more than 40,000 residents.

**2.3** The south east represents the most densely populated part of the County, containing the three largest towns of Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington, which act as main employment and service centres for much of the area. While all of the south east of Northumberland exhibits elements of an industrial legacy, from the 1960's, Cramlington was planned as a new town, the purpose being to provide a focus for employment and housing growth.

**2.4** Beyond the south east, the main settlements are strung along the Tyne Valley corridor and north south along the lowland coastal strip, both of which are followed by main road and rail routes. Morpeth, Hexham, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have large rural hinterlands. The remaining rural areas are interspersed with smaller towns, some with their own hinterlands, as well as numerous villages, small hamlets and isolated farmsteads.

**2.5** Areas in the south of the county are most influenced by the Tyneside conurbation. Tyneside attracts the people of Northumberland as a source of work, education, cultural activity and retailing. To a lesser extent the north and west of the county, are influenced by the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and Carlisle. The countryside between the Tyneside conurbation and the towns and villages to the south of Northumberland have been kept open through the Green Belt designation.

**2.6** Northumberland's rural villages are still central to the farming communities that are the lifeblood of much of the County. Many have been boosted by tourism, although the industry has resulted in increased development pressures. Part of their attractiveness is the organic way in which they have grown, following topographic features, although some have a more planned layout. The honey-coloured sandstone used over centuries remains key to the distinctiveness of Northumberland's rural villages.

**2.7** There are designated areas and sites that are internationally, nationally, and locally recognised for their nature conservation, geological, landscape or heritage value. Most notable are the Northumberland National Park, (a separate local planning authority area), the Northumberland Coast and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, internationally recognised biodiversity and geo-diversity related designated areas mostly concentrated along the populated coast and in more remote upland areas and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. Major historic landmarks such as the Norman Castles and numerous country houses and their associated landscapes, together with fortified farmhouses, remain dominant features of Northumberland's environment and culture.

## 2. A spatial portrait of Northumberland

**2.8** The connectivity of wildlife-rich areas and the 'green infrastructure' in general is relatively poor. Upland areas include some large scale commercial coniferous forestry notably Kielder Forest covering almost 650km<sup>2</sup>. The populated former mining areas of south-east Northumberland have pockets of wildlife in mining subsidence ponds and reclaimed mining land. These are very important assets for people in there localities.



### 3. Spatial vision and objectives - delivering sustainable development

#### A Spatial Vision for Northumberland

**3.1** Sustainable development and sustainable communities are central to government policy and are an overriding aspiration of this plan. The challenge is how the Core Strategy can best achieve this, balancing economic, social and environmental components and responding flexibly to changing circumstances. It will need to take advantage of economic opportunities, meet the needs of existing and future residents, businesses and visitors, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and built heritage.

**3.2** The [Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy \(2011\)](#) sets out the long-term vision for Northumberland - the Core Strategy should reflect this vision. Through the preparation of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the following 'Big Partnership Issues' were identified:

- Making climate change work to our advantage;
- Maintaining and creating sustainable communities;
- Rebalancing our economy;
- Giving everyone a voice and influence;
- Providing healthy lifestyle choice;
- Supporting our young people into adulthood; and
- Delivering services differently.

These were supported by "getting it right spatially – managing development".

**3.3** Whilst the Sustainable Community Strategy vision and 'Big Partnership Issues' are embodied within the Core Strategy, the Core Strategy should have its own spatial vision and objectives to provide the direction for growth, protection and enhancement of Northumberland. The vision is then embedded within eight objectives which aim to provide a coherent approach to allow for sustainable development across Northumberland. The detailed policy approaches then flow from these objectives.

**3.4** Through the Issues and Options consultation there was strong support for the draft vision and objectives, with a number of suggestions on how they could be made more relevant to Northumberland and the need to clarify the relationships between the objectives and how they inform the policy approach.

**3.5** The Vision which is proposed to underpin the Core Strategy is:

#### The Vision

By 2030 Northumberland's diverse communities will be healthy and resilient and set within a diverse and strong economy. The County's significant resources will be utilised in a sustainable way and the unique and varied qualities of the natural, historic and built environment will be protected and enhanced.

### 3. Spatial vision and objectives - delivering sustainable development

#### Question 1

This is our preferred vision for the Core Strategy. Do you have any comments?

#### Objectives

**3.6** To deliver this vision, whilst having regard to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, as well as other plans and strategies, the following eight objectives seek to provide a coherent approach to managing future development and therefore deliver the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The objectives, which are interlinked and not in priority order are:

Objective 1: To place sustainable development and responsible future economic growth at the heart of planning decisions in Northumberland;

Objective 2: To meet Northumberland's objectively assessed development needs and demands including: new homes, employment space, health and community services, and infrastructure;

Objective 3: To maintain and create sustainable communities throughout Northumberland to support health, social and cultural well-being for all including responding to the needs and opportunities created by an ageing population;

Objective 4: To facilitate investment which stimulates employment opportunities and supports job retention in a resilient and strong Northumberland economy;

Objective 5: To make Northumberland resilient to climate change and contribute to mitigating against its effects, whilst also creating sustainable job opportunities in green industries;

Objective 6: To protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment;

Objective 7: To manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, including minerals, energy, land, existing built fabric and water while producing less waste and minimising adverse impacts on communities and the environment;

Objective 8: To ensure all development makes best use of, and safeguards, Northumberland's infrastructure securing necessary up-grades and promotes sustainable modes of transport where appropriate.

**3.7** Through the Issues and Options consultation there was strong support for the identified objectives, with a number of minor amendments suggested. The Sustainability Appraisal identified that although a number of the objectives are either broadly complementary or have a neutral relationship, some potential conflicts and uncertainty

### 3. Spatial vision and objectives - delivering sustainable development

over compatibility between objectives were identified. It is the role of the Core Strategy to weigh up potential conflicts and ensure a balanced approach is taken to ensuring sustainable development.

#### Question 2

These are our preferred objectives for the Core Strategy. Do you have any comments?

#### Sustainable Development

**3.8** The national presumption in favour of sustainable development means that unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise or adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, the Core Strategy is required to:

- Take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- Positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of Northumberland; and
- Meet objectively assessed needs, with flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

**3.9** To ensure that all development reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development it is proposed that the Core Strategy includes an overarching policy. This approach was fully supported through the responses to the Issues and Options consultation.

#### Policy 1

##### Sustainable development

When assessing development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Consideration will be given to how the proposal:

- a. Contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland;
- b. Provides access to housing to meet the needs of the local population;
- c. Supports and improves access, health, infrastructure, social and cultural wellbeing for all, enhancing people's quality of life;
- d. Contributes to the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland's natural, historic and built environment;
- e. Makes the most efficient and effective use of Northumberland's available resources (e.g. land, water, minerals, buildings);
- f. Demonstrates high quality design which respects and enhances local distinctiveness and helps promote a sense of place;
- g. Is resilient to economic, social and climatic change;
- h. Is aligned with the objectives of the Core Strategy.

### 3. Spatial vision and objectives - delivering sustainable development

#### Question 3

This is our preferred policy for assessing sustainable development. Do you have any comments?



### 4. Delivering the vision - the spatial strategy for Northumberland

**4.1** Setting out a clear spatial strategy is fundamental for the delivery of the vision and objectives and in doing so delivering sustainable development. New development must take account of the local distinctiveness and the character of Northumberland. It should also be delivered in tandem with good quality infrastructure and services. The challenge is to plan for growth whilst maintaining the quality of life and protecting Northumberland's high quality environment.

**4.2** Core Strategy objective 2 seeks to meet Northumberland's objectively assessed development needs and demands, including: new homes, employment space, health and community services, and infrastructure. This section of the Core Strategy identifies the overall spatial strategy, which consists of three key elements:

- Strategic approach – the overall approach to growth across Northumberland;
- Spatial distribution – where development should be focused; and
- Delivery areas – the policy approaches for different parts of Northumberland.

#### Strategic approach

**4.3** The Issues and Options consultation identified three strategic development options for discussion. The Council highlighted as part of the consultation that it considered the most appropriate strategic development option was one that planned for targeted increases in development. This would seek to achieve stable population levels and sustainable development to meet the needs of the county's residents while incorporating an allowance for additional growth.

**4.4** It is considered that this approach will provide the opportunity to broaden the range and improve the quality of housing, create opportunities for regeneration and support new enterprise and job creation targeted at key locations across the county. It will also enable the Council to rapidly respond to positive changes in economic outlook and development needs and activity.

**4.5** The NPPF is clear that the Core Strategy must meet objectively assessed needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

**4.6** Through the consultation there was support for this approach, but also concerns that given the current economic situation the Council should be planning for lower rates of development. The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that the preferred approach performed best in relation to economic and social objectives as higher levels of growth could enable flexible and responsive supply of land to meet the needs of Northumberland's residents and provide sufficient flexibility to respond to changing economic circumstances. It was considered to have the additional benefits of supporting regeneration in those settlements which are to be the focus of additional growth.

**4.7** The Sustainability Appraisal also highlighted that the preferred option is likely to have a mixture of uncertain or potential negative effects on the environment. Higher levels of growth could result in increased traffic generation and emissions, higher land take and potential impact on biodiversity. In order to capitalise on the economic and social benefits,

## 4. Delivering the vision - the spatial strategy for Northumberland

the appraisal highlights that careful consideration would need to be given to measures to mitigate the potential impacts, such as directing development to sustainable locations which are well served by public transport.

### Preferred strategic policy approach

The Core Strategy should plan for targeted increases in development to achieve stable population levels and provide sustainable development to meet the needs of Northumberland's residents and to incorporate an allowance for additional growth. However, further work is currently on-going as to the level of housing and economic development required across Northumberland to deliver this approach. There will be consultation on the results of this work in summer 2013.

### Spatial distribution

**4.8** The current development strategies across Northumberland seek to concentrate development in existing settlements and limit new development in the open countryside, making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and services and reducing the need to travel by private car. This has generally been successful in directing new development to sustainable locations and supporting the regeneration of south east Northumberland and the County's market towns. This approach was generally supported through the Issues and Options consultation, however concern was expressed that the approach did not appear to allow for appropriate development in rural areas to sustain communities.

**4.9** In accordance with NPPF, it is considered that the Core Strategy should take a more positive view of development that improves the sustainability of existing settlements and rural communities. This approach has been informed by an audit of services and facilities (see Appendix C) within the settlements across the County, which has identified the main towns and service centres.

**4.10** The Sustainability Appraisal assessed the preferred approach as having a major positive effect on social and economic objectives. It was assessed as having additional benefits to alternative options as it was considered it would provide a flexible supply of housing and employment land in sustainable locations. It also scored well as it will allow for sustainable development in rural areas to support local services. Mitigation measures were also suggested to be incorporated within other policies.

### Policy 2

#### Spatial distribution

The Core Strategy will focus the majority of new development in Northumberland's main towns and service centres. Additional large-scale development and growth will be focused on key locations in: Blyth, Cramlington, Ashington and Morpeth. Development will be supported which allows for this role to be maintained and strengthened.

**Main Towns:** Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington (including Bedlington Station), Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, and Prudhoe;

**Service Centres:** Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Ponteland, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler.

In other settlements development will be allowed elsewhere which:

- a. is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
- b. maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;
- c. meets defined needs; and
- d. protects the countryside from widespread new development.

[Note: The Council is also considering the need for Green Belt review around settlements such as Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe. As previously identified, further work is currently on-going to define the level of additional development required to deliver the preferred strategic approach and therefore it is not possible to set out whether there is a need for Green Belt review until this work is finalised.]

### Question 4

This is our preferred spatial distribution policy. Do you have any comments?

### Delivery Areas

**4.11** Northumberland is large and diverse, different areas have distinct characteristics, functions and needs. Dividing the county into different 'Delivery Areas' will allow the Council to tailor the policy approach to each specific area to better guide the delivery of development. However, it should be recognised that in some instances, a countywide approach remains appropriate.

## 4. Delivering the vision - the spatial strategy for Northumberland

**4.12** The Issues and Options document identified three Delivery Areas, the same areas that are identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy. These areas broadly relate to the strategic transport network and generally reflect the three strategic housing market areas identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010).

**4.13** The responses to the Issues and Options consultation generally agreed with the need to define Delivery Areas but there were differing views on the three areas identified:

- The North area was considered to be too large, with the north of Coquet catchment a better fit for North Northumberland;
- North Northumberland coastal area was suggested as a separate area as there are specific issues to address;
- The South East area to continue up the coast to Amble as there are similar characteristics across this area;
- South and West Area is two separate areas, the remote rural west has no working relationship with the Tyne and Wear conurbation and the characteristics better align with North Northumberland than the south and west area.

**4.14** As a result of the feedback from the Issues and Options consultation and further work, the Council is now seeking views on the identification of four Delivery Areas, as identified on Figure 4.1. It is considered that these areas better reflect the different characteristics of the County and significant planning issues such as:

- The roles of the main towns and service centres;
- Relationships with adjoining areas, in particular Tyneside and Scotland;
- House prices and housing markets;
- Economy; and
- Infrastructure.

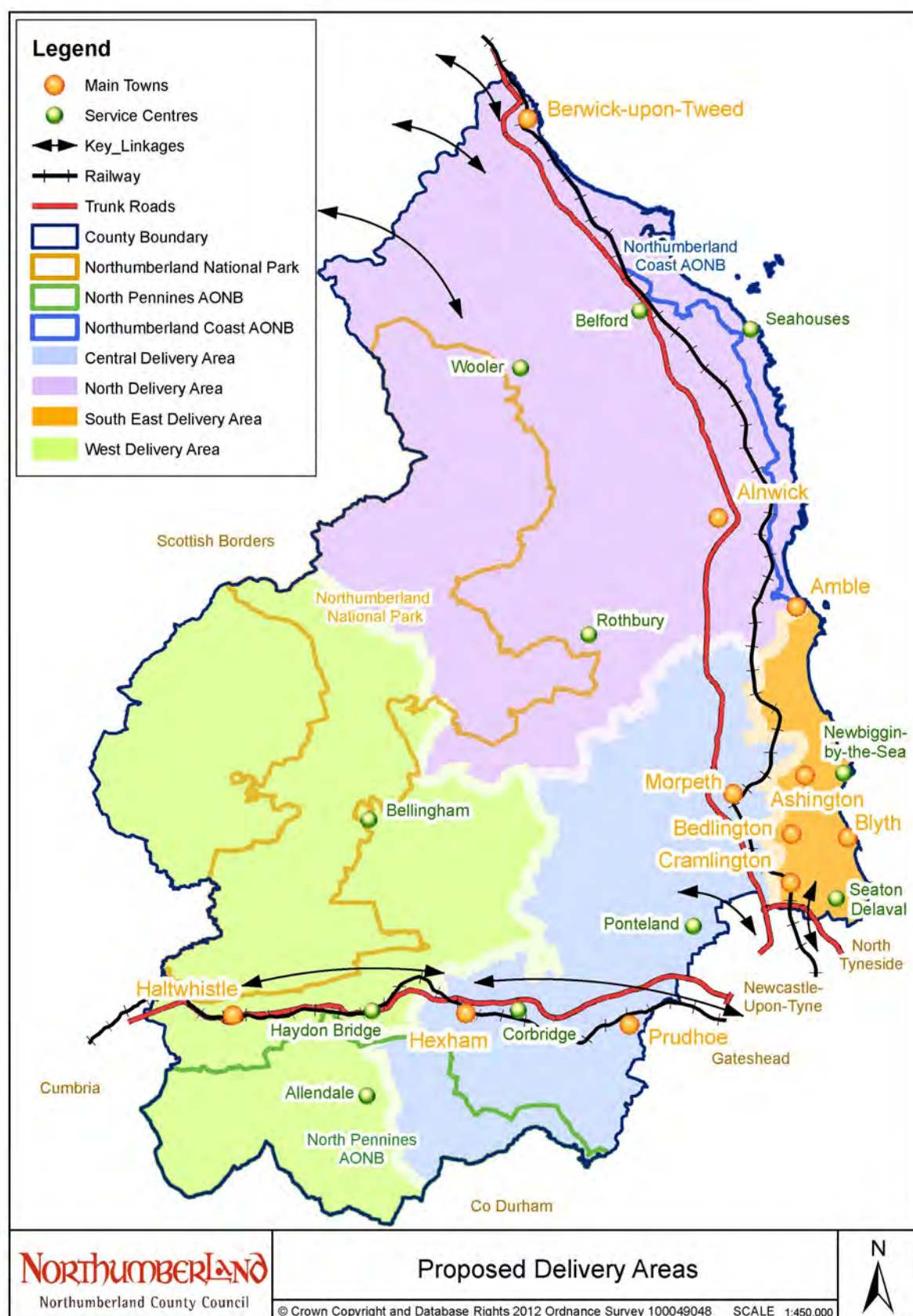
**4.15** It is important to highlight that although these Delivery Areas have defined boundaries this is to enable the Council to monitor development in these areas. In practice the boundaries of the areas overlap in some cases.

### Question 5

This is our preferred approach for Delivery Areas. Do you have any comments?

#### 4. Delivering the vision - the spatial strategy for Northumberland

### Figure 4.1 Delivery Areas



## 4. Delivering the vision - the spatial strategy for Northumberland

### North Northumberland Delivery Area

**4.16** This Delivery Area has a population of approximately 52,400 and 22,400 households. The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick, as the main towns, are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services within the area. Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses and Wooler are key service centres and serve a wide network of settlements. Rothbury and Wooler for example provide key services and facilities for communities that live within the northern part of the Northumberland National Park.

**4.17** It has the largest proportion of older residents (65+ years) and lowest proportion of younger residents (0 to 15 years) in Northumberland, with numbers of children in rural schools falling. North Northumberland has the largest geographical area of the four delivery areas. It stretches south from the border with Scotland to the Simonside Hills and River Coquet and is bounded by the coast to the east and the Cheviot Hills that lie within the National Park to the west. It includes the A1/East Coast road and rail corridor and the A697 road.

**4.18** Berwick-upon-Tweed is the northernmost market town in Northumberland, one of England's outstanding historic towns and a key hub between the city conurbations of Edinburgh and Tyneside. The history and geography give the town a unique sense of place and is a popular tourist destination. Alnwick is another of Northumberland's historic market towns; the centre is dominated by the 11th century castle. The castle and its gardens are a hugely popular tourist attraction and are well linked to the town centre.

**4.19** The Northumberland Coast AONB and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site, as well as the North Northumberland Heritage Coast lie fully within the area. The AONB was designated in 1958; it covers an area of 138km<sup>2</sup> along 64km of coastline from Berwick to the Coquet estuary. The AONB is never wider than 2.5km and only 50m in width at its narrowest point.

**4.20** The AONB Management Plan identifies the special qualities of the area which should be protected and enhanced through the planning system. The population of the AONB is around 20,000, with 28% of the population over 65, and only 12% 15 or under. The viability of local communities and businesses is a vital part of protecting and enhancing the statutory purpose of the AONB. However unsympathetic development, including pressure from recreation, tourism and leisure use poses threats to the primary purpose of the AONB to conserve their natural beauty.

**4.21** The North Northumberland Delivery 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 impacted by development in the Edinburgh City-Region, which extends into the Scottish Borders. Proposals for the expansion of Newton St Boswells in the Scottish Border, which includes around 900 houses, new mixed use development and additional employment development, in addition to the re-opening of the Waverly line could have implications for the north of the delivery area.

**4.22** Large parts of the area are subject to high house prices, although the area has the lowest average gross incomes within the county because of the reliance on agriculture and tourism sectors. Access to affordable housing, particularly within the rented sector, is an issue across the area but is particularly acute in the Northumberland Coast AONB

## 4. Delivering the vision - the spatial strategy for Northumberland

and the other coastal villages where there are high levels of second home and holiday accommodation. Average house prices in the AONB are £265,000, compared to £145,000 in the rest of Northumberland.

**4.23** There are limited bus services operating outside the A1 corridor and very limited rail services. 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. There are a number of harbours in the area, Beadnell, Craster, Holy Island, and Seahouses.

**4.24** Since 2009 757 new houses have been built in the area, of these 473 were constructed in 2010/11. There has also been over 14,000m<sup>2</sup> new employment floor space constructed from 12 developments.

**4.25** The landscape of the area is defined by the backdrop of the rounded form of the Cheviot Hills, mostly within the Northumberland National Park, and extending into the Scottish Borders. This sparsely populated (25 people per km<sup>2</sup>) and tranquil area is wrapped around by a mainly arable, upland fringe of broad valleys and farmed plateaux that includes a number of settlements such as Wooler. The scenic beauty and rich ecology of much of the coastal plain is reflected in the Northumberland Coast AONB and European Marine Site designations.

**4.26** Significant spatial planning issues:

- Role of Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed as main towns, and Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses and Wooler as key service centres;
- Influence of Scotland, particularly on Berwick-upon-Tweed;
- High proportion of residents over 65, and the low proportion of residents under 16;
- Importance of tourism to the area, but the associated problems of low household incomes, high levels of second and holiday homes, and high house prices. This issue is particularly acute within and on the fringes of the Northumberland Coast AONB. Need for other employment opportunities;
- Distinctive and valued natural and built environment;
- Sand and gravel extraction for aggregate use in the Breamish, Glen and Till valleys.

### Policy 3

#### North Northumberland Delivery Area

To deliver sustainable development across the North Northumberland Delivery Area, the following core strategic planning principles apply:

- a. The main towns of Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed, as key hubs for education, healthcare, housing, employment and retail, will be the main focus for future development and regeneration;
- b. Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses and Wooler will continue to be key service centres to their resident communities and those within the wider rural area. Development will be supported which allows for this role to be maintained and strengthened;
- c. Development in other settlements will be supported where it:

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- i. is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
  - ii. maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;
- i. meets defined needs; and
  - ii. protects the countryside from widespread new development;
- d. Isolated new development in the open countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances;
- e. Within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the special qualities of the area will be conserved and enhanced by ensuring that new development is sensitively located and designed. The vitality of local communities will be sustained by:
  - i. requiring a proportion of new housing development to be affordable where there is an identified need; and
  - ii. allowing for the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses where this does not impact on the special qualities of the area;
- f. Provision will be made for aggregate minerals through:
  - i. the release of additional sand and gravel reserves over the latter part of the plan period in the Breamish, Glen and Till valleys; and
  - ii. the release of hard rock reserves from the Whin Sill to the north east of Alnwick and in the Belford area to produce crushed rock aggregate where this would meet the tests set out within Policy 25.
- g. The settlements identified in a. will be the focus for new and enhanced waste recycling and recovery businesses where it can meet the tests set out within Policy 33.

[Note: In the next version of the Core Strategy this policy will also identify the level of housing delivery required in this area and the supply of employment land]

### Question 6

This is our preferred policy approach for the North Northumberland Delivery Area. Do you have any comments?

### West Northumberland Delivery Area

**4.27** The West Northumberland Delivery Area has the smallest population of the four areas with approximately 20,000 people and 8,400 households. The main town of Haltwhistle is the key hub for housing, employment, retailing and services. Bellingham, Haydon Bridge and Allendale, are key service centres which serve a wide network of small settlements, and isolated farmsteads.

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**4.28** There is a strong relationship with Hexham in the Central Northumberland Delivery Area which also provides key services to those that live in this area. The area is not as strongly influenced by Tyneside as the Central and South East Northumberland Delivery Areas, although development pressure in the extreme south east of the area is reflected by the Green Belt designation to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and to preserve the setting and special character of Hexham. Links with Carlisle and Cumbria are stronger than from other parts of the county.

**4.29** The area runs from the Scottish Borders in the North along the A68 and extends south to include parts of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the North Pennines AONB. The area includes the North and South Tyne valleys and the A69 road and cross country rail corridor. The Tyne Valley rail line provides an important public transport connection from the south of the area to the Tyne and Wear conurbation, and Carlisle with frequent services. Bus services also connect the area with Tyne and Wear, but outside the market towns bus coverage is poor. A roughly two hourly daytime bus service runs up the North Tyne Valley to Bellingham from Hexham.

**4.30** The economy of the area is dominated by agriculture, forestry and tourism. Although the area has a high percentage of the population at working age (63%), there is an ageing population.

**4.31** It is sparsely populated and tranquil, with only 11 people per km<sup>2</sup>. There are low development rates across the area. Since 2009 only 163 new houses have been built and 371m<sup>2</sup> of new employment floor space. There are large expanses of moorland, extensive coniferous woodlands and large reservoirs, the largest being Kielder Water. The area is straddled by the Northumberland National Park, reflecting the high landscape quality.

**4.32** The North Pennines AONB, in the south of the Delivery Area, despite a strong historic tradition of industrial scale mineral extraction, the beautiful countryside, a landscape of slow change and cultural continuity, is recognised by the AONB designation. The importance of the area for wildlife habitats is reflected in a number of national nature conservation designations.

**4.33** Significant spatial planning issues:

- Role of Haltwhistle as a key hub and the role of Bellingham, Haydon Bridge and Allendale (including Catton) as key service centres in supporting the vitality of the area;
- The influence of Hexham, and links with Tyneside and Cumbria;
- Reliance of the economy on agriculture, forestry and tourism;
- Role of Kielder Water and Forest Park;
- High quality natural environment;
- Potential coal extraction within the Midgeholme, Penmeller and Stublick Coal Resource Areas;
- Sand and gravel extraction for aggregate use in the Tyne Valley.

### Policy 4

#### West Northumberland Delivery Area

To deliver sustainable development across the West Northumberland Delivery Area, the following core strategic planning principles apply:

- a. The main town of Haltwhistle as a key hub for education, healthcare, housing, employment and retail, will be the main focus for future development and regeneration;
- b. Bellingham, Haydon Bridge and Allendale (including Catton) will continue to be key service centres for resident communities and those within the wider rural area. Development will be supported which allows for this role to be maintained and strengthened;
- c. Development in other settlements will be supported where it:
  - i. is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
  - ii. maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;
  - iii. meets defined needs; and
  - iv. protects the countryside from widespread new development;
- d. Isolated new development in the open countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances;
- e. Within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the special qualities of the area will be conserved and enhanced by ensuring that new development is sensitively located and designed. The vitality of local communities will be sustained by:
  - i. requiring a proportion of new housing development to be affordable where there is an identified need; and
  - ii. allowing for the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses where this does not impact on the special qualities of the area;
- f. Kielder Water and Forest Park will continue to be a focus for tourism development, by permitting tourist accommodation and attractions and facilities linked to outdoor recreation and night sky interpretation at a scale larger than other areas of open countryside, in line with other plan policies. All development should maintain Kielder's dark sky environment;
- g. Inappropriate development, which is harmful to the Green Belt will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances;
- h. Coal extraction will only be permitted in the Midgeholme, Plenmeller and Stublick Coal Resource Areas where it can meet the tests set out within Policy 23;
- i. Provision will be made for aggregate minerals through:

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- i. the release of additional sand and gravel reserves over the latter part of the plan period in the Tyne Valleys; and
  - ii. the release of hard rock reserves from the Whin Sill found in the Chollerton area to produce crushed rock aggregate where this would meet the tests set out within Policy 25.
- j. The settlements identified in a. will be the focus for new and enhanced waste recycling and recovery businesses where it can meet the tests set out within Policy 33.

[Note: In the next version of the Core Strategy this policy will also identify the level of housing delivery required in this area and the supply of employment land]

### Question 7

This is our preferred policy approach for the West Northumberland Delivery Area. Do you have any comments?

### Central Northumberland Delivery Area

**4.34** The Central Northumberland Delivery Area has a population of approximately 77,900 and 32,000 households and extends to the north and west from the Tyneside conurbation. The main towns of Morpeth, Hexham, and Prudhoe are the key hubs for housing, employment (dominated by the public sector), retailing and services. Morpeth and Hexham have important roles as market towns serving wide rural hinterlands which extend to the North and West Northumberland Delivery Areas respectively. The relationship between Morpeth and the South East Northumberland Delivery Area is likely to be strengthened by the development of the South East Northumberland Link Road.

**4.35** Ponteland is a key service centre, which also provides services to a wider rural area, however not to the same extent as Morpeth and Hexham given its proximity to Tyneside and links on the A696. Corbridge is also a key service centre which provides services to the wider rural area. There are a variety of smaller more sparse settlements in the north west of this delivery area.

**4.36** The area covers the southern part of the A1 and East Coast Main Line corridor and the eastern part of the A69 and cross-country rail line and is strongly influenced by Tyneside area in terms of travel to work, house prices and migration.

**4.37** The Central Northumberland Delivery Area includes land associated with Newcastle International Airport.

**4.38** Since 2009 326 new houses have been built in the area with over 15,500m<sup>2</sup> of new employment floor space constructed from eight developments.

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**4.39** The market town of Morpeth serves a medieval pattern of small villages associated with ancient field systems and earthworks. The south eastern part of the area, east of Ponteland and Morpeth, slopes down onto the South East Northumberland coastal plain and is characterised by large scale surface coal mining and restoration.

**4.40** South of the Tyne Valley, the south east of the area is characterised by a transitional, rural landscape influenced by the coal mining industry, which comprises restored landscapes interspersed with small country houses, in well-wooded parkland. Despite a strong historic tradition of industrial scale mineral extraction, the beautiful countryside, a landscape of slow change and cultural continuity, is recognised by the North Pennines AONB designation in the extreme south west of the area.

**4.41** Much of the area is covered by Green Belt to safeguard the countryside from encroachment by the adjacent Tyne and Wear conurbation. There are important strategic green infrastructure links, including river valleys, trunk roads and long distance footpaths, into the adjacent authority area.

**4.42** Significant spatial planning issues:

- Role of Morpeth as a growth location;
- Role of Hexham and Prudhoe as key hubs and the role of Ponteland, Corbridge as key service centres;
- Influence of Tyneside;
- High house prices;
- Role of the Green Belt;
- Newcastle airport;
- Pressure for coal extraction in the Main Northumberland coal resource area, including the resource in the Tyne/Derwent Watershed area.

### Policy 5

#### Central Northumberland Delivery Area

To deliver sustainable development across the Central Northumberland Delivery Area, the following core strategic planning principles apply:

- a. The main towns of Morpeth, Hexham and Prudhoe as a key hubs for education, healthcare, housing, employment and retail, will be the main focus for future development and regeneration;
- b. Additional large scale development and growth will be focused on key locations in Morpeth;
- c. Ponteland and Corbridge will continue to be key service centres to their resident communities and those within the wider rural area. Development will be supported which allows for this role to be maintained and strengthened;
- d. Development in other settlements will be supported where it:
  - i. is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
  - ii. maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;

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- iii. meets defined needs; and
- iv. protects the countryside from widespread new development;
- e. Isolated new development in the open countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances;
- f. Within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the special qualities of the area will be conserved and enhanced by ensuring that new development is sensitively located and designed. The vitality of local communities will be sustained by:
  - i. requiring a proportion of new housing development to be affordable where there is an identified need; and
  - ii. allowing for the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses where this does not impact on the special qualities of the area;
- g. Inappropriate development, which is harmful to the Green Belt will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances;
- h. The sustainable development of Newcastle International Airport and associated business activity will be supported;
- i. Within the Main Northumberland Coal Resource Area, potentially acceptable locations for coal extraction are set out within Policy 23 and proposals for coal extraction will only be permitted in where the tests set out within Policy 23 are met;
- j. Provision will be made for the release of additional sand and gravel reserves over the latter part of the plan period along the Tyne Valley and Derwent tributary;
- k. The settlements identified in a. will be the focus for new and enhanced waste recycling and recovery businesses where it can meet the tests set out within Policy 33.

[Note: In the next version of the Core Strategy this policy will also identify the level of housing delivery required in this area, the supply of employment land and the implications for the Green Belt boundary around main towns and service centres.]

### Question 8

This is our preferred policy approach for the Central Northumberland Delivery Area. Do you have any comments?

### South East Northumberland Delivery Area

**4.43** The most densely populated part of Northumberland (703 people per km<sup>2</sup>). The towns and villages are large although no settlement exceeds 40,000 residents. The population is approximately 161,700 with 68,000 households. There is an ageing population

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but this area has the largest proportion of younger residents (aged 0 to 15 years) within Northumberland. Since 2009 775 new houses have been built in the area and over 42,000m<sup>2</sup> new employment floor space constructed from 23 developments.

**4.44** The main towns of Ashington, Bedlington (including Bedlington Station), Blyth (including Bebside) Cramlington and Amble are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services. The smaller settlements of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval perform a service centre role for their residents and neighbouring villages. Other smaller settlements within the area also provide local services to their resident communities.

**4.45** The area includes valuable economic assets including modern business locations in Cramlington which is recognised as having a sub-regional role as a centre for industry. Sites around the National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) at Blyth with Enterprise Zone status and the new Ashwood Business Park at Ashington also play an important role.

**4.46** This area however faces challenges of deprivation, unemployment and poverty to be able to fully emerge from its post-industrial, former coalfield legacy to find future sustainability and growth, the continuing jobs deficit has been compounded by the closure of the RioTinto Alcan smelter at Lynemouth, which has resulted in the loss of 600 manufacturing jobs. However, the Blyth Estuary has Enterprise Zone status and there is significant growth potential based on the National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC), offshore oil and gas, renewables, engineering and the Port of Blyth.

**4.47** Cramlington houses the largest concentration of manufacturing businesses in Northumberland including a cluster of pharmaceuticals companies and is a prime location for inward investment because of the quality of the environment. There have been a number of positive developments in Cramlington in recent years, including the redevelopment of the town centre, which includes a cinema. A new specialist emergency care hospital is also currently under construction to the east of Cramlington. Northumberland College and Wansbeck Hospital, two major facilities, are located within Ashington.

**4.48** Amble is Northumberland's most important fishing centre. It has become associated with tourism as a result of its position at the southern end of the Northumberland Coast AONB and the establishment of a marina. It falls within the influence of Ashington and also Alnwick. The wider coastal area, particularly around Druridge Bay, Blyth and Seaton Sluice provides an important recreational facility.

**4.49** There are opportunities within the delivery area for the development of a premier outdoor tourism and leisure destination around the former Stobswood, Maidens Hall and Steadsburn surface coal mining sites and surrounding countryside.

**4.50** The A1 south and the A189/A19 corridors are important and there is a strong pull to Tyneside for jobs and learning. The area is reasonably well served by the strategic highway routes; however there is traffic congestion in Blyth and at the key highway junctions.

**4.51** The landscape of the area was historically dominated by coal mining sites and the majority of underground mining sites in the area have now been restored and provide an important ecological and recreational resource. Surface coal mining sites are still present within the area, including sites at Shotton and Potland Burn with sites at Steadsburn and

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Stobswood are now largely restored. Pressure for surface coal extraction in this area is likely to continue over the plan period. The Green Belt extends across parts of the area to prevent coalescence with the greater conurbation and there are important green infrastructure links along the coast, much of which is protected by nature conservation designations; along major road and rail links; and across a number of strategic wildlife habitat networks.

### 4.52 Significant spatial planning issues:

- Role of Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington as a growth locations;
- Role of Bedlington (including Bedlington Station), and Amble are the key hubs, and the roles of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval as key service centres;
- Maintaining the sub regional role of Cramlington as a centre for industry, specifically the pharmaceuticals sector;
- Low levels of job opportunities;
- Poorer quality housing;
- Influence of Tyneside;
- Pressure for coal extraction in the Main Northumberland Coal Resource Area;
- Opportunities to improve public transport access to Tyneside through the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line;
- Strategic employment sites - West Hartford and the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ);
- Green Belt.

### Policy 6

#### South East Northumberland Delivery Area

To deliver sustainable development across the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, the following core strategic planning principles apply:

- a. The main towns of Ashington, Amble, Bedlington (including Bedlington Station), Blyth and Cramlington as key hubs for education, healthcare, housing, employment and retail, will be the main focus for development and regeneration;
- b. Additional large-scale development and growth will be focused on key locations in Blyth, Cramlington, and Ashington;
- c. Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval will continue to be a key service centres to their resident communities and those within the wider area. Development will be supported which allows for this role to be maintained and strengthened;
- d. Development in other settlements will be supported where it:
  - i. is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
  - ii. maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;
  - iii. meets defined needs; and
  - iv. protects the countryside from widespread new development;

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- e. Isolated new development in the open countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances;
- f. Half of the West Hartford Strategic Employment Site will be retained as a large-scale inward investment site with the remainder for general employment development;
- g. The Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone strategic employment area is prioritised for economic development within the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector and for renewable and low carbon energy generation;
- h. Support proposals to secure the future use of passenger transport on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line and resist proposals which may prevent this;
- i. Inappropriate development, which is harmful to the Green Belt will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances;
- j. Recognition is given to the potential opportunity for the development of 'Blue Sky Forest' as a premier destination for outdoor tourism and leisure development;
- k. Within the Main Northumberland Coal Resource Area, potentially acceptable locations for coal extraction are set out within Policy 23 and proposals for coal extraction will only be permitted in where the tests set out within Policy 23 are met;
- l. The settlements identified in a. will be the focus for new and enhanced waste recycling and recovery businesses where it can meet the tests set out within Policy 33. The West Sleekburn area is a strategically important location for waste management and the Ellington Road Landfill site will remain the focus for non-inert waste disposal.

[Note: In the next version of the Core Strategy this policy will also identify the level of housing delivery required in this area and the supply of employment land].

### Question 9

This is our preferred policy approach for the South East Northumberland Delivery Area. Do you have any comments?



## 5. Housing

### Delivering housing in Northumberland

**5.1** The provision of housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of sustainable communities and businesses of Northumberland. The scale, distribution, phasing and types of homes provided are vital to achieving well balanced and sustainable communities, in which people want to live, work and socialise.

**5.2** The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies the importance of delivering housing through its 'Big Partnership Issue' of maintaining and creating sustainable communities. This is embedded within Core Strategy Objectives 2 and 3. Objective 2 seeks to provide a sufficient supply of housing land to meet the objectively assessed needs and provide choice of housing in Northumberland. This will help to achieve Objective 3, to maintain and create sustainable communities through the distribution of the right type of housing in the right locations to meet the needs and demands of those that choose to live in Northumberland.

**5.3** In order to deliver these objectives the Core Strategy will set out a series of strategic policies to ensure that the necessary scale and type of housing is distributed and phased accordingly to the right locations over the plan period, with the flexibility to adapt to change.

### Scale and distribution of housing development

**5.4** Within Northumberland there is a need to identify an appropriate scale of housing to meet housing needs and support sustainable growth of communities and the economy. Planning the distribution of housing seeks to maintain the role and function of settlements, as well as the relationship between settlements. The distribution of new housing development will also deliver the objective of targeted growth in Northumberland. It is therefore important that the Core Strategy plans for the provision of the right scale of housing in the right locations.

**5.5** The Issues and Options consultation asked a series of questions relating to the delivery, supply and distribution of new homes. There was concern from the majority of respondents that the evidence used to inform the Issues and Options document was out of date and insufficient to support housing requirements that were suggested.

**5.6** In relation to the scale of housing development, the Issues and Options document suggested a range of minimum housing requirement targets for each Delivery Area and for Northumberland as a whole. The figure proposed for Northumberland was between 14,440 to 24,090 houses. Key issues emerging from comments received were that:

- Housing requirements should vary across Delivery Areas to accurately represent different needs and demographic makeup.
- Housing development should be supported across all Northumberland, not only in higher tier settlements.
- Concern was expressed regarding the Council's 'Growth Point' aspirations. It was considered to be inappropriate as the initiative had been scrapped by the Government and would introduce an element of bias to the south east and west of the County.

## 5. Housing

- Housing need should be identified at the local level and aggregated up to Delivery Area and Northumberland wide level;
- The use of housing supply and historical under provision as an objective way of assessing needs was questioned, although in anticipation of latent demand which may increase as the housing market emerges from recession, the approach was also supported.

**5.7** The Issues and Options document proposed to distribute housing requirements to tier one and tier two settlements with the remaining level of housing distributed to lower tiered settlements below tiers one and two.

**5.8** Approximately half of those that responded to the consultation considered the Council should distribute new homes in accordance with existing and planned strategies. This approach was considered to best align with the proposed spatial distribution and infrastructure provision and provided flexibility to recognise local priorities whilst continuing to recognise the importance and role of main settlements. It was suggested that there was an identified requirement for permanent residence affordable homes, live-work units or self-build plots in areas of high second or holiday home ownership.

**5.9** As a result of the feedback from the consultation, the Council has commissioned further population and household modelling work together with an update to its long term employment forecasts. These will test a series of different growth based scenarios. The Council will also be undertaking further Housing Need Study work to identify the types and levels of affordable housing required at the Delivery Area and local area levels. A review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) will also be undertaken early in 2013. The findings of these evidence base studies will inform the scale and distribution of housing required at the delivery area and Northumberland area levels. Further engagement on policies informed by the results of this work will take place in summer 2013.

### Efficient use of land

**5.10** It is important when planning for housing delivery that land is used efficiently and effectively so that it does not compromise the core planning principles of the NPPF or the wider sustainable development objectives within the Core Strategy.

**5.11** The Issues and Options consultation asked a series of questions relating to the setting of locally appropriate targets for the use of previously developed land (PDL), the inclusion of a policy relating to development of residential gardens and the setting of locally appropriate housing densities.

### Previously developed land

**5.12** The Government's Plan for Growth (2011) removed nationally imposed PDL targets in its commitment to make the planning system more responsive to economic demands and the needs of local communities. However, the NPPF encourages planning authorities to consider setting locally appropriate PDL targets. The Issues and Options consultation asked if a target for the use of PDL should be set for Northumberland.

**5.13** Northumberland is predominantly a rural county and the availability of previously developed sites is less than in more urban authorities across the UK. Many PDL sites in Northumberland that are better located and easy to develop have been developed, leaving a small proportion of PDL sites remaining. In a depressed economic market, where funding and finance availability have been reduced and house prices have fallen, the Council is aware many PDL sites may currently be unviable to develop. However, it is important to embrace flexibility within policies to accommodate changes in market conditions which may see a reversal in fortunes over the plan period.

**5.14** In the Issues and Options consultation, a majority of respondents were in favour of PDL targets, however overall support was mixed. Concerns were expressed around the evidence base, in that it did not demonstrate that a range of PDL sites were available. There was also concern that implementing a target would stifle opportunities, would lack flexibility and would be contrary to NPPF.

### **Residential garden development**

**5.15** The definition of PDL is set out in the NPPF; this indicates that it excludes private residential gardens which can add to the character of neighbourhoods and enhance the quality of life. The Issues and Options document asked if the Core Strategy should include a policy that restricts the development of residential gardens.

**5.16** Nearly two thirds of respondents agreed that a restrictive policy should be applied to preserve open spaces, environmental habitats, the character of communities and settlement spread. Others considered that a policy restriction was not required and that the revised definition of PDL provided a sufficient degree of restriction. Such a policy was seen as having the potential to impede delivery of housing for particular needs, such as elderly relatives; young people and families, particularly those within rural locations or those that cannot access affordable housing.

### **Density of development**

**5.17** The differing characteristics of settlements across Northumberland mean that different densities of development will be suited to different places, with urban areas more likely to be able to accommodate higher density development than rural villages and hamlets.

**5.18** The appropriate density suited to a development depends on a number of factors that contribute to good design such as: the type of housing provided, its siting, layout, massing, scale, overall design and its landscaping in response to its existing environment.

**5.19** The Issues and Options consultation asked whether it would be appropriate to adopt locally appropriate densities. Over half of respondents supported this approach, with approximately a third of respondents rejecting the suggestion. Key feedback identified:

- such a policy would assist in establishing a critical mass of population to support local services as well as ensuring efficient use of land;
- the policy would need to be flexible to changing economic climates whilst not compromising that quality and design of housing developments;
- targets would be better suited to delivery documents and Neighbourhood Plans;

## 5. Housing

- Concern was expressed that the approach would be too prescriptive and each application should be assessed individually; and
- the Housing Needs Survey should assist in identifying the type and level of housing required for each settlement from which individual designs of developments should respond to.

**5.20** The Council is currently updating its evidence of PDL delivery and density across Northumberland to identify trends in PDL use. This work alongside the SHLAA review, population modelling and housing needs assessment study work will provide an up to date evidence base to inform policies relating to the efficient use of land, if evidence suggests that such policies are required.

### Type and mix of housing

**5.21** Across Northumberland there is a need for a mix of homes of different types and tenures to meet identified needs. It is important the Council provides an appropriate choice and mix across the County to create and maintain balanced and sustainable communities.

**5.22** Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the need to match the housing requirement with supply. Responses highlighted the need for more bungalows and affordable homes as well as the need for larger detached executive homes.

**5.23** The Council will plan for a mix of housing that will be appropriate to the needs of the community, providing a range of types, sizes and tenures including housing for older people and vulnerable groups. Evidence from the Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey 2012 <sup>(2)</sup>, sets out the following future delivery by bedroom size and tenure as a guide at the County level:

**Table 5.1 Future property size requirements by tenure**

Tenure	Property size			
	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Market sector	60%		40%	
Intermediate	40%	60%	0%	0%
Social and affordable rented	65%		35%	
Source: Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey, Final Report 2012, Section 15				

**5.24** Further Housing Needs Study work is currently being undertaken both at the Delivery Area and local area levels to assist in planning for a range of house types, sizes and tenures. This will also assess the requirement for executive housing to help inform the need for a specific policy approach.

**5.25** The Council's preferred policy approach is that new residential schemes will be required to reflect the latest evidence of need. It is recognised that on some sites that it may not be appropriate to be too prescriptive on the housing composition of a development

2 Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey, Final Report 2012, Section 15

proposal as site characteristics and constraints may limit the range of housing that is possible or there may be market demand or viability issues. These issues will be considered and explored in negotiation with developers.

### Policy 7

#### Type and mix of housing

In order to create and maintain sustainable and balanced communities, all housing developments will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Local Housing Needs Studies.

The percentage of different housing types and sizes for each site will depend upon the character and density of the neighbourhood, site characteristics, the viability of the scheme, and market conditions.

### Question 10

This is our preferred policy for the type and mix of housing. Do you have any comments?

## Delivering affordable homes

**5.26** A key objective of the Core Strategy is to ensure that Northumberland meets its objectively assessed development needs, including new homes. Where a need for affordable housing has been identified there is a requirement for the Core Strategy to set out policies to meet this need. National guidance<sup>(3)</sup> defines affordable housing as:

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

3 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Annex 2: Glossary, page 50.

## 5. Housing

**5.27** In common with the rest of the country, Northumberland has experienced significant increases in house prices since 2000; the average home in the county costs around £125,600.<sup>(4)</sup> Whilst this is lower than the national average of around £161,500, incomes in Northumberland are correspondingly lower than the national average; as such the provision of affordable housing remains a key issue and priority for the Council.

**5.28** Across Northumberland the average house price to annual household income ratio is 5:1<sup>(5)</sup> whereas an acceptable level of financial burden associated with home ownership is usually around 3:5 single income and 2:9 joint income.

**5.29** The Issues and Options document asked a series of questions relating to the delivery of affordable housing. Whether the Core Strategy should:

- Set a 30% countywide affordable housing target;
- Include a policy requiring varying rates of social rented and intermediate housing across the Delivery Areas;
- Set site thresholds for the provision of affordable housing;
- Allow for the provision of off-site contributions;
- Allow the provision for the allocation of rural exception sites; and
- Allow provision of affordable homes for local people in settlements identified as affected by a high proportion of second or holiday homes.

**5.30** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the policy approach to securing affordable housing is likely to have major positive social effects in that it should enable the housing needs of residents, who cannot currently access the housing market to be met, as well as promote social inclusion. However, it identified that a countywide target of 30% affordable housing may preclude the development of some housing sites, without the inclusion of an economic viability test.

### Affordable housing targets

**5.31** Feedback through the Issues and Options consultation highlighted concerns that the 30% countywide target was unlikely to be responsive to local levels of need and that there should be targets for each Delivery Area based upon detailed analysis of need. Other comments suggested there was no need to set targets and provision should be assessed on a case by case basis; the target of 30% should be a cap; the target of 30% should be higher in some areas such as in the coastal area and on greenfield sites.

**5.32** The Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey 2012 identifies the affordable housing need at 382 units per year, over 5 years, or 242 units per year over 10 years. This equates to 43%, or 27% of the annual average housing delivery rate (using the RSS annual average dwelling figures for Northumberland).<sup>(6)</sup>

**5.33** The Housing Needs Study acknowledges that a 43% target would render many schemes unviable. Therefore, based upon robust evidence an overall affordable housing target for Northumberland of 30% could be justified, to be negotiated from all suitable sites

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4 Land Registry (December 2011)

5 Hometrack (December 2011)

6 Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey, Final Report 2012, Sections 14.9 and 15.4.

and subject to viability. This reinforces the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment which indicated that a 30% target would be viable in high market value areas without grant and 30% in low value areas but with grant.

**5.34** The responses to the Issues and Options consultation on the inclusion of varying rates of social rented and intermediate housing across the Delivery Areas highlighted concerns that the proposed percentage splits between social rented and intermediate were inappropriate as the Delivery Areas were considered to be too large and the percentages for social rented could have implications for site viability.

**5.35** National guidance requires local planning authorities to identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations reflecting local demand. The Housing Needs Survey suggests an overall tenure mix of 67% social rent and 33% intermediate housing across Northumberland. In assessing the tenure mix in individual development proposals other factors will also need to be taken into account, including the tenure mix in the settlement, local housing need, the viability of the site and the availability of related mortgage products.

**5.36** As a result of feedback from the Issues and Options consultation, the Council is seeking views on revised Delivery Areas and further work is also currently on-going to define the level of additional housing development required to deliver the preferred strategic approach. Whilst, the Northumberland Housing Needs Survey has set out the level and type of affordable housing required at a Northumberland level, the Council will be undertaking further Housing Needs Study work to identify the types and levels of affordable housing required at the Delivery Area level. This work will inform the next stage of the Core Strategy.

### Site thresholds

**5.37** Feedback through the Issues and Options consultation highlighted a mixed response to the setting of site thresholds for affordable housing provision. Comments on thresholds included: continue to use 15 units as minimum threshold as set out within previous national policy, establishing differing thresholds for urban and rural areas, low thresholds could make schemes unviable, thresholds should be as low as 5 or more units and 2/3 or more units, on large sites of 10 or more units provision should be on site.

**5.38** Across the County, since 2009 85% of past completions were on sites of less than 5 units, with 7% on sites between 5 and 10 units, 2% on sites of between 11 and 15 units and 6% on sites over 15 units. This demonstrates that a significant proportion of sites for new housing development are small scale. In order for the Council to maximise opportunities to secure affordable housing, where it is viable to do so, there is justification for all open market housing sites to make a contribution towards affordable housing provision, subject to local need and viability.

**5.39** Therefore, the Council's preferred approach is to seek affordable housing or a contribution thereto, from every open market residential planning application. This approach will ensure that sites which fall below a threshold, perhaps because they are developed at a lower density will still contribute to the delivery of affordable housing where this is required and viable.

## 5. Housing

### Off-site contributions

**5.40** The Issues and Options document asked if the Core Strategy should include a sequential policy relating to use off-site or financial contributions to provide affordable housing. Feedback was mixed with approximately half of respondents supporting the use of the priority order suggested. However, concerns were expressed relating to the application of such an approach, particularly in rural areas. There was also concern that the approach could reduce the flexibility to direct resources to key priorities and limit the scope for developers to cross-subsidise and assist the delivery of housing.

**5.41** In providing affordable housing the presumption is that it will be delivered on the application site and designed as part of the overall scheme to promote social inclusion, and contribute towards creating a mixed and balanced community. Exceptionally, where it can be robustly justified, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision may be acceptable, provided it contributes to the creation of mixed communities in the area.

**5.42** If off-site provision is considered acceptable the affordable housing provision should be provided in the same settlement as the application site or where this is not possible on a suitable alternative site which meets an identified housing need within the area. A financial contribution could be used to deliver affordable housing elsewhere through new build or conversion, or purchase and repair existing housing stock for use as affordable housing.

### Second and holiday homes

**5.43** Many properties within Northumberland are being used as second or holiday homes with concentrations evident specifically along the coast and in accessible upland areas. North Northumberland has the highest amount of second and holiday homes as a percentage of total housing stock in the county, with the former borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed having the fifth highest level in England.<sup>(7)</sup>

**5.44** The Issues and Options consultation asked whether the Core Strategy should include a policy specifically to provide for affordable homes for local people in settlements which are identified as affected by a high proportion of second or holiday homes. Feedback highlighted strong support for such a policy. However concerns were raised identifying that these areas should not be prioritised over other areas where there are similar levels of housing needs in the county. The setting of affordable housing targets should relate to the level of need whether this is due to second/ holiday homes or for other reasons.

**5.45** Other comments suggested that the Council should consider initiatives to raise revenue from second/holiday homes, such as charging 100% council tax and ring fencing the income to use in local communities affected, and supporting changes to the Use Classes Order requiring a change of use planning application when changing a property from permanent residential to second/holiday home.

**5.46** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach scored highly in terms of social objectives by providing affordable housing in locations where housing is often not accessible to local people due to high house prices, helping to promote social inclusion and keep families and communities together. It indicated possible positive effects in helping to sustain rural services and the rural economy. However, potentially significant negative

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7 National Housing Federation (2009)

effects on the environment were identified by virtue of the fact that development is likely to be located in areas which are not served by public transport. This impact could be mitigated by criteria based policies to ensure development is directed to accessible settlements with a range of services.

**5.47** It is recognised that concentrations of holiday accommodation can have a negative impact on the social fabric of a community such as support for local facilities and school provision. In North Northumberland the demand for properties as holiday accommodation, along with the rise in house prices, has made many of the smaller properties unaffordable to the local population.

**5.48** Properties within the housing stock can generally move into and out of holiday use without planning consent. While the Core Strategy will not restrict the use of new market housing in settlements with a high proportion of second or holiday homes the provision of affordable housing could assist in meeting local housing requirements. The Council will therefore seek to address this issue through a positive approach to planning for affordable housing to provide affordable houses for local people in areas where there are high concentrations of second or holiday homes, through the setting of variable affordable housing targets across delivery areas to address local housing need.

**5.49** The Council's preferred policy approach for the delivery of affordable housing is as follows:

### Policy 8

#### Delivering affordable housing

All open market residential development proposals will be expected to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing.

The overall target for the provision of affordable housing is 30% of all new homes, with an overall tenure mix of 67% social rent and 33% intermediate housing.

In applying these requirements, the Council will take into account the following factors in negotiating the proportion of affordable housing to be provided by an individual open market residential development proposal:

- a. The extent of the housing need in the local housing market, as evidenced by an up to date housing needs study;
- b. The need to provide an appropriate tenure mix that meets the needs of local residents, as evidenced by an up to date housing needs study; and
- c. The cost of developing the site and the impact of this on the viability of the scheme. In circumstances where the viability of a scheme is in question, the developer will be required to provide an economic viability assessment, using an approved viability model, to demonstrate this is the case.

The delivery of affordable housing will be provided in the following priority order:

## 5. Housing

- d. On-site as part of the development proposal and designed as part of the overall scheme to promote social inclusion and to contribute towards a mixed and balanced community;
- e. Where it is robustly demonstrated, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision will be acceptable. Where this is the case the following sequential policy approach to the use of off-site or financial contributions will be applied:
  - i. Provision to be made in the settlement, or grouping of parishes or wards which make up the settlement, where the contribution arises.
  - ii. Provision to be made in the adjoining parish or ward, within the Delivery Area where the contribution arises.
  - iii. Provision to be made in the remaining part of the Delivery Area where the contribution arises
  - iv. Provision to be made to cross-subsidise affordable housing provision where priorities are identified throughout the County.

[NOTE: Targets at the delivery area level will be included at the next stage of the Core Strategy document, following further Housing Needs Study work to identify the types and levels of affordable housing required at the delivery area level.]

### Question 11

This is our preferred policy for the delivery of affordable housing. Do you have any comments?

### Rural exception sites

**5.50** National guidance makes provision for rural exceptions policies which permit local authorities, where viable and practicable, to consider allocating and releasing small sites for affordable housing in perpetuity where they would not normally be used for housing. The sites should meet the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. The Council can also consider allowing small numbers of market housing on rural exception sites where this would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

**5.51** Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation highlighted strong support for such a policy approach as rural exception sites can be important in contributing to the viability and vitality of rural settlements. However concerns were expressed relating to the removal of permitted development rights which would require planning applications to be made for extensions or alterations, and the level of market housing potentially being allowed. Comments were also received in relation to the rural exception policy applying to self-build housing or specifically designed 'work from home' accommodation.

**5.52** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach scored highly in terms of social objectives by providing affordable housing in locations where new housing would not normally be allowed, helping to promote social inclusion and keep families and communities together whilst also helping to sustain rural services and the rural economy. However, the appraisal found it is likely to have uncertain or potentially significant negative effects on the environment, as development is likely to be located in areas which are not served by public transport. This impact could be mitigated to a certain extent by criteria based policies to ensure development is directed to the most accessible settlements which may have some level of service provision.

**5.53** Where there is a pressing need for affordable housing which cannot be met in other ways, the provision of homes through exceptions sites is a means of delivering the housing needs of Northumberland's rural communities. Removing permitted development rights should ensure properties remain affordable and continue to meet the needs of the community.

**5.54** Where there are issues with the viability of entirely affordable rural exception housing schemes, a small element of market housing may be acceptable provided the financial need for the market housing can be demonstrated and there is insufficient or no public grant funding. Any cross subsidy from the market housing must be used to fund the affordable housing on the site. Limiting the proportion of market housing will ensure that the housing development is principally affordable.

### Policy 9

#### Rural exception sites

The development of rural exception sites will be permitted if the proposal provides affordable housing in perpetuity and all of the following criteria are met:

- a. There is evidence of identified need in an up to date housing needs study;
- b. The development is available for local people identified as being in local housing need and those with a local needs connection;
- c. The development is within or adjacent to an existing settlement;
- d. The development is well related to local services and facilities; and
- e. The development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the settlement and does not significantly adversely impact on the environment.

Such development proposals will have their permitted development rights removed to enable the properties remain affordable.

The inclusion of market housing within a rural exception housing scheme will only be permitted where:

- f. The provision of the market housing element meets an identified local need; and
- g. It is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the overall affordable housing scheme and insufficient or no public subsidy is available.

## 5. Housing

### Question 12

This is our preferred policy for the development of rural exception sites. Do you have any comments?

### Older people and vulnerable groups

**5.55** National policy requires local authorities to meet the specific needs of older people and other vulnerable groups. The Government aims to support people in their own homes so that they can lead a more independent life. The Government is also committed to helping older people live independently by promoting the development of 'lifetime neighbourhoods'. These are places that are designed to be lived in by all people regardless of their age or disability.

**5.56** Following the national trend, Northumberland is projected to have an increasing proportion of older people within its communities. Over the past decade the number of residents over 65 years old has increased by 25%, compared to a national increase of approximately 12%. By 2021 it is anticipated that almost half of the County's population will be over 50 years old with as many as 11,000 being over the age of 85.<sup>(8)</sup>

**5.57** The Issues and Options document asked whether the Core Strategy should include a criteria based policy to guide the provision and supply of accommodation which is particularly well suited to older people and people with disabilities. Feedback highlighted strong support for the inclusion of such a policy. Comments identified: the need for such a policy to be flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances; that provision should be determined at a local scale where the need arises, the ability to undertake adaptation to existing properties; and the need for smaller properties for older people to decant to.

**5.58** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach scored highly in terms of social objectives by providing purpose built accommodation to meet the specific needs of older and disabled people in sustainable locations, helping to promote social inclusion.

**5.59** The Northumberland Housing Needs Survey identified that properties currently occupied by older people are mainly 3 bedroomed. The survey indicated that older people planning a move within Northumberland have a preference to continue to own their own home, downsize to 2 bedroom properties and live in bungalows. Demand for supported accommodation (other than sheltered accommodation) is identified as being predominantly for independent accommodation with visiting support.

**5.60** Whilst Northumberland has housing stock specifically designated as sheltered or older persons housing, it is important that the Core Strategy enables the provision of increased housing choices in terms of specialist accommodation and appropriate dwellings for older people and vulnerable groups. The provision of additional retirement, sheltered housing and extra-care housing will need to be considered to meet the increasing demand; however, older people have specific housing needs, in terms of design, type, and location. Flexible or adaptable 'Lifetime Homes' may meet the requirements of older people and

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8 Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy, 2011

people with disabilities, allowing them to remain in their homes for longer. New technologies such as 'telecare' can support this, but some vulnerable groups may require support or tailored housing solutions.

**5.61** To enable older people and those with disabilities to access services and facilities, it is also important that the location of housing to meet their requirements is considered. Centrally located sites in key settlements may provide better access to health, leisure, education and transport facilities. Conversely, allowing people to remain in their communities could also provide opportunities to sustain local service provision.

**5.62** It is, therefore important that the Council provides increased housing choices in terms of specialist accommodation and appropriate dwellings that are suitably located close to public transport and other key local services. In addition, offering attractive housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups will assist the Council in freeing up family sized homes that are currently under occupied.

### Policy 10

#### Older people and vulnerable groups

The Council will support the provision of specialist accommodation for older people and vulnerable groups in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need.

In identifying appropriate locations and considering development proposals for specialist accommodation for older people and vulnerable groups, the Council will consider:

- a. The need for the development. Prioritisation will be given to groups in greatest need as evidenced by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Housing Needs Study or Supporting People Strategy;
- b. The accessibility to existing local services and facilities, including local health, leisure, education and transport facilities;
- c. Opportunities to enhance and sustain local service provision; and
- d. The opportunity to create 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods'.

New specialist accommodation should incorporate 'Lifetime Homes' standards and be capable of being readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly. Applicants will be required to demonstrate in their design and access statements how design has taken these standards into account.

### Question 13

This is our preferred policy for the provision of specialist accommodation for older people and vulnerable groups. Do you have any comments?

## 5. Housing

### Provision for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**5.63** The Government has a duty to ‘facilitate the gypsy way of life’ for ethnic Gypsies and Travellers under the Human Rights Act. An increasing need for the provision of permanent and transit pitches has been identified. Government guidance aims to increase significantly the number of Traveller sites in appropriate locations, with local authorities being required to provide for a five year supply of pitches with at least broad locations identified for later years.

**5.64** The Council is committed to providing appropriate housing to meet the needs of the whole community. This includes the provision of sufficient sites for the Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople community. Within Northumberland there are currently two Gypsy Traveller sites owned and managed by Northumberland County Council, Hartford Bridge near Bedlington and Lyneburn Cottages near Lynemouth. Both sites are located adjacent or near to the boundaries of the settled communities and have access to the same local services and facilities. There are also three private sites in Northumberland established on land owned by Gypsy and Traveller families who have planning permission as well as a Showman’s Guild site which is privately owned and managed. There are currently no authorised transits or short stay sites in Northumberland.

**5.65** The Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2008) identifies a requirement for 11 additional permanent pitches, 1 in the North area and 10 in the South East area for the period 2008-13 with no additional pitches being required for the period 2013 to 2018. The Assessment also noted the need for a network of stopping off places throughout Northumberland.

**5.66** The County Council has secured grant funding for the provision of an additional 3 permanent pitches which will be located on an existing permanent site in the South East area. In addition to permanent pitch provision, the Council is working towards the provision of 8 transit pitches in the South East area.

**5.67** The Issues and Options document asked whether the Core Strategy should include targets for additional pitches for gypsy and travellers based upon the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2008).

**5.68** Feedback through the Issues and Options consultation showed over two thirds of respondents were in support of the inclusion of targets. However comments received related to: the targets being too low; the assessment being out of date; the need to include transit sites; the need to work with adjoining local authorities to set targets; the need to address the requirement for Travelling Showpeople; and the need for a criteria based policy to guide the location of site provision.

**5.69** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach scored highly in terms of social objectives by providing sites for Travellers which should facilitate the traveller way of life and should help to promote social inclusion. However it identified that the approach is likely to have uncertain or potentially significant negative effects on the environment and potentially lead to increased traffic generation depending on the exact location of sites. The negative impacts could be mitigated by a criteria based policy, and by directing development to accessible settlements which have health and education services.

**5.70** After considering the comments received and the national planning policy for Travellers, the preferred approach is to include a criteria based policy to guide the location of sites taking into account the needs identified in the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

**5.71** As the Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment does not extend beyond 2018, the Assessment will be refreshed and the results will be incorporated into future versions of the Core Strategy with the identification of sites for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople being undertaken as part of the Northumberland Delivery Plan Document.

**5.72** The preferred policy approach below will apply to both transit and permanent sites for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

### **Policy 11**

#### **Provision for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

The Council will make provision for additional pitches for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople over the plan period to meet the need identified in the Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Sites to meet this need will be identified in the Northumberland Delivery Plan Document.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining the allocation of sites or extensions to existing sites for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and in determining planning applications:

- a. Proposals will not be permitted in areas designated as Green Belt;
- b. Proposals will not be permitted in areas at high risk of flooding, including the functional flood plain;
- c. The site will be well related to local services and facilities, including jobs, shops, schools, medical facilities and public transport;
- d. The proposal will be well screened and landscaped and not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including unacceptable impact to ecological and heritage assets and designations;
- e. 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;
- f. The proposal will not result in disturbance or loss of amenity to any neighbouring residential properties or settled communities;
- g. The site will be provided satisfactorily with adequate infrastructure and on-site facilities, including water supply, sewerage, waste removal / recycling, work areas and play areas.

### **Question 14**

This is our preferred policy for the provision of accommodation for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Do you have any comments?

## 6. Economy

### 6. Economy

#### Delivering a resilient economy

**6.1** The Northumberland economy has core strengths and opportunities in key sectors such as tourism, certain types of manufacturing, and low carbon industry. There are a number of companies which are high tech and operate globally, and smaller companies with potential for strong future growth. The economy has also shown resilience during the recession with a business failure rate lower than the regional and national average.

**6.2** Despite the growth and diversification of Northumberland's economy over the past 30 years it still faces a number of challenges, such as growing private sector employment and increasing wealth and business start-ups. Although around Morpeth, Ponteland, and Hexham the number of new business created has been relatively healthy. The County's economy also needs a greater number of larger commercial employers and the supply chain and skills development benefits this brings.

**6.3** To ensure that the County's future economy is strong and resilient the Core Strategy needs to create the conditions for growth for a diverse range of sectors. The supply and location of employment land needs to provide for the needs of business in line with the plans spatial strategy, and in particular the strategically important low carbon sector must be supported. Rural businesses also need to be allowed to develop and the buoyant tourism industry is an opportunity for the whole County. Cutting across all economic development is the need to develop a local workforce with the right skills base, through support for facilities offering training and skills development.

**6.4** Objective 2 of the Core Strategy seeks to provide an appropriate supply of employment space to meet objectively assessed needs. This will assist delivery of Objective 4 which aims to facilitate investment and employment growth in a resilient and strong economy. A positive policy approach to economic development which includes providing the right amount of land in the right locations will assist the delivery of these objectives. Objective 5 targets delivery of job opportunities in green industries, which the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) strategic employment area is intended to stimulate,

#### The supply of employment land

**6.5** To enable existing businesses to grow and attract new investment in Northumberland it is important that there is an appropriate supply of land for employment development. An oversupply of land could lessen the protection provided for the County's better industrial and business sites against other land uses, whilst any investment could be spread too thinly to encourage development. Too little could limit the growth of local firms and could possibly deter inward investment.

**6.6** Employment sites are industrial and office parks, but can also include sites which are used by a single company<sup>(9)</sup>. This type of allocation is considered to be 'general employment land'. National policy requires that a supply of land is provided that is suitable and sufficient for identified need, but should avoid the protection of underperforming sites.

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9 This section considers employment activities falling within section B of the Use Class Order 1987. For example offices, factories, light industrial premises, research and development facilities, and storage and distribution centres

**6.7** The Issues and Options document suggested the need for between 293 and 317 hectares of employment land for the County up to 2030. This was based on the findings of the Northumberland Employment Land Review (2011) which used economic growth forecasts, past take-up rates, consideration of the 'loss' of land to non employment land uses, and business consultation to identify the requirement.

**6.8** Feedback from the consultation showed a mixed response to the suggested land supply. There was some agreement with the suggested range provided that it remained flexible to change. Others felt that it was too low and at least the current level of supply should be retained to allow for growth. There was also some disagreement with allocation of employment land at all and that economic development should be allowed anywhere unless it conflicts with other policies.

**6.9** It is not considered appropriate to discard the approach of providing dedicated employment sites. Businesses need certainty as to where employment development will be supported, and where investment in supporting infrastructure may occur. Similarly other policies in the Core Strategy need to be based on where significant future development will occur.

**6.10** It is vital that the most up to date evidence is used to provide a suitable supply of land. Although the Employment Land Review remains a robust evidence source, the continuing uncertainty and shocks in the global and national economy mean that a review of the land supply recommendations is considered necessary. Further household and population modelling is also being undertaken and the results of this could impact on the County's ability to attract businesses and future job growth. The long term employment forecasts are currently being revised. This will then inform an update of projections for land need, taking into account new guidance on the amount of land needed per job, and recent take-up and loss of employment land. These revisions will allow for a recommended land supply when we consult on the next version of the Core Strategy.

### Windfall employment development

**6.11** Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation showed particular concern that the suggested land supply may not provide for an unforeseen, large scale inward investment. The suggested retention of a portion of the West Hartford site as a larger inward investment location, and the proposed BEREZ strategic employment area are intended to provide for this need. However, it is acknowledged that when large firms plan to invest in a new location site requirements can be very particular and therefore the search is often national or Europe wide. If Northumberland does not have a suitable site to attract this investment the Core Strategy needs to be flexible enough to accommodate it, or risk losing opportunities to other areas. Similarly existing businesses may experience growth greater than is expected which could demand expansion beyond allocated land. This is especially true of sites occupied by a single company.

**6.12** The preferred approach is to include a windfall employment policy to allow for Northumberland to accommodate large-scale economic development proposals which have specific requirements which cannot be met by the existing land portfolio. It is important however that Northumberland's allocated employment land remains the focus for business development so that it does not become fragmented, and greenfield land is unnecessarily built on. It is also vital that the proposals do not compromise other policies in the plan.

## 6. Economy

This approach should be seen as an exceptions policy where it can be robustly demonstrated that the needs of the business cannot be met on an existing employment site.

### Policy 12

#### Windfall employment development

Proposals for large-scale business development within the B use classes on non-designated employment land, either as a standalone proposal or an extension of an existing business, will be supported provided that:

- a. It can be robustly demonstrated that the needs of the business cannot be met on allocated employed land;
- b. The proposed development would be appropriate in scale and character to the proposed setting;
- c. There would be no significant adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses;
- d. There is no significant adverse impact on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity unless it can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures; and
- e. The development can be satisfactorily accommodated in accordance with other development plan policies.

### Question 15

This is our preferred option for large-scale windfall employment development. Do you have any comments?

### The distribution of Land

**6.13** As well as providing for the right amount of land to meet forecasted need the Core Strategy needs to ensure that the approach is flexible enough to cater for changing economic circumstances and market demand. The right amount of land needs to be provided in the right locations.

**6.14** The Issues and Options document suggested that existing land supply is currently not necessarily where demand is strong or new employment sectors wish to locate. Changes to the site portfolio recommended in the Employment Land Review were set out for each Delivery Area, consisting of suggested de-allocations and potential new allocations, better suited to provide for economic development. These changes would result in a net reduction in allocated land in each area. It also suggested potential approaches to three strategic issues:

- reclassifying land around the Blyth Estuary from 'expansion' land to 'available' to provide for the low carbon sector;

- the future use of the West Hartford inward investment site; and
- a potential review of Green Belt boundaries to provide for new sites.

**6.15** Consultation feedback showed some agreement with changing allocation to better match where businesses want to locate, but only 17% agreed with the suggested distribution. A number of reasons for disagreement were given including: lack of information to show exactly where changes are proposed; general disagreement that land supply should be reduced anywhere; too greater proportion is proposed in the south east; and divergence from past take-up patterns. A more even and positive distribution was generally suggested. A number of site specific suggestions were also provided concerning areas like West Hartford, the former Alcan site, and Prudhoe Hospital.

**6.16** As the overall land supply is being revised, and different Delivery Areas are being proposed, the preferred distribution of land is not being identified in this document, but will instead be set out in the next version of the Core Strategy on which there will be further engagement in autumn 2013. This will also be informed by a review of land around settlements where there is a need for additional employment land to determine which sites are best suited. This process is especially important for Hexham, Prudhoe, and Ponteland, given the potential need for a Green Belt review identified in the Issues and Options.

### **Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) Strategic Employment Area for low carbon industries**

**6.17** The UK low carbon and environmental goods sector grew by 4.7% in 2010/11 and is valued at over £116 billion. It has grown in the North East by 8.9% over the past two years. The sector encompasses a range of activities including all aspects of renewable energy activity, alternative fuels, building technology development and alternative fuel production.

**6.18** Moving to a low carbon economy and becoming an exporter of green technology, services and energy are seen as central to Northumberland's economic future. Northumberland and specifically the area around the Blyth Estuary have a number of advantages which put it ahead of other areas of the UK targeting this economic activity:

- The National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC), located at the Port of Blyth is the centre of excellence for the development, testing, and commercialisation of renewable technologies;
- Existing deep water port facilities and marine engineering skills;
- Proximity to sites in the North Sea identified as potential sites for off-shore wind energy production by the Round 3 Programme<sup>(10)</sup>;
- BEREZ was established in 2010, a private/public sector partnership, including the Council, to support investment in the low carbon sector at six sites north and south of the River Blyth.

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10 A programme undertaken by The Crown Estates to identify sites for offshore wind farms around the UK. The largest of the nine zones identified, Dogger Bank, is located off the North East coastline

## 6. Economy

**6.19** The Issues and Options document proposed designating a significant area of land around Blyth and Cambois to provide for the low carbon and renewables industries, justified by strong evidence for future growth in these sectors. This included currently allocated employment and port land, proposed new land allocation, and the re-designation of land set aside as expansion land as 'available'.

**6.20** Feedback from the consultation showed divided opinion as to whether there was need for specific land for the low carbon sector, with 31% agreeing and 53% objecting. Many objectors suggested that restricting such a large area of land for a particular sector was inflexible, and potentially risky if the sector does not grow as expected. Similarly businesses currently within the BEREZ area were concerned that their scope for growth would be restricted. There was also suggestion that the 'low carbon sector' needs defining, and recognition that only portions of a business may fall into the sector, which the policy should be flexible enough to recognise. Giving greater weight to the adjacent Site of Special Scientific Interest and the need for additional habitat creation was also recommended.

**6.21** The area identified was supported by 63% of respondents, with some amendments suggested to accommodate specific potential business growth. Possible impact on the road network and adjacent communities were also common concerns.

**6.22** The preferred approach proposes a revised area, based on further identified opportunities, to be designated as a strategic employment location prioritised for businesses which operate in the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector<sup>(11)</sup>. In order to provide a flexible approach a range of economic activity will be supported within this sector including manufacturing, offices, storage and distribution, port activity, and supporting services activity. Renewable and Low Carbon Energy generating uses will also be supported recognising plans to develop such uses within the BEREZ area, and the existing supporting infrastructure to distribute generated electricity.

**6.23** The preferred approach recognises that the Blyth Estuary is a nationally designated ecological site. Therefore any development would need to closely consider the potential impact on the habitat and protected species, seeking to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse impacts.

**6.24** The creation of the strategic area will involve alterations to existing allocated land. About 44 hectares is proposed to be de-allocated, the majority of which has permission for residential development. About 33 hectares of new land is also proposed to be allocated which is considered to be deliverable, accessible, and well suited to provide for the needs of the preferred economic sectors. Roughly 184 hectares of land currently held for expansion will be re-designated as 'available' opening it for development. The area will total about 217 hectares. This is shown in Figure 6.1.

**6.25** It is recognised that traffic congestion on the arterial routes into Blyth Town Centre is a significant issue. Cowpen Road serves traffic coming from the north and west. As well as being the principal access to the former Bates Colliery site and Wimbourne Quay it also carries a considerable amount of public transport and commercial traffic. As such it is known that this route operates close to capacity at times. This issue will need to be carefully considered in terms of impact and possible mitigation measures for any development proposals in the BEREZ area south of the River Blyth.

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11 As defined by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills

**6.26** It is considered justified to provide this additional land given the identified competitive advantages and that much activity in the targeted sectors can be land hungry, and as it is currently underrepresented it was not fully factored into land demand forecasts. The long term plans to develop a clean-coal power station within the BEREZ area may also take-up a significant amount of land. In addition Local Development Orders are being developed for three of the BEREZ sites, whilst Enterprise Zone status has been granted for a portion of the site. Both these measures will significantly enhance prospects for future investment.

### Policy 13

#### BEREZ strategic employment area

The BEREZ strategic employment area is prioritised for economic development within the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector, and for renewable and low carbon energy generation. Development within the area should ensure that:

- a. The amenity and functioning of adjacent communities and other land uses is not significantly adversely affected;
- b. There is no significant adverse impact on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure, unless it can be suitably mitigated;
- c. There is no significant adverse impact on the environment, including ecological and heritage assets and designations; and
- d. The development design is of a high quality with appropriate landscape screening.

### Question 16

This is our preferred option for the BEREZ employment area. Do you have any comments?



## 6. Economy

**Figure 6.1 Preferred Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) Strategic Employment Area**



### Rural economy

**6.27** Although Northumberland's town centres and planned business parks are the main economic drivers in the County a great many of businesses operate from small settlements, the countryside, and from home. There is a need for a balanced spatial approach to economic development allowing for growth and diversification of the rural economy, whilst protecting the environment and local communities.

**6.28** Supporting a diverse range of investment and job opportunities will strengthen Northumberland's rural economy and make it more resilient to future change, so helping to achieve Objective 4 of the Core Strategy. This in turn will help to deliver objective 3 by enabling the County's communities to remain sustainable.

**6.29** The traditional rural industries (agriculture, fishing and forestry) are still an important form of economic activity in rural Northumberland, with over 2000 businesses and over 5000 direct employees. It is forecast that employment is likely to remain steady or grow steadily to 2030. Farm diversification into activities such as specialist food and drink and leisure activities are increasingly important, and the equine industry, both breeding and recreation, add an estimated £23million to Northumberland's economy.

**6.30** Improved telecommunications mean businesses that are not traditionally rural can locate more remotely as they do not necessarily need to be physically close to their customers. The attractiveness and lifestyle of rural Northumberland can be a big pull for businesses, their owners, and new entrepreneurs in various sectors, such as legal and business services, consultancy, research, information technology, and certain creative industries like advertising, architecture, and leisure software. This has led to growth in micro and lifestyle businesses, many of which are established by people moving into rural areas. A great many of these operate from home workspaces.

**6.31** However, the rural economy faces a number of distinct challenges such as isolation from larger markets; added transport costs; distance from centres of education; and in some areas inadequate broadband and telecommunications<sup>(12)</sup>.

**6.32** The Issues and Options document suggested supporting traditional rural industries and farm diversification for leisure services and business space. The widespread re-use of buildings and specified areas for new development was proposed to provide for business growth.

**6.33** Feedback from the consultation showed 63% support for the proposed approach with promotion of farm diversification and exploiting opportunity from improved telecommunications especially welcomed. However, it was suggested that a more positive policy for homeworking would better support the latter. It was also considered inappropriate to largely restrict new economic development in the open countryside and that the growth of existing businesses should be more strongly supported. In balance with economic growth the need to give more consideration to the potential impact on landscape, tranquillity and the local road network were common concerns.

**6.34** The preferred policy approach recognises that market towns are drivers for the rural economy, providing services, a local market, and location for larger scale employment activities. It also supports economic growth in the hinterland of these towns and the wider

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12 The Northumberland Local Broadband Plan aims to provide high speed internet to all residents by 2020

## 6. Economy

rural area. The rural employment policy will therefore apply outside the main towns and service centres identified in Policy 2<sup>(13)</sup>. It is not considered necessary to allocate new specific employment sites in rural areas given the high number of micro-businesses and home run enterprises, but use of existing employment sites will continue to be supported.

**6.35** Recognising the core planning principles of the NPPF the preferred approach to provide rural workspace is to prioritise re-use of existing buildings and sensitive redevelopment of those that are derelict. Redevelopment constitutes development of the existing building into a functional employment space, not demolition and rebuild; this would be considered new build development. The approach will achieve a balance between effectively using existing development, and protecting Northumberland's rural landscapes.

**6.36** However, it is recognised that the re-use of buildings will not always provide for the needs of a business or a local commercial market. Where this can be robustly demonstrated, appropriately scaled and designed new business space will be supported. This preferred approach will apply to new developments and the expansion of existing businesses, and to seek to encourage development to be close to existing settlements.

**6.37** In the rural North East 38% of businesses operate from home, with many of these remotely operating professional services enterprises made possible by improved telecommunications. It is important to allow these businesses to grow appropriately and for new home enterprises to be established as they play an important role in sustaining rural communities. In addition to supporting businesses wanting to operate from part of an existing home, the preferred approach will also support the conversion of outbuildings, and where appropriate the construction of new buildings within the dwelling's curtilage to provide for the needs of the enterprise. It is recognised however that home working may generate noise, and traffic movement, so maintaining the amenity of neighbouring properties will be a key consideration.

**6.38** People often would like to run a business from home but don't have the space to do so or do not want to mix work and home life. Live-work units are specifically designed to provide for this by integrating residential and commercial space. They provide in one building what would otherwise require two. Although they provide workspace it must be recognised that they are also residential and so it is considered unsustainable to allow them to be developed where housing would generally not be supported. The preferred approach will support appropriate conversion to live-work units in all locations, but new build accommodation will only be permitted within or adjacent to existing settlements, unless there is clear evidence to demonstrate why this is not possible: for example an undersupply of housing in the Delivery Area which the live-work units could help to address, or the enabling role of such development to make a wider commercial scheme viable.

**6.39** Farm diversification is important to widen sources of income and sustain agricultural businesses. Typically this provides for tourism and leisure activity, but also new office and workshop space. The preferred approach supports diversification schemes, and would expect that the re-use of redundant farm buildings is prioritised. However it is important that the main agricultural function of the farm is maintained to ensure farmland remains productive.

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13 The Commission for Rural Communities 2004 definition of 'rural' recommends use of population density to define rural areas of England

### Policy 14

#### Rural economy

To promote the growth and diversification of the rural economy proposals which enable the development of new economic activity and the expansion of existing businesses outside the main towns and service centres identified in Policy 2 will be supported where they:

- Utilise existing buildings or propose the sensitive redevelopment of derelict, disused or abandoned buildings to provide dedicated workspace or to expand an existing business;
- Demonstrate through a robust business plan and/or viability assessment that the needs of the proposed or existing business, or the commercial property market cannot be met through conversion or extension and therefore propose appropriately scaled, well designed new buildings, prioritising accessible sites;
- Maintain the farms main agricultural function;
- Increase productivity, add product value, or improve the environmental performance of agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors; or
- Provide new build live-work units within or adjacent to existing settlements, where such development is proposed to take place in the open countryside a robust need for this would have to be demonstrated.

The provision of workspace for a home run business through the conversion of part of a dwelling, out-buildings, or development of appropriately scaled new buildings within the dwelling's curtilage will be supported, provided there is no significant adverse impact on adjacent residential properties.

To balance rural economic development with maintaining the character, diversity and tranquillity of Northumberland's rural environment, all development must be appropriate in scale, character and design to its setting and should not conflict with any of the plans landscape, heritage, and biodiversity policies.

### Question 17

This is our preferred option for the rural economy. Do you have any comments?



## 6. Economy

### Tourism

**6.40** Tourism is a key economic sector for Northumberland. In 2011 9.1 million people visited the county, a 2% increase on the previous year, with a similar percentage rise in expenditure to £706 million. The industry supports over 11,000 jobs directly, with a further 2,200 in the supply chain, with both figures increased by about 6% from 2010. Tourism employment and revenue are expected to experience high growth over the plan period and could be the growth sector for the County. Employment in 'hotels, restaurants and recreation' alone is forecast to expand by 32%, adding around 4550 jobs by 2030<sup>(14)</sup>.

**6.41** However, the industry still faces a number of challenges. Employment in the sector continues to be characterised by part-time and seasonal work, and despite recent visitor growth, Northumberland still received around 1 million fewer visitors in 2011 than in 2003, and overnight visitors declined in the past year. Expenditure and employment are also at lower levels than 2003 despite some recent recovery from the deep recession of 2008-09. Growth has fluctuated and so the strength of this recovery in the short term remains uncertain. .

**6.42** The Northumberland Tourism Business Plan's main objective is to grow the value of the County's tourism industry 6% by 2016, primarily through better marketing, product development, and improved communication. It is hoped that this will lead to increased visitor numbers, higher levels of spending, and growth of jobs in the tourism sector.

**6.43** Northumberland's key tourist attractions centre on the coastal, river valley, and upland landscapes, as well as key historic assets such Hadrian's Wall, castles, and the County's historic market towns. It is important that the Core Strategy supports heritage led regeneration and sustainable tourism growth, to create jobs and economic resilience and so help deliver Objective 4. As the sector has the potential to grow across Northumberland, including in the South East, and so help all communities to be sustainable, it may be an important driver of objective 3. This needs to be balanced with Objective 6 by protecting and enhancing the distinctive and valued environment which attracts tourists in the first place.

**6.44** The Issues and Options document recognised the importance of the tourism sector and suggested an approach which supported the development of accommodation and attractions within or next to settlements which prioritised the re-use of buildings. In the open countryside differing approaches for accommodation and facilities were proposed. Use of existing buildings was supported for both types of development. New build accommodation was proposed to be restricted, unless linked to a major development, but small scale attractions would be supported under certain circumstances.

**6.45** Consultation feedback showed support for this with 59% agreement; however there was a broad range of recommended changes. Many suggested the need for a more positive approach to development in the open countryside and smaller settlements, but balanced with protecting the reasons why people visited. It was also suggested that a framework to assess small and large developments on their merits would be more suitable. It was felt that caravan and chalet sites were being unjustifiably restricted and a more objectively assessed approach would be better. Conversely there was concern about light pollution from this and other development in the countryside.

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14 Northumberland Long Term Employment Forecast. St Chad's College, Durham (2010). This broad sector forecast will include some job growth not linked to the visitor industry

**6.46** Tourism development differs from other forms of economic development in that:

- Whilst it can be located to be accessible by public transport, travel by car is often essential as development regularly needs to be accessible to the visitor in relation to places they are likely to visit;
- Tourism proposals can be directed to certain locations but allocating specific land can be counterproductive as continuously directing development to a site which the market sees as unsuitable can prevent growth occurring elsewhere; and
- More than other forms of economic development it may have a positive impact on landscapes and biodiversity.

**6.47** The preferred approach therefore seeks to balance the development of tourism throughout Northumberland, with the protection of the unique qualities of the County's natural and built environment which predominantly attract tourists in the first place. Development will be prioritised in locations which are accessible, have complementary land uses for tourists, the capacity to accommodate additional growth, and strong potential to attract visitors.

**6.48** The County's main towns, which include the larger, historic market towns, are best placed to do this. There are also a number of the service centres, which whilst not being centres for other economic activity, are key hubs for the tourism industry. In these locations efficient use of existing buildings and previously developed land will be prioritised before new build development would be supported on greenfield sites. Also, to direct serviced accommodation<sup>(15)</sup> to the most sustainable location within these locations a sequential approach is preferred. This will prioritise town centre and edge of town centre sites before accessible locations out of town would be supported.

**6.49** To realise the benefits of tourism across the County development will also be supported close to smaller settlements and adjacent to existing development in the open countryside. Efficient use of land will also be expected in these circumstances through re-use of buildings then the appropriate re-development of derelict or disused buildings, recognising the value of bringing these buildings back into economic use. However it is acknowledged that this is not always possible and so appropriately scaled new buildings may be supported in accessible locations.

**6.50** Generally development in countryside will not be supported to protect the landscape and promote sustainable development. However, it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances new facilities, especially those linked to heritage assets and outdoor recreation, can only be accommodated at certain locations and the preferred approach is to provide for this eventuality. Similarly it will make allowance for unforeseen, large scale tourism developments when the significant potential economic gain needs to be considered against possible harmful impacts.

**6.51** The lack of hotel beds, particularly in larger capacity developments, is a key issue for tourism in Northumberland. Larger hotels often require edge of settlement locations and to be viable may require supporting land uses like a pub or café. In the past sequential tests for these supporting town centre uses has prevented the growth of this key

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15 Businesses providing overnight accommodation in permanent buildings – hotels, motels, guest houses, B and B's, Inns

## 6. Economy

accommodation need. Therefore whilst the preferred policy approach requires the hotel itself to be subject to a sequential test, where an edge of settlement location is justified it will not apply to supporting facilities as part of the scheme.

**6.52** The preferred policy approach also recognises that areas of the County are statutorily designated for their natural, landscape, cultural, and historic qualities, whilst other areas have the potential to be catalysts for future growth, these are:

- Northumberland National Park;
- Hadrian's Wall Corridor;
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Northumberland Coast AONB and Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine site; and
- Kielder Water and Forest Park.

**6.53** Although Northumberland National Park has a Management Plan and separate planning strategy to deliver tourism development, the Council has a duty to have regard to the statutory purposes, the first of which is to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Park and the second is to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities. The influence of the National Park is an important element of the tourism industry outside the Park.

**6.54** Northumberland's AONBs and the Hadrian's Wall Corridor also have detailed management plans aimed at protecting the reasons for the designation. It is recognised that the coastal AONB in particular faces significant development pressure. The preferred approach supports the sustainable growth of tourism in these areas, but will need to conserve and enhance the reasons for the designation. This will achieve a balance between protecting these unique areas and promoting their potential for tourism growth.

**6.55** Kielder Water and Forest Park has strong potential for tourism growth linked to outdoor recreation and night sky interpretation, building on recent investment. The Plan therefore supports the development of facilities and accommodation at scale larger than would be acceptable in other open countryside locations. This is detailed in Policy 4.

**6.56** Policy 6 recognises that the Blue Sky Forest Project is a genuine regeneration opportunity to turn the former Stobswood, Maidens Hall and Steadsburn surface coal mining sites and surrounding countryside into a premier destination for outdoor tourism and leisure, supported by appropriate built development within an attractive landscape setting.

### Policy 15

#### Tourism

To support a growing, sustainable tourism sector, development of new visitor attractions and facilities, accommodation, and the expansion of existing tourism businesses will be supported in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Priority will be given to locating tourism development in the main towns and service centres identified in Policy 2.

- b. Where new serviced accommodation is proposed within the main towns and services centres, priority will be given to proposals within the centre, then edge of centre, then those on the edge of main towns and service centres. Town centre uses supporting the main visitor accommodation function of the development will not be subject to the sequential test.
- c. In rural locations conversion of existing buildings is prioritised, then the sensitive reconstruction of derelict or disused buildings, then appropriately scaled new build development, only where building reuse or brownfield development is not feasible or is unsuitable to meet the needs of the business. All development is expected to be located close as is practicably possible to settlements or existing development;
- d. For new attractions or facilities, development in isolated locations in the open countryside will only be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that the needs of the business can only be accommodated at that location;
- e. New or extension to existing sites for chalets, caravans, and camping will be supported in accessible locations provided that they:
  - i. are not visually intrusive;
  - ii. have good quality year-round landscape screening;
  - iii. have no significant adverse impact on the surrounding road network unless it can be suitably mitigated; and
  - iv. do not compromise Northumberland's dark skies.
- f. Development is appropriate to the location in terms of scale, layout, materials and design, and should not conflict with any other plan policy. The appropriateness of large-scale new tourist development will be assessed on the potential economic gain against any possible harmful impacts and other plan policies;
- g. The development does not significantly adversely impact:
  - i. the current tourism offer;
  - ii. dark skies;
  - iii. the character of Northumberland's natural and historic assets and landscapes;
  - iv. the purpose and special qualities of the Northumberland National Park, or the North Pennines and Northumberland Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- h. Developments that enhance the environment or bring disused heritage assets back into appropriate economic use will be particularly supported.

### Question 18

This is our preferred option for tourism. Do you have any comments?

## 7. Town centres and retailing

### 7. Town centres and retailing

**7.1** Town centres are an important element of Northumberland life, providing the main trading hubs for often wide hinterlands. They are key places of employment and contain most of the shops and leisure facilities in the County. Many are historic and make a vital contribution to Northumberland's tourism economy.

**7.2** Town centres therefore particularly contribute towards Core Strategy Objective 3, which seeks to deliver sustainable communities for Northumberland's population. Keeping town centres strong will clearly also contribute to maintaining a resilient economy (Objective 4) and will help deliver Northumberland's objectively assessed development needs (Objective 2).

**7.3** A Town Centre and Retail Study informed the Core Strategy Issues and Options document. In the light of the continuing impact of the recession on the town centres, an update to the study has been carried out and this, along with the comments received on the Issues and Options document, has informed the preferred approach. The findings confirm that the retail sector has been significantly affected by wider economic factors such as higher VAT, rising unemployment, static pay coupled with rising inflation, and low investment. As a result, there is considerable uncertainty about the strength and durability of future growth in the sector. Smaller centres such as those in Northumberland have suffered disproportionately compared with regional centres. For example it is explained in the study update that, where retail chains are contracting, they are likely to close smaller stores away from regional centres first. Those still investing, who may have chosen to expand their portfolio into smaller centres a few years ago, are now much more likely to seek economies of scale by investing in regional centres.

### Hierarchy of centres

**7.4** As a result of the findings of the update to the Town Centre and Retail Study, it is more important than ever to consider carefully the role and relationship of centres to seek to ensure that they are resilient to economic change and meet the needs of local people. The Issues and Options document proposed splitting the twelve Tier 1 settlements, insofar as town centres were concerned, based on the difference in scale in what seven of these offered compared with the other five. There would be seven 'Town Centres' – Cramlington, Blyth, Ashington, Morpeth, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick and Hexham – and five 'District Centres' – Bedlington, Amble, Ponteland, Prudhoe and Haltwhistle. 'Local Centres' would consist of the centres of all Tier 2 settlements.<sup>(16)</sup>

**7.5** A few respondents expressed concern that the hierarchy could lead to investment being directed to certain centres, leading to a floorspace oversupply and consequent vacancy, while allowing lower tier centres to decline. Another worry was that the visitor role of some District and Local Centres – e.g. as gateways to the National Park – would be given insufficient emphasis in the hierarchy. In terms of the Sustainability Appraisal, the option of having such a hierarchy was found to have a neutral effect, with any impacts one way or the other emerging from policies applied within centres rather than the hierarchy itself.

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16 The tiering approach has been revisited - see Spatial Strategy earlier in this document.

**7.6** It is considered important to go ahead with the hierarchy definition as previously set out. This would be in line with national policy, which advises that local plans should define a network and hierarchy of centres that are resilient to anticipated future economic changes. The hierarchy should minimise the risk of further relative decline of the town centres in relation to the regional centres (e.g. Newcastle and the Metrocentre). It will reaffirm the existing roles of all centres through encouraging investment and development on an appropriate scale. Altering the existing relationship between centres within Northumberland could detract from this effort.

**7.7** This approach does not rule out carefully planned 'step changes'. For example the recent permission at Prudhoe would take that town centre from around one fifth to around one third the size of Hexham in terms of total retail floorspace – and arguably closer to where it should be in terms of its overall role as a District Centre. The positions of Hexham and Prudhoe in the hierarchy would remain the same.

### Policy 16

#### Hierarchy of centres

A centre hierarchy is defined as follows:

Delivery Area	Level A Town Centres	Level B District Centres	Level C Local Centres
Central	Morpeth; Hexham	Ponteland; Prudhoe	Corbridge
North	Alnwick; Berwick-upon-Tweed		Belford; Rothbury; Seahouses; Wooler
South East	Ashington; Blyth; Cramlington	Amble; Bedlington	Bedlington Station; Ellington; Guide Post; Hadston; Lynemouth; Newbiggin-by-the-Sea; Seaton Delaval; Widdrington Station
West		Haltwhistle	Allendale; Bellingham; Haydon Bridge

Each level of the hierarchy will be planned and growth encouraged on a scale and to a level which helps cement or reassert the roles of centres within the hierarchy and relative to regional centres, taking account of local opportunities and within the bounds of local constraints. Town and District Centres will be supported in line with Policy 17.

### Question 19

This is our preferred option for the hierarchy of centres. Do you have any comments?

## 7. Town centres and retailing

### Shopping patterns and trends

**7.8** Northumberland is reasonably well provided with convenience shops, which are those that provide for day to day needs, such as food. The seven Town Centres all have large supermarkets, although some stores lie beyond the defined centres. There are smaller stores in the five District Centres. Mini-market or village store type facilities can be found in the Local Centres and some other villages. In 2009, one quarter of the convenience spending of Northumberland residents did not go to shops within the County.<sup>(17)</sup> This is likely to have decreased with the opening of additional stores and expansion/ relocation of existing stores, but there is no doubt that some convenience spending still leaves Northumberland. It is therefore considered necessary to continue to make food shopping more convenient for Northumberland residents, particularly in places closer to Tyneside.

**7.9** Northumberland's centres provide a range of comparison goods shopping, which are goods that are purchased less frequently, such as clothes and electrical goods. The older centres retain some independent stores which add to their local distinctiveness. However, the 2009 data showed that less than half of Northumberland residents' spending on comparison goods stayed within the County, illustrating the dominance of regional centres like Newcastle, the Metrocentre and retail parks such as Silverlink. The latest forecasts demonstrate that this predominance is likely to accelerate further. While there have been some new facilities opening since the surveys were carried out, such as the Sanderson Arcade in Morpeth, these have been relatively few in number and it is quite likely that Northumberland centres will have lost further ground on the regional centres over this period, especially taking account of intervening closures.

**7.10** The update to the Town Centre and Retail Study has revised previous growth forecasts for the retail sector significantly downwards and has explored the implications of these for centres. Convenience spending per head is forecast to remain fairly static and any increase in spending power that could be directed to Northumberland's centres would be dependent on population increases or trade being "clawed back" from elsewhere. Comparison spending is predicted to recover, but only gradually. However efforts to capture Northumberland's share of this growth will need to be strengthened because investment decisions are tending to favour larger regional centres even more than before. Internet shopping has also continued to rise steadily to approaching 10% of all retail spending and will almost certainly continue to creep up by a further few per cent in the coming years. With fuel prices high, this form of shopping may well adversely impact the scope for growth in rural centres more than it would for urban centres.

### Shopping floorspace needed and how to accommodate it

**7.11** The new forecasts show that a total of around just 10 to 15 thousand square metres<sup>(18)</sup> of additional comparison floorspace will be needed in the County's centres if Northumberland is simply to retain the forecast growth in comparison spending up to 2030. For convenience floorspace this could be even lower at 5 to 10 thousand square metres.<sup>(19)</sup>

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17 See Northumberland Town Centre and Retail Study, 2011.

18 This would be roughly equivalent to one and a half times the new floorspace in the Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, or the same as about five retail warehouses – for the whole of Northumberland over the whole plan period. Actual spending is predicted to grow by much more than the equivalent of this amount of floorspace but a high proportion can be soaked up by existing floorspace that is "undertrading".

19 Roughly equivalent to a typical Aldi or Lidl supermarket.

Since there is no longer a significant need to add floorspace for current levels of spending retention to be sustained, Northumberland's centres should be much more physically capable of absorbing the necessary growth. Even when the modest opportunity for some centres to increase market share through clawing back spending lost to other centres, or for some centres to add to choice are taken into account, it is difficult to argue that significant physical expansions of town centres will be required.

**7.12** The Issues and Options consultation showed a mixed response to the floorspace ranges set out, which were based on the higher growth forecasts. Over half of those who expressed a preference had doubts over whether these levels of floorspace were actually needed or could be absorbed without damaging existing shops or the character of centres. The new forecasts support the need for the more cautious approach advocated by many of the respondents.

**7.13** The retail study identified the revised scope for growth in the seven town centres and five district centres and proposed ways to deliver this sustainably in each centre. Overall, the approach would concentrate on reinvesting in and improving the existing primary shopping areas rather than expanding them. It is considered that the levels of floorspace now required (if any) are low enough for the associated new development to be absorbed in areas within or immediately adjoining existing shopping zones.<sup>(20)</sup> Even in places where a need has been identified and suitable opportunities may not exist close to the centres, such as in Alnwick, the strategy should still place strong emphasis on the need for any growth to be centrally located, (which may mean a more incremental approach to new floorspace).

### Maintaining and strengthening Northumberland's centres

**7.14** These lower growth forecasts necessitate a degree of caution when considering the expansion of town centres, as existing shops will be more vulnerable than they would be if forecasts were at pre-recession levels. However it is important to set this within the context of the overall strategy set out earlier in this document. This aims for a stable population with development geared to meet the needs of the county's residents while incorporating an allowance for additional growth. Meeting the needs of the county's residents may, in some instances, mean seeking to provide more services locally than is the case at present.

**7.15** All of this suggests that the Council should be aiming for more than the status quo for town centres, especially in relation to Blyth, Cramlington, Ashington and Morpeth where any additional growth would be focused under the strategy. There are also on-going plans and programmes that seek to regenerate Northumberland's centres. The Core Strategy approach should therefore incorporate these positive aspects within the context of the low growth scenario by continuing to support opportunities for the County's centres to keep pace with centres elsewhere and cater for residents and visitors alike.

**7.16** The Issues and Options document proposed that a three pronged approach was needed so that Northumberland's town centres might keep pace with the continuing growth in comparison goods spending.

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<sup>20</sup> This is clearly possible in Cramlington and Blyth and Ashington town centres where opportunities have been identified through extant planning permissions or adopted SPDs.

## 7. Town centres and retailing

- The first element would be to maximise opportunities to secure new additions to existing town centres' shopping areas – the new Sanderson Arcade at Morpeth being the main recent example. However the document acknowledged that would not be viable or physically possible in many centres, the update to the Retail Study has confirmed that this is even less likely in the current economic climate.
- Therefore the second element was to recognise the contribution that new supermarkets have made to the keeping comparison, as well as convenience spending local and to support the inclusion of further comparison floorspace in any further supermarkets, so long as these are also well related to town centres.
- The third element would be 'bulky goods'. A range of large scale difficult-to-carry items have long been offered at retail parks with easy parking. There are major sub-regional retail parks on Tyneside, such as Silverlink, Kingston Park and Retail World on Team Valley, which have continued to attract people out of Northumberland.

**7.17** The Issues and Options document asked if combining these three elements was the right approach. Slightly under half of those expressing a preference supported the whole approach with additional respondents supporting particular elements but not others. The main concern, expressed in several responses, was that the approach could detract from the “town centre first” policy that has now been reiterated in the NPPF and that local traders could suffer as a result. The supermarket element received the most negative comments; people were worried that large stores should not be allowed to proliferate in unsuitable locations. There seemed to be recognition that the bulky goods element needs to be better represented. Another concern was that new floorspace created in centres closer to Tyneside would just stand empty as people would continue to use the Tyneside retail parks. Retail Parks in Northumberland, at Cowpen Road in Blyth or Cramlington town centre have had limited success because they do not provide the choice or quality offered by the Tyneside parks

**7.18** While the approach has received a degree of support, as a result of the revised forecasts and the comments received it is proposed to modify the approach to reflect this. It is considered the contribution of supermarkets to durable goods sales in Northumberland has already been largely realised and further opportunities will be limited. The advantages of additional bulky goods are also recognised but it will be necessary for any future retail parks to be in central locations that are also accessible by car and such opportunities will be limited by the lower expenditure growth and the lack of obvious sites in the necessary central locations.

**7.19** The policy below combines the continued aspirations for Northumberland's town centres to grow and regenerate, and to cater for both residents and visitors, with the more cautious approach that has emerged with the revised growth forecasts. The policy reaffirms a 'town centre first' priority.

### Policy 17

#### The roles of Town and District Centres

The continuing role, vitality, viability and competitiveness of Northumberland's Town and District Centres, as defined in Policy 16 will be supported, having regard to the latest growth forecasts, with a view to maintaining or increasing the percentage of local spending retained in these centres, including the following:

- a. Within Town Centres, opportunities will be identified and proposals supported for developments which are physically and functionally integrated with and add choice to the existing retail offer in the Primary Shopping Area. This may include retail warehouses or retail parks in locations that are accessible by car, where acceptable in terms of their scale and local impact;
- b. Within District Centres, new provision should be predominantly aimed at meeting local residents' shopping needs and be of a scale appropriate to the towns' respective catchments;
- c. Where new or extended supermarkets are proposed that are physically well linked with existing Primary Shopping Areas or District Centres, it will not be sought to limit, unnecessarily, the proportion of net floorspace that sells comparison goods.

Any of the above should be in scale with the size and function of the centre and in keeping with local character. Proposals beyond Primary Shopping Area or District Centre boundaries should be sequentially tested and assessed for their impact in line with Policy 18.

### Question 20

This is our preferred option for the role of town and district centres. Do you have any comments?

### Defining town and district centres

**7.20** As well as allowing for essential growth in retail and leisure expenditure, the Core Strategy will need to define boundaries within which town centre uses should, as far as possible, be contained. This will help to ensure that centres remain vibrant. The Issues and Options consultation suggested definitions for 'primary shopping areas' and wider 'town centres' covering the main seven town centres.

**7.21** Some respondents thought that these definitions were too tight and that outlying uses or possible future development sites should be included. However, it is important to avoid town centre activity being spread too thinly and diluting vibrancy; all parts of the defined areas should be well related to the main hubs of activity. As mentioned earlier in relation to retailing, it is considered that most anticipated development needs can (and should) be accommodated within the proposed boundaries. If it is found that sites for future

## 7. Town centres and retailing

expansion are necessary, possibly falling outside these boundaries, then these can be taken forward in the Delivery Development Plan Document. Subsequent to these developments taking place, boundaries could then be reviewed if appropriate.

**7.22** Some responses highlighted that local people should have more of a say. There is no reason why appropriate local revisions should not be made in Neighbourhood Plans, within the overall intent of having the boundaries in the first place.

**7.23** A specific comment was made that a site at the western end of Cramlington town centre, which has had retail permission for some time, should be included within the Primary Shopping Area. Apart from this amendment, it is proposed that these boundaries be carried forward.

**7.24** Once in place, the boundaries will help contain development that requires public access in central locations and will therefore have a positive impact in terms of the sustainability objectives.

**7.25** In the five district centres of: Bedlington, Prudhoe, Haltwhistle, Amble and Ponteland, there is less of a distinction between shopping areas and other uses and a single 'District Centre Boundary' will be appropriate. No new work has been done to redefine these and it is proposed that existing Local Plan definitions be used. The exception is in Amble, where the definition that reached the Preferred Options stage of the Alnwick District-wide Development Control Policies document will be used.

**7.26** The details of the Primary Shopping Area and Town Centre boundaries will be reviewed, particularly if changes on the ground mean that they are no longer fit for purpose. There will be an opportunity to do this in the Delivery Document. Minor revisions may also be possible through Neighbourhood Plans.

**7.27** Locating main town centre uses, as defined in NPPF, within these defined boundaries will help keep centres vital and viable:

- New proposals for town centre uses other than retail, which total 2,500m<sup>2</sup>, should therefore be kept within Town Centre boundaries, with proposals beyond having to satisfy tests set out in the NPPF.
- Large scale retail proposals should be kept within the more tightly drawn Primary Shopping Area boundaries. It is proposed that, within Northumberland, 1000m<sup>2</sup> is defined as the upper limit for proposals beyond the Primary Shopping Area not to require an impact or sequential test.<sup>(21)</sup>

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21 The NPPF gives Councils the option of defining what is meant by 'large-scale', suggesting a default of 2,500 square metres. However, it is important to recognise that Northumberland centres are small in scale and vulnerable to sudden diversions of spending. Therefore a lower threshold of 1000 square metres is set. Sequential testing procedure is set out in NPPF paragraph 24 and impact assessments in NPPF paragraph 26. The scale of new developments, even below this size, may not always be appropriate in District Centres or below and this would be assessed qualitatively.

### Policy 18

#### Defining centres and maintaining vitality and viability

Boundaries for the following centres are defined in Appendix A:

- Town centres: Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth, Hexham: separate 'Town Centre' and 'Primary Shopping Area' boundaries
- District Centres: Amble, Bedlington, Haltwhistle, Prudhoe, Ponteland: single 'District Centre' boundaries

Main town centre uses should be located within Town Centre and District Centre boundaries unless there are strong planning reasons to locate them elsewhere or unless they are office uses that otherwise meet Policy 21.

The following will be subject to sequential and impact testing:

- a. Proposals for more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> net retail floorspace beyond Primary Shopping Area or District Centre boundaries;
- b. Proposals for leisure-related buildings of 2500m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace, (not linked with wider open space activities or hotel use), that are beyond Town Centre or District Centre boundaries; and
- c. Proposals for office uses that are either more than 2500m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace beyond Town Centre and District Centre boundaries or more than 500 metres from a public transport interchange.

All proposals for town centre uses, including those within the defined boundaries, should be in scale with the size and function of the centre and in keeping with local character.

Proposals that are smaller than the above sizes should be centrally and accessibly located.

### Question 21

This is our preferred option for the definition of centres and the maintenance of their vitality and viability. Do you have any comments?

### Leisure use in and around town centres

**7.28** Leisure, tourism, cultural and community activities are important elements of a vibrant town centre mix. Many types of leisure facilities are well provided for in Northumberland's town centres and policies will encourage their location within town centres, seeking edge of centre sites where this cannot be achieved. The key issues for

## 7. Town centres and retailing

Northumberland are around the mix of smaller scale uses on high streets and the relative absence of sub-regional scale attractions, meaning that local people have to travel to regional centres and participation levels are low.

### The high street mix

**7.29** Local leisure facilities, such as restaurants, bars and fitness clubs, are often interspersed with shops, markets and other uses within Northumberland's town centres. This integration has been vital to the success of these centres in terms daytime activities, the evening economy and in catering for visitors. Only Ashington and Cramlington have been identified as towns that could benefit from a significantly wider range of local leisure provision.

**7.30** At present, many of the Town and District Centres have 'frontage policies' seeking to keep a high percentage in retail use. A move away from rigid policies of this sort is supported by the Government through its acceptance of findings in the recent Portas Review. Therefore the Issues and Options document asked whether it should be made simpler to change between uses on the high street, in all centres without an application for permission where this will help boost vitality and viability – especially of declining centres.

**7.31** Around three quarters of those responding to the question, supported additional flexibility, especially if this would prevent a proliferation of empty shop units. There was however concern that the right balance should be struck on the high street, some seeing it as important to keep a ceiling on the numbers of cafés and similar uses; to prevent the loss of shops that meet basic needs; and to retain essential local character. There were calls for the details of such policies to be locally determined – for example through Neighbourhood Plans. Some people thought charity shops should be limited but these fall within the retail use class and the planning system cannot stop an existing shop from becoming a charity shop. The sustainability appraisal also saw it as being important to achieve the correct balance between leisure uses and retail uses. It considered that too many leisure uses could generate traffic and have negative environmental impacts for more of the day or push shops to less sustainable locations. On the other hand the more flexible approach could prevent people travelling further afield for certain leisure facilities. A correct balance will therefore need to be struck.

**7.32** Notwithstanding the Government's support for additional flexibility on the high street, NPPF retains the concept of 'Primary Shopping Frontages'. In order to ensure that the balance is right, it is proposed that the frontage policies in the various existing Core Strategies and Local Plans should be retained for the time being but that new overarching criteria should be introduced that would allow the variation necessary to retain the vitality of the streets and squares concerned without undermining the retail role and choice in the longer term.

**7.33** The detailed frontage definitions, as well as the percentage thresholds that apply within them, will be reviewed through the Delivery Document. This will also be an area where changes may come about through Neighbourhood Plans .

### Policy 19

#### Leisure uses within Town and District Centres

It will be sought to provide for residents and visitors, both at daytime and in the evenings, with a range of leisure uses integrated with the retail offer of Northumberland Town and District centres.

The Council will support proposals for non-retail uses on primary shopping frontages where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. Long term vacancy of units within the frontage concerned is adversely affecting the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole;
- b. The proposed use would maintain or add to the vibrancy of the shopping frontage; and
- c. The cumulative impact of the non-retail uses would not lead to an unacceptable reduction in the range of the retail offer of the frontage concerned or the retail role of the centre as a whole.

### Question 22

This is our preferred option for leisure uses within town and district centres. Do you have any comments?

#### Large-scale leisure facilities

There are low participation rates among the County's residents in certain leisure activities, often because facilities are not available within Northumberland. Modern built facilities, such as ten pin bowling alleys, multi-screen cinemas and large bingo halls, tend to serve wide populations and, so far, the majority have located on Tyneside and drawn people out of the County. The NPPF makes clear that built leisure facilities that are not linked either with large sports fields or with open countryside activities, should preferably be within defined town centres.

The approach set out in the Issues and Option document sought to increase participation in these activities through improved accessibility. It suggested a town centre location or locations within South East Northumberland, where the population is most concentrated, in the expectation that this would also attract participants from a wider area of the County. It was calculated that large-scale new facilities could claw back spending from Tyneside, reduce the average travel distance and increase the overall participation of Northumberland residents. The new multi-screen cinema in Cramlington should go some way towards this goal but there will be additional scope, especially as the plan period progresses.

The consultation results saw agreement that there was a need to bring facilities closer to potential users. However, respondents from the north and west of the county disagreed that South East Northumberland should be singled out. Sustainable planning, tourism and

## 7. Town centres and retailing

market forces were cited as reasons for other locations to be considered. The Sustainability Appraisal found that a central, accessible location within the County's main concentration of population would have a positive impact.

It is recognised that there are some gaps in provision for leisure purposes that could be filled through additional facilities within rural market towns, and that this may also help boost tourism. The modified approach will therefore be to allow, in any town centre, large format leisure facilities on a scale that would meet the needs and demands of its own plus its catchment population, as well as those of people working in and visiting the town. It is acknowledged that these types of provision can in themselves attract much sought-after visitor income. Facilities serving a population significantly greater than a single town and its catchment should, as a rule, only be located in town centres in South East Northumberland, providing that sites and infrastructure allow.

### Policy 20

#### Large-scale leisure facilities

Large-scale leisure facilities will be encouraged to locate in the centres defined in Policy 16, especially the Town Centres, as follows:

- a. Within the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, to a scale that could serve wider areas – i.e. more than a single town and its catchment – plus workers, tourists and other visitors, as long as suitable sites and infrastructure can be provided;
- b. Outside the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, up to a scale that would serve the resident population of the town and its catchment, plus those working in or visiting the town;

Large scale leisure facilities that provide an additional attraction for tourists will also be encouraged if they are in scale with and physically capable of accommodation.

### Question 23

This is our preferred option for large scale leisure facilities. Do you have any comments?

### Office accommodation in town centres

**7.34** Offices are also a key element of town centres. It is particularly important that offices that rely on frequent public access, such as banks and professional services, should have a town centre location. Benefits also result from other offices being located in town centres as well. It allows the central services to be more accessible for employees who can give a vital boost to local spending.

**7.35** The Issues and Options document noted that the NPPF allows increased flexibility on the definition of 'edge-of-centre' when it comes to offices. Northumberland's greatest success in terms of the office market has been in the form of purpose-built office parks, especially in the south east of the county. These are outside defined centres. The NPPF identifies that any future such development can be located away from town centres as long as they are within 500m of a public transport interchange.<sup>(22)</sup> The question posed in the Issues and Options document was whether to apply the fullest possible flexibility to maximise office investment in all accessible locations, not just town centres. Around 80% of responses favoured this approach. The sustainability appraisal highlighted distinct advantages, economically and environmentally, in allowing some offices in park-style locations away from congested centres but only if the locations were highly accessible by public transport.

**7.36** The Northumberland market is not strong enough to support a supply of purpose-built, speculative office developments, but this may be because of restriction of desirable sites, rather than a lack of interest. However a supply of new centrally located offices will only be achieved if the offices form part of retail or leisure-led mixed use schemes, where there is a demand. This should also be part of the approach.

### Policy 21

#### Office accommodation within Town and District Centres

A continuing supply of centrally located offices will be ensured through:

- a. Seeking an office element to commercial development and redevelopment schemes in Town or District Centres, where local demand exists;
- b. Locating future office business parks within 500m of a town centre or public transport interchange;
- c. Permitting changes of use to offices within defined town centres unless this would conflict with retail frontage policies or detract from the vitality of the frontage concerned.

### Question 24

This is our preferred option for office accommodation within town and district centres. Do you have any comments?

<sup>22</sup> Defined as a rail or bus station or grouping of bus stops where it is possible to swap between regular public transport services or easily transfer between a private transport mode and regular public transport services.

## 8. Green Belt

### 8. Green Belt

**8.1** The NPPF attaches great importance to Green Belt and Northumberland's Green Belt, adjoining that in North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead and County Durham delivers a number of Core Strategy objectives, particularly Objective 6, to protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment. In accordance with NPPF the purposes of the Green Belts are to:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- Prevent the 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.

### Extent of the Northumberland Green Belt

**8.2** Northumberland's Green Belt stretches northwards from the Tyne and Wear conurbation and from east of Haydon Bridge to just south of Cramlington and Blyth. Large settlements inset<sup>(23)</sup> in the Green Belt include Hexham, Corbridge, Prudhoe and Ponteland. It also includes an area for which the general extent of a Green Belt extension around Morpeth has been established and is still to be defined in detail.

**8.3** Areas of Green Belt were designated around the Tyne and Wear conurbation, including parts of Northumberland, in the 1960s and in the 1970s, Northumberland County Council in association with Tyne and Wear County Council sought to extend the Green Belt into south east Northumberland. The extension around Morpeth was identified in the 1996 Northumberland Structure Plan, Regional Planning Guidance (RPG1) in 2002, with the Policy S5 of the revised Northumberland Structure Plan (2005) defining the general extent as:

- West of Netherwitton, Hartburn and Belsay;
- North of Longhorsley and west of Widdrington Station, excluding the Stobswood Opencast site;
- East of Pegswood;
- West of Ashington, Guide Post, Bedlington and the A1068; and
- East of Bothal, Hepscoth, Nedderton and Hartford Bridge.

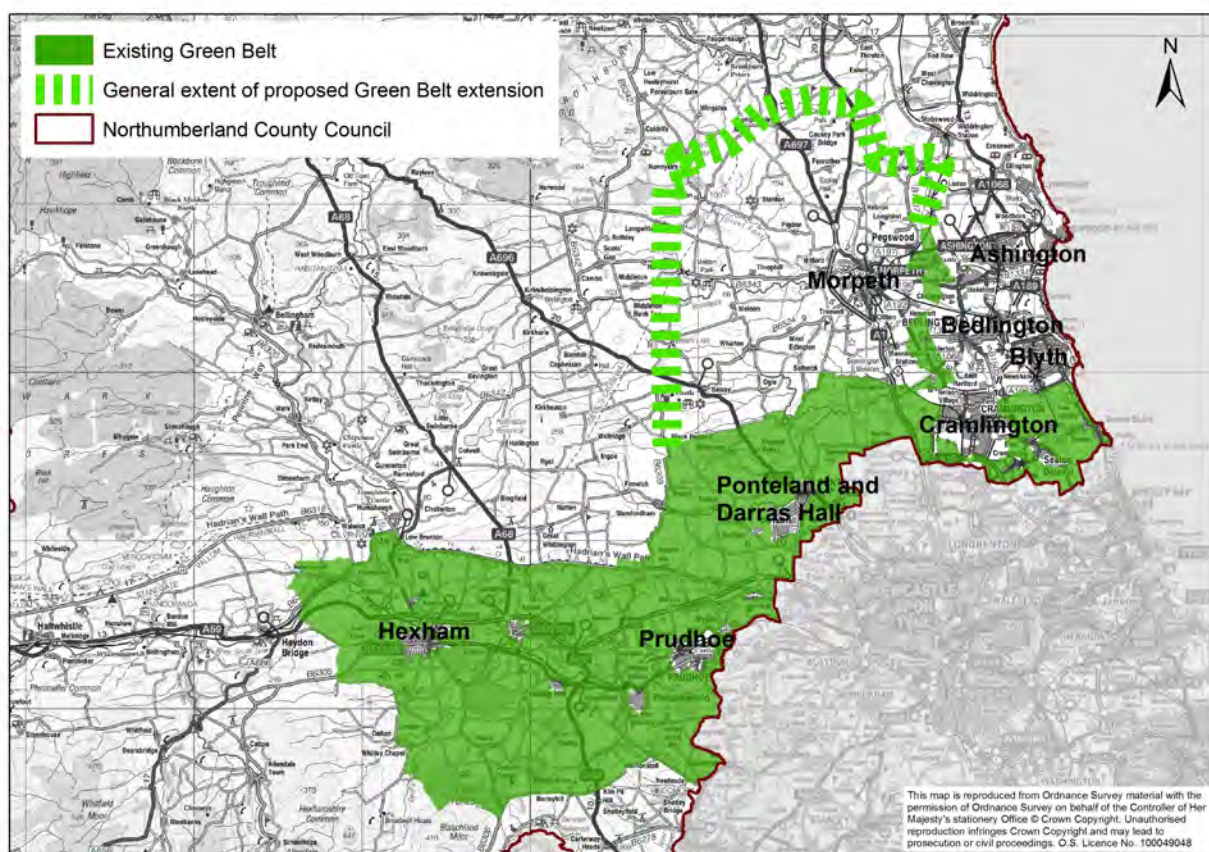
**8.4** The Structure Plan also defined the purpose of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth to:

- Preserve the special setting and character of Morpeth;
- Prevent Morpeth merging with neighbouring settlements;
- Assist regeneration of main settlements and coalfield villages in South East Northumberland beyond the Green Belt; and
- Safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

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23 Inset means they are excluded from the Green belt

Figure 8.1 Northumberland Green Belt



**8.5** The 2008 North East Regional Spatial Strategy, which is due to be revoked, maintained the broad extent of the Green Belt with detailed boundaries to be defined in relevant Local Plans. The Government's consultation<sup>(24)</sup> on the likely effects of revocation of the RSS proposes to retain saved structure plan policy S5 relating to the Green Belt at Morpeth. It states that "removing this policy before the council has adopted a local plan, which defines Green Belt boundaries could put Green Belt land at risk from unwanted development. This is in line with the Coalition Agreement to safeguard Green Belt."

**8.6** Prior to Local Government Reorganisation the Wansbeck Local Plan, 2007 defined the first, eastern part of the Morpeth Green Belt extension. However, the review the Morpeth Local Plan did not reach adoption before Local Government Reorganisation in 2009, therefore the detailed boundaries have not yet been defined for the whole area.

### Green Belt boundaries

**8.7** NPPF requires that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and that the boundaries need to have a permanence enduring beyond the plan period. However, it is recognised that many of the existing boundaries around settlements may not provide sufficient capacity to accommodate growth into the future beyond the Core Strategy plan period. In order to reflect the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development and proposed Core Strategy Objective 1, which places sustainable development and positive future growth at the heart of planning decisions in

24 Strategic Environmental Assessment of the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy, November 2012

## 8. Green Belt

Northumberland, it may be necessary to agree a localised boundary review to provide settlements, where appropriate, with sufficient space for economic and/or residential development as far ahead as can now be projected.

**8.8** The issue of possible localised review of existing Green Belt around settlements resulted in a significant response to the Issues and Options consultation. A substantial number of respondents expressed concern that developer pressure, particularly around Ponteland and Darras Hall, would have a significant negative impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.

**8.9** As identified elsewhere within the document, the Council is currently carrying out population and economic growth modelling to project where and how much development land is required over the plan period. Until that modelling is complete it is not known whether a localised Green Belt review will be required and if so, the extent of any review. Given the strategic importance of the extension of the Green Belt around Morpeth, this additional work is also assessing the appropriateness of the proposed outer boundaries for the extension. At the Issues and Options consultation the majority of consultees preferred option 2, the outer of two suggested boundary options. The boundary of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth will also have regard to phase two of the A1 to South East Northumberland Strategic Link Road, the Morpeth Northern Bypass. The new link road is expected to provide better access to promote economic regeneration and improve social inclusion.

**8.10** In summer 2013 there will be further public engagement on the results of the population and economic growth modelling work, including how it may affect Green Belt boundaries.

### Treatment of Green Belt settlements

**8.11** In discussing the treatment of Green Belt settlements the Issues and Options consultation relied heavily on the tier approach that is no longer being carried forward in the preferred approach. There was a mixed response to the Issues and Options proposed treatment of settlements in the Green Belt. A significant proportion agreed with the proposed approach however a large number objected to any localised review of boundaries around settlements.

**8.12** There was considered to be a lack of clarity with regard to the treatment of lower tier settlements and concerns that development in such settlements would be stifled. Suggestions for the creation of a new coastal Green Belt were also made. This highlighted confusion between the purposes of Green Belt and nature, heritage or landscape designations. The Council does not consider that the coast needs to be protected from coalescence with the Tyne and Wear conurbation and the NPPF does not support the creation of new Green Belt except in very special circumstances.

**8.13** In light of changes to the tier approach to spatial delivery the approach to the treatment of Green Belt settlements will be reviewed. The approach will take account of emerging data on population modelling and will provide flexibility for localised Green Belt review to be identified through subsequent delivery documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

## Previously developed land in the Northumberland Green Belt

**8.14** A number of major developed sites are identified in existing development plan policies where limited infill development is considered appropriate but the Green Belt notation is carried across the site (they are washed over). The NPPF, does not provide for the identification of major developed sites but instead encourages partial or complete development or infilling of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use, as appropriate development. That is provided the development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it. The major developed sites designated by former Castle Morpeth Borough Council and Tynedale District Council are shown in Table 8.1 below.

**Table 8.1 Major developed sites identified in former district Local Plans**

Location	Local Plan	Former Plan Policy Reference
Prudhoe Hospital	Tynedale	NE10
Hexham Racecourse	Tynedale	NE11
Slaley Hall	Tynedale	NE12
Ochrelands, Yarridge Road	Tynedale	NE13.1
Bywell Home Farm	Tynedale	NE13.2
Stocksfield Hall Business Units	Tynedale	NE13.3
Fourstones Paper Mill	Tynedale	NE13.5
Marley Tile Co., Newlands, near Ebchester	Tynedale	NE13.6
Tyne Valley Nursery, Mickley Square	Tynedale	NE13.7
Howford Haulage Site, Acomb	Tynedale	NE13.8
Wentworth Grange Care Home, Riding Mill	Tynedale	NE13.15
Police Headquarters, Ponteland	Castle Morpeth	C19
Cottage and Rural Enterprise Village, Ponteland	Castle Morpeth	C19
Ponteland High and Middle Schools	Castle Morpeth	C19
Ponteland Leisure Centre	Castle Morpeth	C19

**8.15** At Issues and Options the majority of Issues and Options responses agreed with the Council's proposed approach that the Core Strategy should not identify existing or new major developed sites in the Green Belt but include them in the Green Belt and apply national policy with regard to allowing appropriate development on previously developed land. The additional work currently on-going will inform the policy approach which will be subject to consultation in the summer of 2013.

## 9. Minerals

### 9. Minerals

**9.1** Minerals are important resources. They are the raw materials that are necessary to provide the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs. Objective 8 of the Core Strategy seeks to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, this includes minerals, while minimising adverse impacts on communities and the environment. In order to deliver this objective the Core Strategy sets out strategic policies for minerals to ensure these finite resources are not unnecessarily sterilised, that land is made available to meet needs and that minerals extraction, transport and processing does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and local communities. The minerals industry in Northumberland is recognised as an important source of employment, particularly in rural areas.

**9.2** The extraction of Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock and sand and gravel for aggregate use and the extraction of coal for use in electricity are the most significant minerals currently extracted in Northumberland. Other important minerals currently include natural building stone, brick-making clays (including fireclays, coal measures mudstones, brick shales and glacial clay). Other mineral resources found in Northumberland, but not currently extracted include fluorspar, witherite and barite which occur in the veins with the lead and zinc ores and the potential also exists for conventional hydrocarbons and gas from coal seams and workings.



### Environmental criteria for considering minerals proposals

**9.3** The potential for unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity and the local environment as a result of minerals extraction, processing and transport is a major concern both for residents in Northumberland and those outside where sites are close to the boundary. This is recognised in the NPPF, which states that Local Plans should set out environmental criteria against which planning applications will be assessed.

**9.4** It was clear from the Issues and Options consultation that residents were concerned about the proximity of minerals sites to residential dwellings and the potential effects of this on residential amenity. Concerns were also raised regarding the impacts on Northumberland's natural and historic environment and the cumulative impacts from a number of sites close to each other and/or the cumulative impacts from a site or sites over a number of years. The draft policy therefore includes criteria to assess the impact of proposals on local communities and the environment.

**9.5** The Issues and Options consultation asked whether the Core Strategy should identify minimum separation distances between minerals sites and residential properties and other sensitive land uses. The majority residents who responded favoured the use of separation distances in a policy due to concerns about the potential impacts of minerals extraction on residential amenity. However, some environmental groups and the minerals industry did not favour the use of separation distances in policy and stated a preference for proposals to be assessed on a site-by-site basis, reflecting concerns that the separation distance would be arbitrary and a standard distance would not reflect individual site characteristics. A number of consultation responses suggested a 500 metre separation distance, reflecting the approach in planning policy for coal in Scotland and Wales. When mapped a 500 metre separation distance from residential could potentially sterilise large parts of the mineral resource, which could be considered as unnecessary sterilisation given there are examples of minerals sites that have been located closer than 500 metre to sensitive properties and have operated without problems.

**9.6** Taking these views into account, and recognising the concerns regarding the potential impact minerals development can have on residential amenity, it is proposed that each proposal will need to demonstrate that the proposed site design, method of working and the separation between the site and sensitive land uses is appropriate and sufficient to protect amenity. This assessment should take account of current industry best practice and the mitigation measures that can be used, including the use of planning conditions and obligations.

### Policy 22

#### Criteria for assessing all minerals proposals

Planning permission for minerals developments will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the environmental, social and economic benefits outweigh any significant adverse impacts on local communities and the environment, taking account of the effects on the following:

- a. Local amenity, in particular proposals shall demonstrate that there is appropriate separation from the site to residential dwellings and other sensitive uses to safeguard from unacceptable noise, dust, vibration and visual impact;
- b. Landscape character and landscape sensitivity, particularly as a result of changes to landform and topography during and after extraction;
- c. Nature conservation and geological sites, including internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, species and habitats;
- d. The special qualities and the statutory purposes of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland National Park;
- e. The effects on cultural heritage including known and unknown archaeological features, designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings;
- f. Soil resources and agricultural land quality, including best and most versatile agricultural land;
- g. The transport network, including its suitability for the proposed movements, the suitability of the proposed site access and the impact on non-motorised users, with transport of minerals using rail and water transport encouraged;
- h. Public rights of way;
- i. Flood risk;
- j. Air quality;
- k. Ground and surface water quality;
- l. Light pollution; and
- m. Land stability.

The effects listed above should be considered both individually and cumulatively. In assessing cumulative impact, particular regard will be had to:

- n. The combined effects from a number of separate effects from an individual site;
- o. The combined effects from a number of separate effects from one or more sites in a locality; and
- p. The cumulative impact over an extended period of time from either an individual site or a number of sites in a locality.

### Question 25

This is our preferred policy to assess the environmental acceptability of proposals for minerals development. Do you have any comments?

### Coal

**9.7** Northumberland has a long history of coal extraction and continues to make a significant contribution to national coal supply from surface coal mines. Over the plan period demand for coal is likely to continue and the coal resource in Northumberland has the potential to assist in meeting this demand, subject to the environmental and social acceptability of individual proposals for extraction. The Core Strategy has a role in guiding where future extraction could be acceptable and in assessing the acceptability of proposals, which is particularly important given the potentially significant effects of surface coal mining.

**9.8** The coal resource in Northumberland is found across extensive areas of the County. The extent of the surface coal resource is shown in Figure 9.1. This resource has been divided into 'principal resource areas' <sup>(25)</sup>, which represent the areas of coal where extraction is more economically viable due to the closely spaced nature of the coal seams and the quality of the coal, and 'subsidiary resource areas' <sup>(26)</sup> (Lower Carboniferous areas) where extraction is unlikely to be commercially viable through the plan period due to the nature of the resource found there.

**9.9** The principal resource areas in Northumberland can also be divided into the following sub-areas (illustrated in Figure 9.1) based on their locations and broad characteristics:

- Main Northumberland coal resource area, which includes the Tyne/Derwent watershed sub-area; and
- The outlying resource coal areas of Midgeholme, Plenmeller and Stublick.

**9.10** The preferred approach for coal is to assess all proposals against the key policy test for coal extraction in the NPPF. This states that proposals will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated 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 to justify the grant of planning permission. Potential benefits arising from coal extraction proposals may include the avoidance of a mineral resource being sterilised, the remediation of underground coal mining legacy issues and the supply of fireclay to meet demand from brickworks.

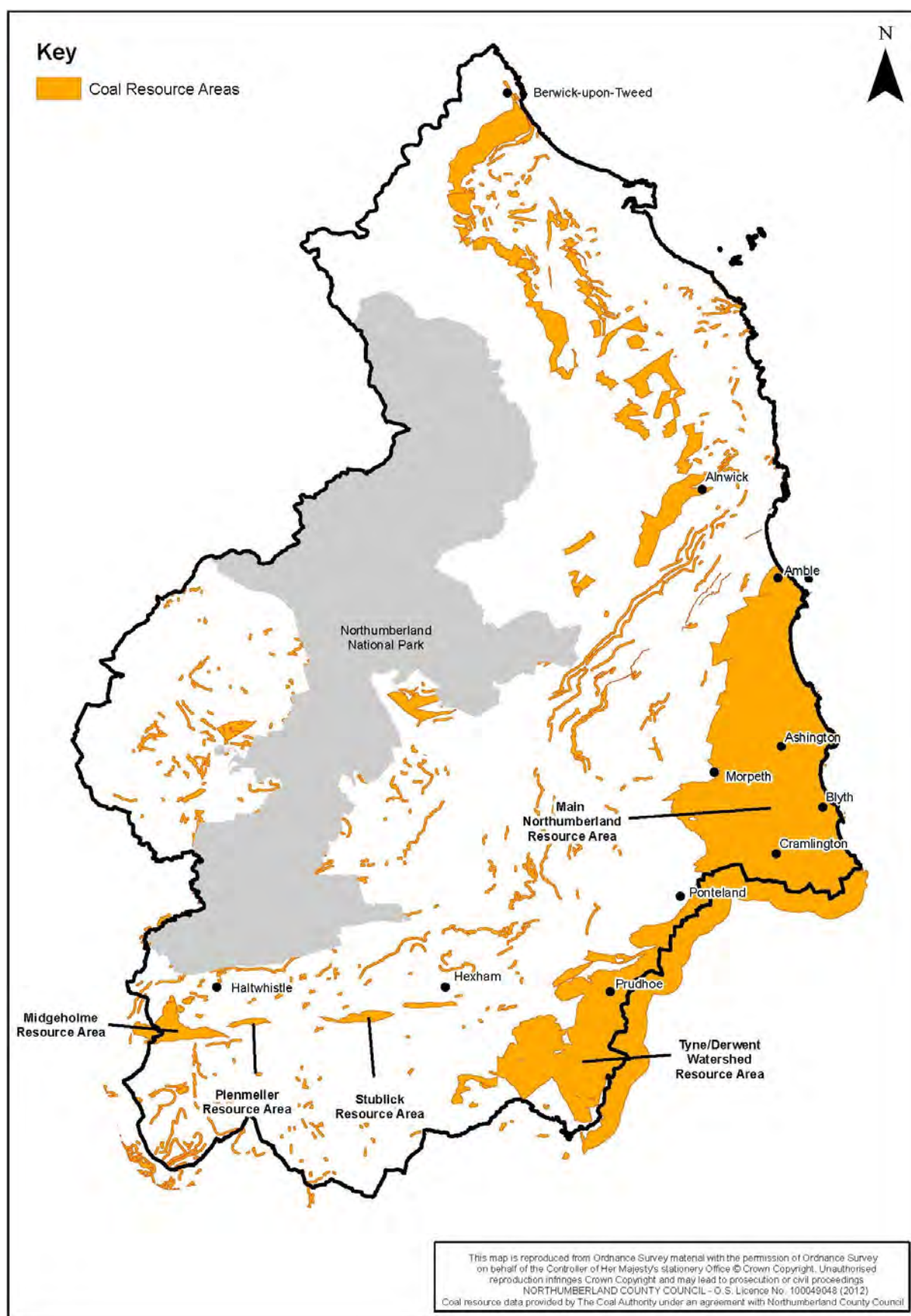
**9.11** The Issues and Options consultation asked whether the Core Strategy should look to identify broad locations where coal extraction could be acceptable in principle or whether a purely criteria based approach should be used based to assess proposals based on the key policy test for coal extraction in the NPPF. The response to this issue was mixed with some preference for proposals to be assessed on an individual basis using policy criteria, which in a number of cases reflects concerns regarding the negative effects from the identification of particular locations for coal extraction. On the other hand some of the responses stated a preference for the Core Strategy to identify locations for coal extraction as this would provide more certainty about where coal extraction could take place over the plan period. In addition, it was noted that the responses received from residents and environmental groups generally expressed concerns about the potential for adverse environmental effects as a result of coal extraction.

<sup>25</sup> The 'principal resource areas' comprise closely-spaced coals within the Coal Measures.

<sup>26</sup> The 'subsidiary resource areas' comprise much more widely-spaced coals in Lower Carboniferous.

## 9. Minerals

Figure 9.1 Coal resource areas in Northumberland



**9.12** Taking account of the responses to the Issues and Options consultation and the requirement in the NPPF to indicate any areas where coal extraction may be acceptable, the preferred approach is to seek to identify acceptable locations for coal extraction and recognise the different characteristics of the coal resource areas in the policy approach. The approach in each of the resource areas is outlined below.

**9.13** In the Main Northumberland coal resource area the preferred approach is to identify locations where coal extraction may be acceptable. The locations identified have been informed by the 'Environmental Considerations and Mineral Resources Study'<sup>(27)</sup>, which mapped the coal resource areas and a number of environmental considerations in order to understand the location of key considerations that would have an influence on the location of future extraction. The following have been identified as potential locations where coal extraction may be acceptable:

- North of Chevington, east of Eshott and south and west of Acklington;
- North of Ashington;
- North of Ellington and south of Widdrington;
- North of Longhirst and south of Ulgham;
- South and west of Morpeth;
- South and east of Ponteland; and
- South of Whittonstall.

**9.14** Any specific proposals in these locations will be assessed against the key policy tests for coal extraction in Policy 23 and the policy criteria in Policy 22. In the northern part of Main Northumberland coal resource area, which has been subject to surface coal extraction over the last 50 to 60 years, particular emphasis will be placed on the cumulative impacts that could arise as a result of further working, the protection of residential amenity and the effects on key green infrastructure networks. The identification of these locations in the Main Northumberland resource area does not preclude proposals being considered elsewhere in this resource area where they meet the key policy tests for coal extraction and take account of the environmental considerations present. Within the Tyne/Derwent Watershed resource area, particular regard shall be given to the environmental considerations relating to landscape and nature conservation present around Hedley on the Hill, the area along the Derwent Valley and in relation to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which overlaps with part of this resource area to the south.

**9.15** Due to the overlap between the Stublick and Plenmeller resource areas with the North Pennines AONB, proposals for coal extraction are likely to be considered as major development within this nationally designated area and would be subject to the policy tests for this type of development in the NPPF. The Midgeholme coal resource area, located to the north of Halton Lea Gate and Lambley, is adjacent to the North Pennines AONB and significant nature conservation designations are located to south and east. The effects on these designations will be the principal factors in assessing proposals in these areas.

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27 Environmental Considerations and Mineral Resources Study. Available at:  
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

### Policy 23

#### Coal

The strategy for coal extraction is to permit proposals only where it can be demonstrated 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.

In the Main Northumberland coal resource area, which includes the Tyne/Derwent watershed, the following are identified as locations where coal extraction may be acceptable:

- a. North of Chevington, east of Eshott and south and west of Acklington;
- b. North of Ashington;
- c. North of Ellington and south of Widdrington;
- d. North of Longhirst and south of Ulgham;
- e. South and west of Morpeth;
- f. South and east of Ponteland; and
- g. South of Whittonstall.

Operators are expected to work with the Council and local communities in seeking to identify acceptable sites in the above locations. Any proposals in these locations will be assessed against the key policy tests for coal extraction and the requirements of Policy 22, with particular emphasis on the cumulative effects that could arise as a result of coal extraction in these locations.

The identification of these locations does not preclude proposals being considered in other locations in the Main Northumberland Coal Resource Area where they meet the key policy tests for coal extraction and take account of the environmental considerations within the resource area.

In the Tyne/Derwent watershed sub-area proposals should have particular regard to the significant environmental considerations present in the area around Hedley on the Hill to the north of this resource area, along the Derwent Valley and within and adjacent to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as the suitability of the transport network.

In the Midgeholme coal resource area proposals will particularly have to demonstrate that the environmental, social and economic benefits outweigh any significant adverse effects on:

- h. The adjacent North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- i. The nature conservation designations that are found to the south and east of the resource area.

In the Stublick coal resource area and the Plenmeller coal resource area proposals will be considered as major development within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would be subject to the policy tests in national planning policy for major development in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Proposals in the subsidiary resource areas will be assessed against the key tests for coal extraction and the criteria in Policy 22.

### Question 26

This is our preferred policy for coal extraction. Do you have any comments?

### Clays

**9.16** Northumberland is an important source of clay, which is principally used as a raw material in the manufacture of bricks, pipes and tiles. The resources that are found in Northumberland include fireclays, coal measures mudstone, brick shale and glacial clays.

**9.17** Fireclay is particularly valued for its use in the manufacture of buff-coloured bricks and the extent of this resource largely coincides with the coal resource. Fireclay deposits in Northumberland are relatively thin, which means that extraction on their own is not economically viable and they are extracted concurrently with coal at surface coal sites. The Core Strategy will plan for the continuation of supply of fireclay to brickworks by supporting its extraction and recovery concurrently with coal. Given the economics associated with the extraction and the relationship with coal extraction, it is not possible to identify a landbank as required by the NPPF as the supply of this resource from Northumberland is reliant on coal sites coming forward.

**9.18** Glacial clay has previously been extracted from the Swarland Brickworks Site at Thrunton. Due to the economic climate the extraction of clay from this site has now ceased along with the manufacture of bricks at the adjacent brickworks. There remains significant reserves at the site as extraction has ceased before the reserves have been exhausted. Given that this site still currently has planning permission for clay extraction it is proposed to safeguard this resource.

**9.19** In summary, the strategy for brick-making clays is, therefore, to encourage extraction of clays as an ancillary mineral concurrently with coal and consider proposals in line with the coal policy, safeguard the permitted reserves at the Swarland Brickworks site and provide criteria to consider proposals for new clay extraction sites should proposals come forward over the plan period.

### Policy 24

#### Clays

The strategy for the provision of brick-making clays is to plan for its steady and adequate provision by:

Supporting the extraction of brick-making clays, particularly fireclays, concurrently with coal where the proposals meet the policy tests for coal extraction in Policy 23 and site restoration can take place in a timely manner;

## 9. Minerals

- a. Requiring the efficient use of the clay resource where it can be extracted concurrently with coal and ensuring resources are not unnecessarily sterilised
- b. Safeguarding the clay reserves at the Swarland Brickworks Site, Thrunton;
- c. Permitting proposals for new clay extraction sites where:
  - i. The proposals would enable a 25 year stock of reserves to be maintained;
  - ii. The need for the clay that cannot be met from an existing reserves with planning permission for extraction or a site nearer a brickworks; and
  - iii. There will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and the amenity of local communities, as assessed against Policy 22.

### Question 27

This is our preferred policy for clay extraction. Do you have any comments?

### Aggregate minerals

**9.20** 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.

**9.21** 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.



**9.22** The NPPF requires an annual Local Aggregates Assessment to be prepared to assist in identifying the provision for aggregates that Northumberland should seek to plan for based on average of the previous ten years sales and other relevant information on supply options. The Local Aggregates Assessment is currently being prepared and this is being undertaken as a joint piece of work with Durham County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority and the five Tyne and Wear authorities. The NPPF also requires account to be taken of national and sub-national guidelines published by government, which the North East Aggregates Working Party has advised on what provision each of the planning authorities within the sub-national area should make.

**9.23** Initial work from the Local Aggregates Assessment indicates that the average annual sales over a ten year period for Northumberland are 538,000 tonnes for sand and gravel and 1.73 million tonnes for crushed rock. This compares to the North East Aggregates Working Party's recommendation that Northumberland should make provision for an annual production of 2.1 million tonnes for crushed rock and 818,750 tonnes of sand and gravel. These figures will be updated once the Local Aggregates Assessment has been completed.

**9.24** For crushed rock there are sufficient reserves in Northumberland with planning permission to meet the provision indicated by the Local Aggregates Assessment up to and beyond 2030. As a result it is not proposed to make specific provision for the release of additional reserves in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy, however, needs to be flexible to maintain production from Northumberland as there are a number of sites with planning permissions that are due to expire during the plan period and reserves within individual sites have the potential to be exhausted. This approach was generally supported in the responses to the Issues and Options consultation, although various concerns were raised regarding the potential environmental effects of extensions to quarries or new quarries.

**9.25** For sand and gravel, current reserves provide for around 17 years of production from the end of 2010 based on the 10 year sales average but would only provide for around 12 years production if the level of sales required to meet the apportionment recommended by the North East Aggregates Working Party for Northumberland was achieved. While this is above the minimum land bank indicator of 7 years for sand and gravel as set out in the NPPF, there will be a need to release further sand and gravel reserves in Northumberland later in the plan period to maintain an appropriate landbank of reserves.

**9.26** The approach will be to identify specific sites in the Delivery DPD to meet this identified requirement for additional provision in the latter part of the plan period. The principal broad locations for these sites will be the Breamish, Glen and Till valleys and the Tyne Valley. However, this does not preclude the consideration of sites outside of these areas where it can be demonstrated that the proposed site is more environmentally acceptable.

### Policy 25

#### Aggregate minerals

The strategy for aggregate minerals is to:

- a. Make land available to provide a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to meet identified needs as informed by the Northumberland Local Aggregate Assessment.
- b. Encourage the use of recycled and secondary aggregates and require proposals for primary aggregate extraction to demonstrate that the need for this mineral cannot be met from recycled and secondary aggregates.
- c. Give priority to the extension of existing sites where this would have no unacceptable adverse effects on local communities and the environment, as assessed against Policy 22.
- d. Release reserves of crushed rock through the extensions to existing sites and new quarries where it can be demonstrated that:
- e. The proposal would help to maintain productive capacity to meet the required provision identified in the Local Aggregates Assessment;
- f. 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;
- g. There would be no significant unacceptable adverse effects on local communities and the environment as assessed against Policy 22.
- h. Make provision for the release of additional sand and gravel reserves to meet needs over the latter part of the plan period. Specific sites to meet this requirement will be identified in the following principal broad locations:
  - i. Breamish, Glen and Till valleys
  - ii. Tyne Valley
- i. In assessing proposals for sand and gravel extraction consideration will be given to the effects on the environment and local communities and the balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland
- j. The identification of these principal broad locations for sand and gravel extraction does not preclude proposals being considered in other areas where the proposed site would be more acceptable overall than potential sites in the broad locations above.

### Question 28

This is our preferred policy for the provision of aggregate minerals. Do you have any comments?

### Natural building and roofing stone

**9.27** Sandstone from Northumberland is used as a natural building material and has been quarried in the County for many years. This material is important in maintaining and enhancing the character of the built environment in Northumberland and further afield.

**9.28** The demand for building stone arises in relation to specific building or restoration projects, making it difficult to predict demand and land requirements over the period to 2030. The Core Strategy will seek to ensure that a steady and adequate supply of natural building stone is maintained over the plan period.

**9.29** The strategy for natural building and roofing stone is for existing quarries to continue to meet supply requirements during the plan period with proposals for extensions to these quarries and for new quarries, including historic quarries that do not have a planning permission, being permitted where the material cannot be supplied from an existing permitted quarry and subject to their being no significant unacceptable adverse effects on the environment and local communities.

#### Policy 26

##### Natural building and roofing stone

The strategy for natural building and roofing stone is to plan for its steady and adequate provision by:

- a. Supporting the continuation of the provision of building and roofing stone from existing quarries to contribute to supply requirements
- b. Permitting proposals for extensions to existing quarries and the development of new quarries where:
  - i. Proposals demonstrate the material cannot be supplied from an existing quarry; and
  - ii. There will be no significant unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment or the amenity of local communities, as assessed against Policy 22.

#### Question 29

This is our preferred policy for the extraction of natural building and roofing stone. Do you have any comments?

### Oil and gas

**9.30** In terms of conventional oil and gas and shale gas, the Carboniferous rocks in Northumberland are identified as having generating potential but this potential has not been proven following previous exploration of this resource.

## 9. Minerals

**9.31** Northumberland also has the potential for recovery of gas from coal seams and coal mines to produce energy by the means of coal bed methane, abandoned coal mine methane and underground coal gasification. The prospects for these technologies within Northumberland are considered to be low due to the extensive previous working of the coal resource in Northumberland and due to the methane content is considered to be below the levels for commercial extraction. It is, however, recognised that there is potential for underground coal gasification off the South East Northumberland coast and this could result in the need for associated infrastructure in the coastal area.

**9.32** The Issues and Options consultation sought views on whether a specific policy was needed for oil and gas development or whether proposals should be considered against national planning policy and an overarching local minerals policy. In light of the publication of the NPPF and uncertainties regarding the future prospects for oil and gas extraction in Northumberland, the preferred approach to oil and gas extraction is to set out a criteria-based policy to assess proposals that may come forward during the plan period. Relevant factors that are particular applicable to this type of development include potential pollution of land, air and water, disturbance from noise, visual impact and transport impacts.

### Policy 27

#### Oil and gas development

The strategy for onshore oil and gas, including gas from coal seams and workings, is to allow proposals for exploration, appraisal and production provided that:

- a. There are no significant adverse impacts on the environment and local communities, as assessed against Policy 22 and taking account of the environmental considerations within licenced areas;
- b. The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable risk or hazard;
- c. The proposal would be appropriately sited to minimise visual intrusion; and
- d. For conventional oil and gas, the proposal would facilitate the full appraisal and development of the resource.

### Question 30

This is our preferred policy for oil and gas development. Do you have any comments?

## Peat

**9.33** Peat has traditionally been extracted from Northumberland for use in horticultural and as a fuel. The NPPF is clear that local plans should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for peat extraction. This is in line with wider Government policy that seeks to protect peat habitats due to their nature conservation importance and their role as carbon stores.

**9.34** Given the national planning policy context it is proposed that no specific provision for peat extraction is made in the Core Strategy. If proposals for peat extraction come forward during the plan period they will be assessed against national planning policy and other relevant policies in the local plan. This approach was generally supported by the feedback received from the Issues and Options consultation.

### Policy 28

#### Peat

The strategy for peat extraction is to not permit proposals for new sites or extensions to existing sites.

### Question 31

This is our preferred policy for oil and gas development. Do you have any comments?

## Metalliferous and vein minerals

**9.35** The North Pennine Orefield extends into the south west of Northumberland. The industrial minerals fluorspar, witherite and barite occur in the veins with the lead and zinc ores and have been the principal minerals produced across the wider North Pennines in the latter part of the twentieth century, although there has been no recent extraction in Northumberland.

**9.36** Given that the occurrence of these resources in Northumberland overlaps with the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the proposed strategy for metalliferous and vein minerals is to consider proposals against the tests for major development within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the NPPF and other relevant policies in the local plan. Known metalliferous and vein mineral resources will also be safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

### Policy 29

#### Metalliferous and vein minerals

The strategy for metalliferous and vein minerals is to:

- a. Consider proposals against the national planning policy for development in nationally designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other relevant policies in the local plan; and
- b. Safeguard known metalliferous and vein mineral resource against unnecessary sterilisation by non-minerals development in this plan.

### Question 32

This is our preferred policy for the extraction of metalliferous and vein minerals. Do you have any comments?

### Site reclamation

**9.37** It is important that mineral extraction sites are properly restored at the earliest opportunity and the after-use is appropriate to the site involved. The restoration of minerals and landfill sites is a key consideration in assessing proposals for these types of development. Good site reclamation and aftercare has the potential to enhance the environment and contribute to the achievement of wider policy objectives. It is expected that operators will address site reclamation and its proposed after-use at an early stage in the planning process.

**9.38** The policy identifies possible opportunities for site restoration to enhance the environment, which could also have the potential to provide wider benefits. This does not seek to limit the opportunities considered but ensure these issues are at least considered from the initial stages of designing both the site and its intended after-use.

**9.39** The responses to the Issues and Options consultation generally supported the opportunities identified following site restoration. The responses also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the restoration of sites is considered from when a site is being proposed and that it is important to ensure sites are restored at the earliest opportunity. These principles are recognised in the preferred policy approach for mineral site reclamation.

### Policy 30

#### Site reclamation

The strategy for the reclamation of mineral extraction sites in Northumberland is:

- a. Ensure high quality restoration and aftercare takes place in line with current industry best practice at the earliest opportunity with the phased restoration of sites where feasible.
- b. Ensure that the proposed after-use seeks to positively enhance the local environment and bring benefits to local communities having due regard to landscape character of the local area, the setting of the site and its characteristics prior to working
- c. Seek the following primary after-uses in appropriate circumstances:
  - i. Creation or enhancement of wildlife habitats that would result in a net-gain for biodiversity and would be linked to existing ecological networks, having particular regard to the Biodiversity Action Plan;
  - ii. Provision of public open space;
  - iii. Creation of new native woodland;

- iv. Creation of new water habitats, including those that could assist in flood alleviation, that are designed to take account of aviation issues where relevant;
- v. Improved public access, including links to surrounding green infrastructure and expansion of the public rights of way network.
- vi. Where high quality agricultural land is present, reclamation for agriculture and food production will be sought but opportunities to incorporate elements of after-uses listed above should be considered.

Proposals for minerals extraction are required to be accompanied by detailed proposals for site restoration and the proposed future land use. Planning permission will not be granted unless satisfactory provision has been made for the reclamation and after-use of the site.

### Question 33

This is our preferred policy for mineral site reclamation. Do you have any comments?

### Safeguarding mineral resources

**9.40** The NPPF seeks to ensure that known minerals resources are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral developments either above the mineral resource or near to it. Local plans are required to define 'Minerals Safeguarding Areas' (MSAs) to identify that there are mineral resources present that may be sterilised by non-mineral development. MSAs carry no presumption that any areas within them will ultimately be acceptable for mineral extraction.

**9.41** MSAs are defined around for the following mineral resources:

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

**9.42** The MSAs cover the whole of the resource area. The MSAs will include known mineral resources beneath existing settlements and will overlap with other planning and environmental designations. The MSA will also be extended beyond the boundary of the mineral resource to include a buffer around the actual area of the resource to avoid sterilisation from development near the resource.

### Policy 31

#### Safeguarding mineral resources

Mineral Safeguarding Areas are defined around the following mineral resources in Northumberland:

- a. Carboniferous limestone;
- b. Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
- c. Coal;
- d. Igneous rock;
- e. Sand and gravel;
- f. Sandstone; and
- g. Metalliferous and vein minerals.

These resources will be protected from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

All applications for non-mineral development in a Mineral Safeguarding Area must include an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of development, except where the proposed development is of the type set out in the accompanying exemption criteria.

Planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area unless:

- h. The applicant can demonstrate to that the mineral concerned is not of economic value; or
- i. The mineral can be extracted without unacceptable community and environmental impacts, as assessed against Policy 22, prior to the development taking place; or
- j. The development is temporary in nature and it will not impact on the potential for mineral extraction within a timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or
- k. There are no other reasonable alternative options for the proposed development that would avoid or minimise the sterilisation of minerals; or
- l. The overall planning benefits of the proposed development outweighs the potential loss of the mineral resource; or
- m. The development is exempt as set out in the accompanying exemption criteria.

Developments exempt under m. are:

- n. Householder planning applications (includes extensions to existing domestic dwellings, domestic garages, outbuildings and high garden walls or fences)
- o. Advertisement consent applications
- p. Reserved matters applications (including applications following the grant of outline planning permission)

- q. Applications to change the use of an existing building (except where the change is to a residential dwelling (use class C3) and other sensitive users such as schools (use class D1) and hospitals (use class C2))
- r. Applications to remove or amend a condition of an existing planning application
- s. Works to trees
- t. Prior notifications
- u. Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development (CLEUD)
- v. Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD)
- w. Sites that have been allocated for development in the development plan, where the development plan has taken account of the presence of a mineral resource, the potential for prior extraction of the mineral resource and determined that prior extraction should not be considered when planning applications come forward on the site in question

### Question 34

This is our preferred policy for safeguarding mineral resources. Do you have any comments?

### Safeguarding minerals infrastructure

**9.43** 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.

**9.44** The most 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 sites 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. The safeguarding of these sites is also particularly important if the use of rail and water for the transportation of minerals is to be encouraged. Nonetheless it is recognised that it is also important to safeguard the other sites listed above, particularly to ensure that their future use is not prejudiced by incompatible development in the vicinity of the safeguarded site.

**9.45** Details of the safeguarded sites are provided in the tables 9.1 to 9.3 below.

## 9. Minerals

**Table 9.1 Infrastructure associated with minerals transportation**

Wharfs	Railheads	Rail links to mineral sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battleship Wharf, Cambois</li> <li>• Tweed Docks, Berwick-upon-Tweed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butterwell, Linton Steadsburn, Widdrington</li> <li>• Belford (Easington) Quarry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Coast Main Line to the Butterwell Disposal Point to Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Line at Ashington</li> <li>• East Coast Main Line to the Steadsburn railhead</li> <li>• Rail links to the Port of Blyth</li> </ul>

**Table 9.2 Sites for concrete batching, the manufacture of concrete products and coated materials**

Coating plant	Concrete batching	Concrete manufacturing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrasford Quarry</li> <li>• Cragmill Quarry</li> <li>• Divethill Quarry</li> <li>• Howick Quarry</li> <li>• Keepersshield Quarry</li> <li>• Swinburne Quarry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Gasworks Site, Alnwick</li> <li>• Barrington Road, Bedlington</li> <li>• Blyth</li> <li>• Haltwhistle</li> <li>• Howford Quarry, Acomb</li> <li>• Red Row, Bedlington</li> <li>• South Farm, Belford</li> <li>• Tweed Docks, Berwick-upon-Tweed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephenson Way, Bedlington</li> <li>• West Sleekburn</li> </ul>

**Table 9.3 Sites for recycled and secondary aggregates**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flannigan site – Ramparts Business Park, Berwick-upon-Tweed</li> <li>• HFF Groundworks site – West Sleekburn Industrial Estate, Bedlington</li> <li>• Howick Quarry – Longhoughton</li> <li>• Hughes site – East Cramlington Industrial Estate, Cramlington</li> <li>• JBT Waste site – Barrington Road Industrial Estate, Bedlington</li> <li>• Prestwick Pit site – near Ponteland</li> <li>• Sanders site – Pegswood</li> <li>• Stewart site – Coquet Enterprise Park, Amble</li> <li>• Thornbrough Quarry – Corbridge</li> <li>• Thornton site – Linton Colliery</li> </ul>
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### Policy 32

#### Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure

Minerals related infrastructure shall be safeguarded from unnecessary loss from non-mineral related development on the site or within the vicinity of it.

Planning permission will not be granted for non-minerals related development that would result in the unnecessary loss of minerals related infrastructure, unless:

- a. It can be demonstrated that the proposal for non-mineral development will not prevent or prejudice the current or future use of the site; or
- b. It can be demonstrated that the site is no longer needed for mineral handling, processing, storage and transport; or
- c. It can be demonstrated that alternative capacity for mineral storage, processing and transport facility be provided and delivered at a different site.

### Question 35

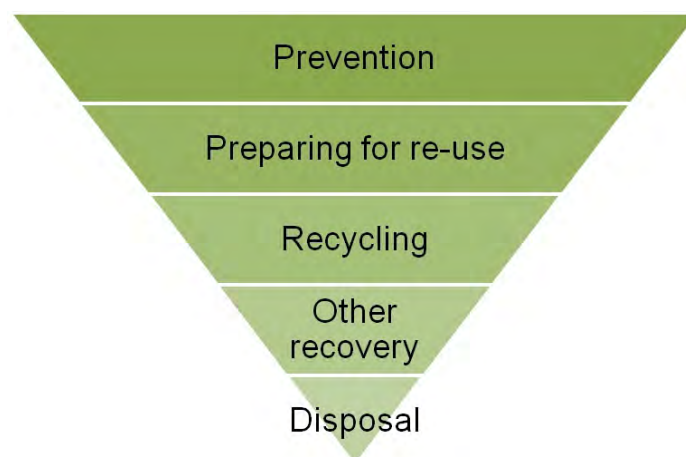
This is our preferred policy for safeguarding minerals related infrastructure. Do you have any comments?

## 10. Waste

### 10. Waste

**10.1** Waste is defined as material or object that is no longer wanted and requires management. However, rather than being something that needs to be disposed of, the Core Strategy recognises that 'waste' is an important and valuable resource. The Core Strategy, therefore, 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 10.1) and assist in recovering these resources rather than disposing of them, in accordance with Objective 7.

**Figure 10.1 The waste hierarchy (Source: Planning Policy Statement 10)**



### The amount of waste we need to plan for

**10.2** The Issues and Options document provided an overview of the tonnages of waste that are forecast to arise over the plan period. The responses to the consultation generally accepted that this provided the most robust information on which to identify the waste management capacity that needs to be provided over the plan period. It is recognised that municipal waste (or local authority collected waste) arisings are less than those forecast and that this pattern is likely to continue over the plan period.

**10.3** Some of the responses to the Issues and Options consultation queried why the forecast arisings increase 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 forecast to result in an overall increase arisings despite a decrease in the waste produced per person. There is a similar situation for commercial and industrial waste where there is a projected increase in arisings to reflect growth ambitions. The amount of local authority collected waste managed by landfill is projected to be around 8% over the plan period and this has reduced significantly from the tonnages managed by landfill prior to 2009 which were in excess of 100,000 tonnes each year.

**Table 10.1 Summary of projected arisings and management of local authority collected waste from Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30**

Year	Projected waste arising (tonnes)	Waste recycled (i)(tonnes)	Waste recovered (ii)(tonnes)	Residual waste to landfill (tonnes)
2014/15	208,760	83,504	192,059	16,701
2019/20	220,113	92,447	202,504	17,609
2024/25	232,081	99,795	213,515	18,566
2029/30	244,698	110,114	225,122	19,576

i. Includes reuse, recycling and composting

ii. Includes reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery

**Table 10.2 Summary of projected arisings and management of commercial and industrial waste for Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30**

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated reuse, 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

**Table 10.3 Summary of projected arisings and management of hazardous waste for Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30**

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated reuse, 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

**10.4** Further work is also required to understand how the arisings of waste from the other waste streams set out in the Issues and Options document are likely to change over the plan period. Work is also being carried out with other local authorities within the region as part of the duty to cooperate to provide more robust information on the generation of low level radioactive waste in Northumberland.

## 10. Waste

### Provision for waste recycling and recovery capacity

**10.5** It is recognised that Northumberland already has a well-established and spatially 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 the council's long-term aspiration to provide household waste recovery centres to serve the Coquet valley, North Tyne valley and Amble areas where coverage 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 that should be reflected in the Core Strategy.

**10.6** The preferred spatial strategy for the provision of new or enhanced waste recycling and recovery facilities is to focus provision on the key settlements in Northumberland and the South East Northumberland Delivery Area. These locations represent the principal sources of waste generation in Northumberland as a result of these locations being the main centres of population, centres for commercial and industrial activity and the main focus for new development. The West Sleekburn area within the South East Northumberland Delivery Area is also recognised as a strategically important location for waste management due to the concentration of existing facilities there.

**10.7** The development of waste recycling and recovery facilities outside of these key locations, including within other smaller settlements, will generally only be suitable for smaller-scale facilities and will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they are located reasonably close to the source of the waste and/or is to manage waste arising in a local catchment and the transport network is adequate to accommodate the proposed imports and exports of materials from the site.

**10.8** The preferred approach also sets out a sequential approach to selecting sites within the spatial strategy. The draft policy refers to 'designated' industrial estates and work is currently being carried out to identify which industrial estates would be suitable for waste management uses, which will then be set out in the next version of the Core Strategy. On farm locations will be most appropriate for the treatment of organic and agricultural wastes and examples of facility types include anaerobic digestion and composting. In addition, it is recognised that some waste management uses, such as open windrow composting, may have a requirement for an outdoor location and this is recognised in the policy.

**10.9** These principles for the location of new or enhanced waste management facilities and the scope of the criteria for assessing proposals were generally supported in the feedback from the Issues and Options consultation. Some of the responses did, however, make detailed points on the scope of individual criteria and concerns were raised about development that would occur outside of the key settlements.

**10.10** The Sustainability Appraisal recognised that this approach would have a positive effect in terms of locating facilities close to the main sources of waste generation in Northumberland, minimising the distances waste is transported. It also recommended that policy criteria would also ensure environmental effects, including those on local communities, are acceptable.

## Policy 33

### Provision for waste management

The strategy for the provision of new waste management facilities is to focus new development in the key settlements in Northumberland and particularly in South East Northumberland Delivery Area. The West Sleekburn area is recognised as a strategically important location for waste management. Proposals outside of these areas will only be suitable where they help support the provision of an accessible network of local facilities and have suitable connections to the transport network.

The strategy for the locating of new waste management facilities is to locate sites in the following order of preference:

1. On-site management of waste where it arises;
2. Sites with an existing waste management use, including the extension of existing facilities where it can be demonstrated that there are no significant cumulative adverse environmental effects from the site operations or the transportation of waste;
3. Designated industrial estates;
4. Previously developed land or redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages;
5. Greenfield sites.

In granting planning permission, the proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. The design is compatible with its location in terms of its siting, scale, form and landscaping;
- b. The facility is fully contained within buildings or enclosed structures, unless it can be demonstrated that any significant adverse environmental effects can be effectively mitigated by other means;
- c. The proposal is well related to the transport network and materials can be imported and exported from the facility by means other than road transport. Where road transport is proposed, and transport by means other than transport is not feasible, the road network and site access shall be suitable to cope with the proposed vehicle movements;
- d. The proposal would not result in significant adverse effects on the natural and historic environment, nearby sensitive receptors or the residential amenity; and
- e. The proposal would not give rise to significant adverse cumulative effects.

## Question 36

This is our preferred policy for the provision of new or enhanced waste management facilities. Do you have any comments?

## 10. Waste



### Waste disposal

**10.11** In line 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 that it is not possible to recycle, including the residues remaining after recycling and recovery has occurred. Landfill sites are split into three categories: non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill and inert landfill. By definition non-hazardous and hazardous landfill sites are non-inert.

**10.12** 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 and also from Newcastle and North Tyneside. The strategic role of this site will continue during the plan period due to its remaining capacity.

**10.13** The preferred approach for non-inert landfill 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 to landfill. The preferred approach recognises the strategic role of the Ellington Road landfill site and sets criteria to assess proposals that come forward over the plan period. Three potential approaches were identified in the Issues and Options consultation. There was a support for both the approaches that would seek to examine opportunities for further disposal capacity at the existing sites and the identification of areas of search as these would provide the most certainty. Preference was also stated for the latter approach to be used in combination with policy criteria.

**10.14** The Sustainability Appraisal identified some uncertainty in relation to this approach as it would be dependent on the location of any proposals. The Sustainability Appraisal recommended that the policy approach needed to have safeguards to mitigate any significant adverse impact on the environment and local communities.

### Policy 34

#### Non-inert waste landfill and landraising

The strategy for waste disposal is to seek to minimise the waste managed by landfill and to maximise the use of solutions higher up the waste hierarchy.

The focus for disposal over the plan period and further capacity is the 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 their environmental acceptability.

Proposals for additional non-inert landfill capacity will only be permitted where:

- a. It can be demonstrated that the waste cannot be practically managed using solutions further up the waste hierarchy
- b. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not have a significant unacceptable adverse impact on local communities and the environment
- c. The proposal would not result in the creation of excessive capacity that would lead to the unnecessary importation of waste from outside Northumberland
- d. The proposal makes provision for the capture and use of landfill gas for energy generation; and
- e. The proposal is supported by a detailed restoration and aftercare scheme.

### Question 37

This is our preferred policy for non-inert waste landfill. Do you have any comments?

**10.15** For inert waste landfill the preferred approach is to seek to maximise construction and demolition waste recycling and where this is not feasible seek to encourage the positive use of material for the restoration of mineral extraction sites and/or for land reclamation schemes. Policy criteria are also provided to assess proposals for additional inert landfill capacity.

**10.16** This approach was generally supported in the feedback received from the Issues and Options consultation. The Sustainability Appraisal identified the approach would have positive outcomes in terms of encouraging the positive use of inert wastes but a number of uncertainties were identified as the impact in relation to a number of objectives would be dependent on the location of any proposals.

### Policy 35

#### Inert waste landfill and landraising

For inert waste disposal the strategy for inert waste disposal is to encourage the positive use of material through the restoration of mineral extraction sites and for land reclamation schemes.

Proposals for additional inert landfill capacity will only be permitted where:

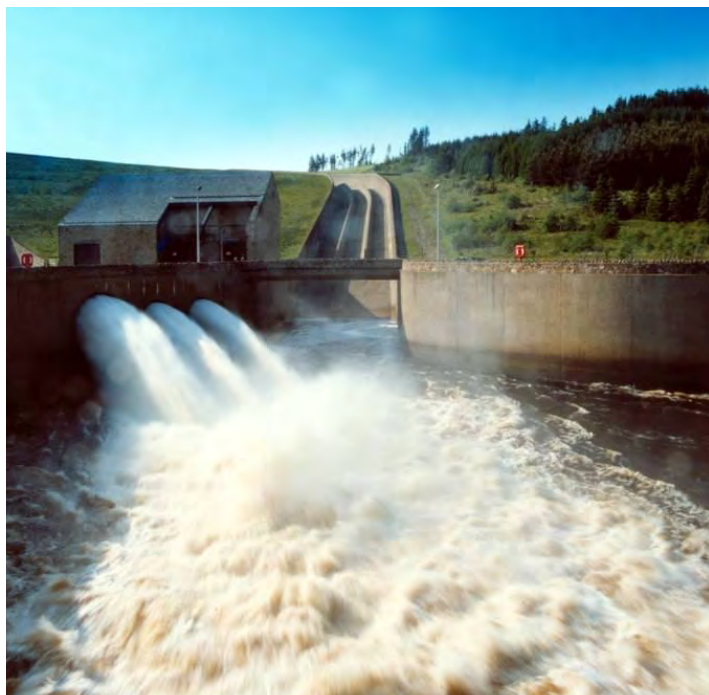
- a. It can be demonstrated that the waste cannot be practically managed using solutions further up the waste hierarchy;
- b. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not have a significant unacceptable adverse impact on local communities and the environment;
- c. The proposal would not result in the creation of excessive capacity that would lead to the unnecessary importation of waste from outside Northumberland;
- d. The proposal would not delay the restoration of existing sites; and
- e. The proposal is supported by a detailed restoration and aftercare scheme.

### Question 38

This is our preferred policy for inert waste landfill. Do you have any comments?

### 11. Renewable and low carbon energy

**11.1** Objective 5 for the Core Strategy is to make Northumberland resilient to climate change and contribute to mitigating its effects. The development of renewable and low carbon energy can make a significant contribution to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and future climate change and increase energy security, enabling the UK to have greater control over its energy supply.



**11.2** Northumberland has significant potential to deliver renewable energy from a number of sources, and generation can have economic benefits. Objective 6 for the Core Strategy is to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, including energy while minimising adverse impacts on communities and the environment. The Core Strategy and subsequent planning decisions therefore need to balance the generation of renewable and low carbon energy with the need to protect the Northumberland's environment and communities from any significant adverse impacts associated with development.

### Northumberland approach to renewable and low carbon energy

**11.3** The [UK Renewable Energy Strategy \(2009\)](#) sets out how the UK intends to derive 15% of all energy used from renewable resources by 2020, in order to fulfil its EU obligations, and make progress on its commitments to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 against 1990 levels as detailed in the [UK Climate Change Act \(2008\)](#). The [UK Renewable Energy Roadmap \(2011\)](#) indicates that the UK is on track to meet its 2020 renewable energy target, which would require that 30% of electricity, and 12% of heat demand will be supplied from renewable resources.

**11.4** The NPPF requires local authorities to have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources. The Council recognises the valuable contribution to energy generation of a number of technologies. The greatest potential for energy generation in Northumberland is in the form of electricity, derived from onshore wind, biomass and hydro power<sup>(28)</sup>.

28 As identified in the Council's [Renewable, Low Carbon Energy Generation and Energy Efficiency Study \(2011\)](#)

## **11. Renewable and low carbon energy**

**11.5** In the Issues and Options consultation we asked if the Council's approach to seek to meet national aspirations in respect of climate change and renewable energy, but not set a local target for Northumberland was the right one. Feedback highlighted concern that there was too great an emphasis on wind energy, and that a more balanced approach to generation is required. Northumberland residents felt that the County has already fulfilled its obligations in terms of renewable energy generation and that the Council should not chase national targets. Support for local targets was mixed, with different views considering that targets should be considered as ceilings and floors, and simply as aspirational.

**11.6** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach proposed in the Issues and Options document was likely to have a positive impact upon greenhouse gas emissions, resource use and economic objectives. However, it highlighted that if national renewable energy aspirations increase, large-scale development could be detrimental to objectives relating to the well-being of communities, heritage and Northumberland's landscapes.

**11.7** Northumberland has already made a significant contribution in the delivery of renewable energy. While the operational capacity of large scale schemes is currently only 67MW, when consented schemes are also considered, the capacity of 345MW exceeds the County's RSS 2010 target of 212MW. The majority of consented schemes are for wind farm developments, a number of which are expected to become operational in the near future. In addition, if schemes currently in the planning system (principally from biomass and wind) receive consent, the 2010 RSS target for capacity will nearly have been achieved twice over.

**11.8** If consented schemes and those in the planning system are considered, Northumberland will generate a much higher percentage of its electricity consumption from renewable sources, than that which is required nationally to meet aspirations for 2020. However, there remains a significant gap between the capacity of consented and operational schemes.

**11.9** The NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and it is not considered consistent with a positive strategy for renewable energy for targets to be ceilings. In this context, and given the gap between operational and consented capacity, it is not considered appropriate to set targets for renewable energy in the Core Strategy, but provide a positive approach to renewable energy, which has due regard to residential amenity and the significant value of the landscape and Northumberland's ecological, cultural and historical assets.

### **Assessing large-scale renewable and low carbon energy development**

**11.10** In order to support a positive strategy for renewable and low carbon energy generation, consistent with the NPPF, applicants will not be required to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and applications will be supported if impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. In order to guide development proposals for renewable and low carbon energy, and ensure that Northumberland's environment and communities are appropriately protected from any significantly adverse impacts it is considered that a criteria based approach should be adopted.

**11.11** At the Issues and Options stage, the Council asked whether this approach is appropriate, and whether separation distances between wind turbines and residential developments and opportunity areas should also be used to guide development.

**11.12** There was general support for a criteria-based approach but it was considered that a wind specific policy was also required, given concerns regarding this technology. It was considered that greater clarity of definition is required regarding the type and scale of development. It was also considered that the proposed criteria were not robust and clear enough and needed to be quantified or qualified. While additional criteria were suggested in relation to assessing wind applications, wind farm developers considered that criteria beyond that required by national policy were overly restrictive. There was strong resident support for separation distances between turbines and properties, and some other sensitive land uses and designations. Support from environmental groups was mixed. There was little support for the identification of 'opportunity areas' to guide the spatial distribution of wind developments.

**11.13** While the Sustainability Appraisal considered that the proposed assessment criteria should mitigate most potential adverse impacts, the benefit of an additional criterion to protect local amenity was identified.

**11.14** Recognising that different development proposals, both in scale and type, will present different planning issues, small-scale schemes<sup>(29)</sup> will be determined by Policy 39.

**11.15** For all other renewable and low carbon energy development proposals, defined as large-scale in the Core Strategy, Policy 36 will apply. For large-scale wind turbine developments, Policy 37 should be read in conjunction with Policy 36 to address specific issues relating to this technology.

### Policy 36

#### Large-scale renewable and low carbon energy development

Large-scale renewable and low carbon energy development proposals will be supported in order to contribute to energy generation and a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, unless the environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposal are clearly outweighed, during construction or operation, by significant adverse impacts upon:

- a. Landscape character and sensitivity;
- b. The special qualities of, or compromise the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, or the North Pennines and Northumberland Coast Areas 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 sites and their settings;

29 In the Core Strategy, small-scale schemes are those defined in the [Green Energy \(Definition and Promotion\) Act \(2009\)](#) and the [Microgeneration Strategy \(2011\)](#) as microgeneration schemes with a capacity of up to 50kW for electricity and 300kW for heat.

## 11. Renewable and low carbon energy

- e. Air, and ground and surface water quality;
- f. Hydrology and water supply;
- g. Highways<sup>(30)</sup> and traffic flow, Public Rights of Way<sup>(31)</sup> and non-motorised users; and
- h. Amenity due to noise, odour, dust, vibration or visual impact.

Proposals located in Green Belt, will need to demonstrate the very special circumstances to justify the otherwise inappropriate development.

### Additional requirements

- i. All planning applications will need to demonstrate that there is grid capacity, and how grid connection can be achieved without new lines, associated infrastructure and ancillary buildings having a significant adverse visual impact.
- ii. All planning applications will need to demonstrate how sites will be decommissioned and restored to quality of at least its original condition once operations have ceased.
- iii. All applications will need to demonstrate compliance with each requirement individually and cumulatively.

Policy 37 should be read in conjunction with Policy 36 for large-scale wind energy applications.

### Question 39

This is our preferred policy for assessing large-scale renewable and low carbon energy developments. Do you have any comments?

## Wind energy

**11.16** Northumberland's wind resource is significant, and appropriate development proposals will be considered favourably in accordance with national policy. 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 upon residential amenity.

**11.17** In comparison to the number of turbines with planning permission, the number constructed within Northumberland is relatively small. Future wind turbine proposals will need to consider the cumulative impact of all consented schemes. Given that a number of developments have been consented in the RSS's Broad Areas of Least Constraint<sup>(32)</sup>,

30 In this context, a highway is defined as a publically maintained road, together with footways and verges (Planning Portal, 2012).

31 Public rights of way are defined as footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (Planning Inspectorate, 2009).

32 The RSS identified Broad Areas of Least Constraint for wind energy at South and West of Berwick, North/South Charlton, Knowesgate, Harwood Forest, Northern Coalfield South of Druridge Bay and Kiln Pitt Hill

opportunities for further wind farm development in some areas of the county may be limited. With advancements in technology, wind turbines are increasing in size, and the potential impacts are greater.

**11.18** Recognising that there are a number of planning issues which are specific to wind turbine development, a criteria based policy for this technology has been developed, to address concerns highlighted in the Sustainability Appraisal and raised during the Issues and Options consultation. To protect residential amenity, and reflecting support for separation distances, there will be a presumption against wind turbine development within a distance of six times the turbine blade tip height of residential properties.

**11.19** To address specific issues relating to large-scale wind turbine development, Policy 37 should be read in conjunction with Policy 36.

### **Policy 37**

#### **Large-scale wind energy development**

The large scale development of wind turbines, or groups of turbines will be supported, unless the environmental and economic benefits of the proposal are clearly outweighed by significant adverse impacts upon:

- a. Amenity of occupiers of residential properties or residential areas, due to the noise of rotating turbines, shadow flicker or visual intrusion;
- b. Long range views of and from the Cheviot, Simonside Hills, and the Outcrop Hills and Escarpments of the Northumberland Sandstone Hills National Landscape Character Area<sup>(33)</sup> which are important to the character and quality of the landscape;
- c. Peat habitats, and mobile species such as bats or birds;
- d. The safety of aviation operations, and navigational systems;
- e. TV and/or radio reception, and information and telecommunications systems; and
- f. Highways and traffic flow during construction and decommissioning. Applications will need to demonstrate that site access can be achieved without significant adverse environmental, social or economic impacts.

Within the North Pennines and Northumberland Coast AONBs there will be a presumption against wind energy developments of more than one turbine, or turbines with a hub height of 25 metres or more.

#### **Additional requirements**

- i. All planning applications for wind turbine development should be accompanied by rigorous and accurate assessments of all aspects of the proposed development

33 The Outcrop Hills and Escarpments are defined in the Northumberland Key Land Use Impact Study Part c (2010)

## 11. Renewable and low carbon energy

consistent with national guidance<sup>(34)</sup>, and undertaken in accordance with the latest technical standards and guidance.

- ii. All planning applications need to assess the cumulative impact of developments, including those with planning consent which have not yet been constructed.
- iii. To maintain public safety, wind turbines should not be located within topple distance plus 10% of a highway or railway line, and blades should not over-sweep a public right of way.
- iv. 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.
- v. All planning applications need to assess the impacts of development in neighbouring administrative areas.
- vi. All applications will need to demonstrate compliance with each requirement individually and cumulatively.

Policy 37 should be read in conjunction with Policy 36 for large scale wind energy applications.

### Question 40

This is our preferred policy for assessing large scale wind energy developments. Do you have any comments?

<sup>34</sup> The NPPF indicates that the approach set out in National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) and relevant sections of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1) should be used in determining planning applications for wind energy development.

### 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

**12.1** Sustainable design and construction is about creating high quality developments that are cheaper to run and minimise their environmental impact. It is mainly concerned with improving energy efficiency and lowering carbon output from new and existing buildings. In the UK almost half of carbon emissions come from buildings: 27% from domestic buildings and 17% from non-domestic, therefore improving energy efficiency of existing buildings is an important element of meeting CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets.

**12.2** Objective 7 of the Core Strategy is to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, which include minerals, energy, land, existing built fabric and water. Objective 5 is to make Northumberland resilient to climate change and contribute to mitigating against its effects. Improving the sustainability of building construction and use, and supporting small scale renewable and low carbon energy generation provides an opportunity to deliver these objectives.

**12.3** In addition, local generation would improve Northumberland's energy security; this in turn can keep energy prices steady and aid the 26% of the County's household living in fuel poverty. Helping to deliver Core Strategy Objective 3, to maintain and create sustainable communities throughout Northumberland.



### The Energy Hierarchy

**12.4** An energy hierarchy approach to sustainable development can be a cost effective way of achieving low carbon development by guiding priorities in development design. The Issues and Options document identified two possible hierarchies. Both prioritise energy reduction and efficiency with one then giving precedence to renewable energy, the other favouring decentralised energy networks.

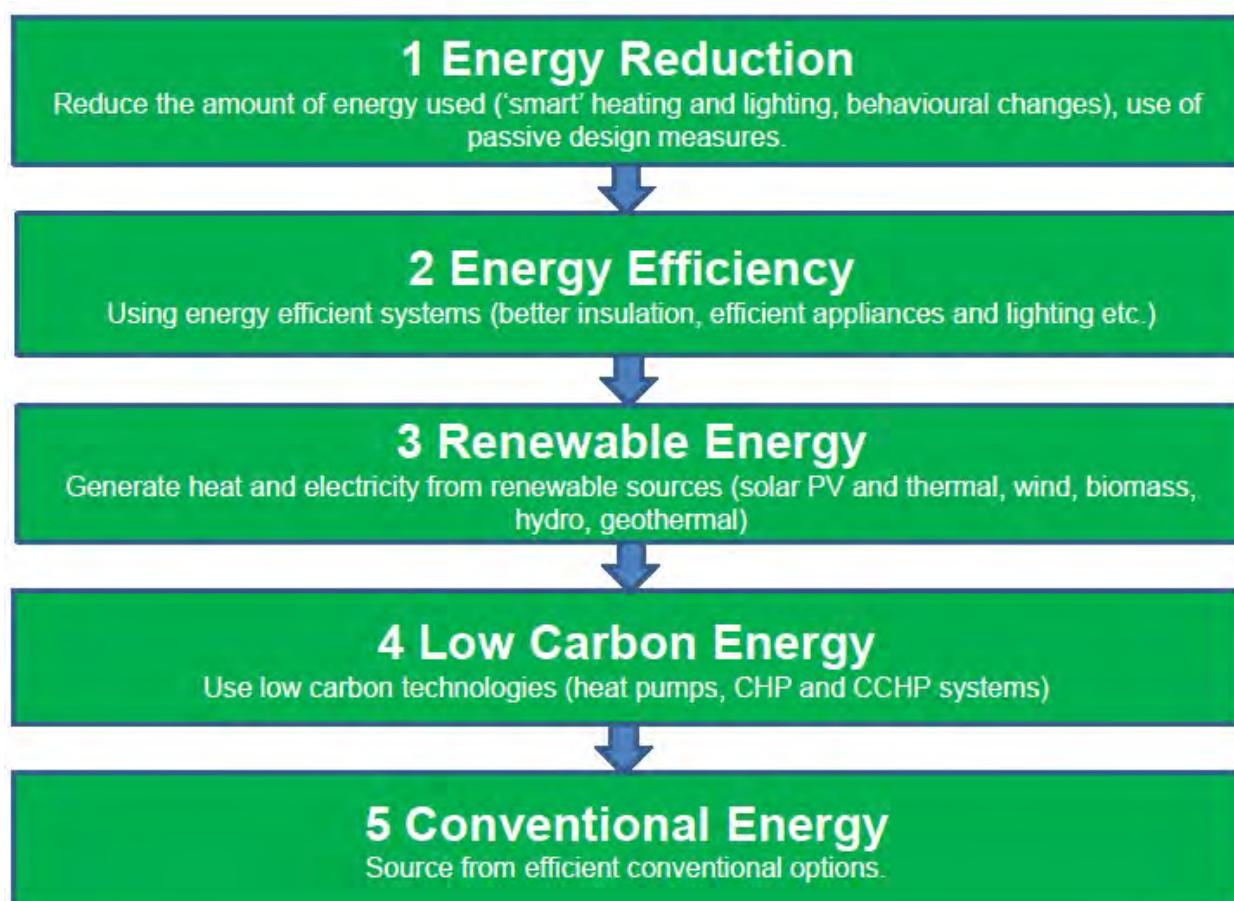
**12.5** Feedback from the consultation showed strong support for an energy hierarchy approach, with agreement that energy reduction and efficiency should be the main priorities. The need for a clear distinction on which technologies apply to each tier was suggested. Many also thought supplying energy from renewable sources needs to be high up the hierarchy given the potential in Northumberland.

## 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

**12.6** The hierarchy prioritising decentralised energy is not considered the best approach for Northumberland. Due to low population density in much of the County the potential for large scale energy networks is limited as in many areas a network may not be financially or technically achievable. However, there is a clear need to encourage use of decentralised energy networks where feasible, particularly in large developments, high density schemes, and those close to sources of waste heat such as large public buildings and industrial operations.

**12.7** The preferred policy approach is to use a hierarchy prioritising renewable energy generation, as the county has strong potential for small scale generation of both heat and electricity. Prioritising this will raise the County's contribution to national generation targets, and will provide more flexibility to developers as the wide choice of technologies will allow for the one most suited to site specific conditions to be included in the design. Developers are encouraged to use the Regional Micro Renewables Toolkit (NaREC) to determine this.

**Figure 12.1 The Northumberland Energy Hierarchy**



The hierarchy does not demand specific targets to be met at each level. It is an overarching approach for developers to factor in the design of a building or development, and demonstrate this to the Council as part of a design statement.

## 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

### Extensions to existing buildings

**12.8** Northumberland's existing building stock is generally quite inefficient with annual carbon output per person in Northumberland greater than the north east and national average, and one of the highest outputs per person from residential buildings in the whole country. The high proportion of detached and solid wall properties is a contributor to residential inefficiency, and there is still considerable potential to increase efficiency in existing buildings. For example only 36% of Northumberland's homes currently have wall insulation.

**12.9** The Issues and Options consultation presented three options: enforced incremental improvements to the existing building when it is extended; mandatory payment into a carbon offset fund; or reliance on building regulations and financial incentives.

**12.10** Feedback showed the need to improve the efficiency of existing buildings is generally supported, but there was a mixed response between relying on the Building Regulations and requiring efficiency improvements to the rest of the house when permission is granted for extensions. Many felt that this would be too great a financial burden on households and could impact on construction jobs.

**12.11** The preferred approach therefore is to encourage developers to improve the energy efficiency of the host building when extensions and conversions are undertaken. It is recognised that this is likely to cause minimal disruption to the buildings use, and will bring benefit to the future user through lower running costs whilst lowering Northumberland's carbon output. Efficiency improvements in the existing stock will also be improved through a positive approach to the use of allowable solutions<sup>(35)</sup>.



### New buildings

**12.12** Building Regulations set the minimum energy efficiency and carbon standards for all new and refurbished buildings. It will be the main driver of improvements in sustainable construction. From 2013 buildings are required to be 44% more efficient than the target rate established in 2006. Further targets seek to increase this to zero carbon standard for homes from 2016, and in non-residential development from 2019, with certain public buildings expected to achieve this sooner. A proportion of zero carbon buildings

35 A flexible range of measures to reach zero carbon standard as yet undefined by the Government

## 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

carbon and energy savings will be achieved through 'allowable solutions'. In due course these demanding targets may deliver small-scale renewables<sup>(36)</sup> in order to meet the energy reduction requirements.

**12.13** The Issues and Options document identified two main approaches for the Core Strategy to be proactive and go beyond Building Regulations: targets for on-site renewable energy generation or carbon reduction (a 'Merton' approach); or targets set against nationally recognised building design standards.

**12.14** 56% of responses favoured setting targets against national design standards alongside building regulations (but avoiding duplication) as a lead to zero carbon buildings. It was felt that policy would need to be flexible to allow for future innovation, and a suitable requirement should apply to all development. A percentage based renewable generation or carbon reduction policy was generally seen as inflexible and difficult to achieve.

**12.15** The energy efficiency of new buildings can also be improved through the use of 'passive design' measures, with savings of 20-30% achievable. Provided that they are applied at the design stage to influence massing, siting, layout and appearance such measures can typically be applied at little or no extra cost to individual buildings or whole developments.

**12.16** The Issues and Options document asked if the Core Strategy should seek inclusion of passive design measures for all new buildings. The consultation showed strong support, with 76% in favour, but also a need to recognise that site specifics dictate feasibility and the need for the policy to be linked to a design guide. A greater acceptance of innovative building design with a different character was also suggested.

**12.17** Consultation feedback also suggested the need to consider development viability and site specific limitations in relation to passive design and any policy targets beyond building regulations. This suggests the need for a balance between sustainability and allowing for developments to remain economically viable and Northumberland to remain attractive to investment.

**12.18** The preferred policy approach is therefore to take a proactive approach to go beyond the Building Regulations by using nationally recognised design standards to set appropriate targets and guide developers to go beyond carbon and energy reduction in sustainable design, in line with national policy. However, the approach recognises that each development proposal will have specific costs and the location and characteristics of the site will dictate the viability of achieving required standards.

**12.19** The use of a 'Merton' policy approach is not considered a suitable approach for the Core Strategy as experience of using these policies shows they are difficult to enforce as they provide little flexibility to factor in site specific issues and can lead to renewable generation technology being installed where it may not be effective.

**12.20** Two sets of standards are therefore proposed to be used to set targets - the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' (CSH) for domestic buildings, and the 'Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method' (BREEAM) for non-domestic buildings.

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<sup>36</sup> Installation intended to supply the energy needs of a building or group of buildings up to 50kW for electricity and 300kW for heat.

## 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

Both are credit based assessment systems, with each credit weighted for its contribution to an overall score, and closely linked to the Building Regulations. There are a number of advantages to using CSH and BREEAM targets including:

- providing a clear, shared framework to assess development proposals against and guide developers through the design process;
- developments can more easily be independently assessed;
- they bring together the wider aspects of sustainable construction (i.e. water and waste management, cycle storage, sound insulation etc.) with the agenda of carbon reduction and changing how energy is supplied.

**12.21** Whilst BREEAM and CSH are most appropriate at this time, this may change over the life of the Core Strategy and plan reviews will ensure that innovation is not being restricted.

**12.22** To achieve zero carbon development in line with the Governments definition, 'allowable solutions' will be sought after 2016, in line with those subsequently defined. When developers demonstrate that CSH and BREEAM standards cannot be achieved they will be expected to use allowable solutions proportionately to improve sustainability near or off site. This will achieve a balance between sustainability and viability.

**12.23** It is not preferable to set specific targets to incorporate passive design measures. Instead developers should maximise their use at the design stage in relation to the specifics of the development and location, and demonstrate to the Council how the schemes design has achieved this as part of a design statement. It is recognised that it is more challenging to incorporate passive design in conversions and refurbishments, but certain approaches are still achievable.

**12.24** The preferred policy approach also recognises that improving sustainability may produce innovative designs which could be considered to be out of keeping with Northumberland's architectural character. Proposals for innovative design will be supported, provided that they do not conflict with other policies in the plan, particularly that it can be demonstrated that the building will be compatible with its setting and will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

**12.25** In addition, currently 22% of homes in Northumberland are off the gas network, often heated by oil or electricity. This is carbon intensive and can lead to fuel poverty due to the high cost. There is considerable potential to provide heat through biomass conversions and heat pumps, helping to reduce carbon and improve the lives of residents. Whilst conversion of existing properties off carbon fuels is encouraged, it is more technically and financially feasible for new properties to include renewable or low carbon heat generation at the design stage.

### Policy 38

#### Sustainable design and construction

To promote sustainable development all development proposals should demonstrate a commitment to sustainable design and construction and strive to achieve high energy efficiency and low or zero carbon energy generation where viable.

## 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

All new development proposals will be required to satisfy the following criteria, unless the developer can robustly justify why this is not technically or financially viable:

- a. Demonstrate how the design and planned functioning of the development has incorporated the principles of the energy hierarchy;
- b. Taking account landform, layout, building orientation, massing, and landscaping incorporate design measures to improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting, and so lessen the reliance on artificial alternatives;
- c. Connect to an existing or approved district energy scheme where appropriate. Major development proposals should utilise opportunities to incorporate a district energy network;
- d. All new residential units will achieve a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 from 2013 rising to code 6 after 2016 or an equivalent standard for any successor assessment standard;
- e. All non-residential units will achieve a minimum BREEAM 'very good' standard to 2015 and 'excellent' standard thereafter or an equivalent standard for any successor assessment standard;
- f. From 2016 implement agreed 'allowable solutions' to achieve zero carbon buildings. Before 2016, if required Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards cannot be achieved, contribute proportionately to 'allowable solutions' near or off site;
- g. All applications for new units should be accompanied by a BREEAM or Code Sustainable Homes assessment demonstrating how the development meets the required standard; and
- h. Developments not on the gas network should derive their heat from a renewable or low carbon source.

Property owners undertaking extensions on all buildings are encouraged to undertake proportionate energy efficiency improvements to the existing building.

### Question 41

This is our preferred policy for sustainable design and construction. Do you have any comments?

### Small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation

**12.26** Many forms of renewable and low carbon generation technology can currently be installed on existing properties under permitted development rights. There is strong demand in Northumberland to go beyond this with over 320 applications approved for small scale renewable energy schemes since April 2009. Northumberland has the technical potential to achieve 7% carbon reduction and 70,000MWh from maximum uptake of just three technologies (solar PV and thermal, and heat pumps). Micro wind has especially strong potential in rural Northumberland and the availability of local fuel sources can provide for increased biomass generation.

## 12. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy

**12.27** Development of domestic and micro energy generation will allow residential and non-residential buildings to generate clean, cost effective energy and will be supported where appropriate. The preferred approach also supports micro-generation technology installed at a scale suitable to provide for a community energy scheme, or for a domestic scheme to generate additional revenue within the limits of the plans definition of 'small-scale' generation.

**12.28** Policy 39 would apply to all proposals for energy generation development within the limits of the plan's definition of small scale. The approach to individual or community schemes beyond small-scale would be assessed against policies 36 and 37.

### Policy 39

#### Small-scale renewable and low carbon generation

Small-scale renewable or low carbon energy generation proposals will be supported provided that there is no significant adverse impact from proposed development individually, or cumulatively with existing development on:

- a. Landscape character and sensitivity;
- b. The special qualities of, or compromise the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, or the North Pennines and Northumberland Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- c. Internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation and geological sites and features, and protected habitats and species;
- d. Internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets and their settings;
- e. Air, ground, and surface water quality;
- f. Hydrology and water supply;
- g. Highways and traffic flow;
- h. Amenity due to noise, odour, dust, vibration or visual impact;
- i. Infrastructure is located as close as is practicably possible to the development it serves;
- j. The development does not compromise public safety and allows continued safe use of publicly accessible areas, including use of technologically safe equipment and installation practice.

### Question 42

This is our preferred policy for small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation. Do you have any comments?

## 13. Transportation

### 13. Transportation

**13.1** Transport policies will deliver a number of the Core Strategy objectives, particularly Objective 8 which seeks to ensure that all development makes best use of, and safeguards Northumberland's infrastructure securing necessary up-upgrades and promotes sustainable modes of transport where appropriate.

**13.2** Transport policies have an important role in facilitating sustainable development, in accordance with Objective 1. Good access to key services and facilities is vital to support economic development, in accordance with Objective 2, and for the quality of life for Northumberland's residents, in accordance with Objective 3. Transport policies also have an important role in helping to reduce the causes of climate change (Objective 5).

**13.3** Access across the County's boundaries is important, particularly to Tyneside and Scotland, recognising Northumberland's links with surrounding areas for employment, education, leisure and tourism.



### Accessibility

**13.4** It is important that access can be facilitated by a range of modes of transport, other than the private car, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport, and consideration given to disabled access. Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the need to recognise that public transport does not always facilitate journeys, and that in some areas of the county, the private car will remain important.

**13.5** The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that the enhancement of public transport, walking and cycling should have major positive effects across the range of sustainability objectives and indicators through improving access to public transport and encouraging healthy lifestyles through walking and cycling.

**13.6** The NPPF states that the Core Strategy should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. It also recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. This is particularly the case in parts of Northumberland where the

reduction of commercially-viable bus services, together with a reduction in available public sector funding for public transport subsidies and other influencing factors have contributed to the loss of local services.

### **Walking and cycling facilities**

**13.7** Walking and cycling have many benefits in terms of health and well-being as well as reducing vehicle trips and therefore carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion. There is a need to protect and enhance networks for walking and cycling across Northumberland.

**13.8** The extensive Public Rights of Way network provides access for walking, cycling and other non-motorised transport such as horse riding. It can also provide a valuable means of access to education, work, services and facilities, particularly in rural areas. Rights of way are also an important leisure facility.

**13.9** The feedback from the Issues and Options consultation highlighted that there is a need to promote and enhance walking and cycling facilities for visitors and tourists, as well as for Northumberland residents. Many respondents also raised many issues which are outside the control of the planning system, such as the maintenance of Public Rights of Way, and the provision of cycle lanes as part of the highway network. Improvements to Public Rights of Way are dealt with under the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and changes to the highway network such as the provision of cycle lanes are dealt with under the Council's responsibilities as Highway Authority for non-trunk roads.

**13.10** The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that walking and cycling is likely to have many benefits in terms of health and wellbeing, as well as reducing vehicle trips and carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion.

### **Policy 40**

#### **Principles for accessibility**

The Council will support the development of high quality pedestrian, cycle and non-motorised transport networks across the county. New developments should make adequate provision of pedestrian and cycle access and links to existing networks will be sought where appropriate. All development proposals should where appropriate and viable promote accessibility by:

- a. Minimising the overall need for journeys whilst promoting, accommodating and facilitating investment in infrastructure for sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport;
- b. Providing prioritised access for pedestrians and cyclists;
- c. Considering the transport and accessibility needs of the whole community when planning and assessing development.

All major development proposals should be supported by a Transport Assessment/Transport Statement and Travel Plan.

## 13. Transportation

### Question 43

This is our preferred policy for accessibility. Do you have any comments?

### Parking

**13.11** The NPPF allows local planning authorities to set local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, taking account of: the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport; local car ownership levels; and an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

**13.12** It is important to note that the proposed policy approach relates to parking standards associated with development and does not include town centre and on-street car parking, as this is dealt with by the Council's Parking Strategy.

**13.13** The Issues and Options consultation highlighted that a number of Parish and Town Councils would prefer to set local car parking standards through Neighbourhood Plans. However, since not all Parish and Town Councils may wish to produce such documents, there is a need for parking standards to be set across the county in order to ensure that development is required to provide an appropriate level of parking.

**13.14** The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that the approach to parking standards is likely to have a largely uncertain effect since this will depend on the nature and location of development and the way in which parking standards are implemented.

### Policy 41

#### Parking standards for residential and non-residential development

It is proposed that the Core Strategy should retain the Council's current car parking standards [set out in Appendix B], in relation to new residential and non-residential development. The Council may support local variation of these standards in Neighbourhood Plans where evidence and local consultation show this to be feasible and locally acceptable.

### Question 44

This is our preferred approach to parking standards. Do you have any comments?

### Safeguarding existing and future potential rail infrastructure

**13.15** At present, the main towns of Ashington, Bedlington and Blyth do not have direct rail passenger transport services linking to Tyne and Wear. The Council has examined and proposed the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line. This remains an aspiration of the Council, together with the continued use of the line for the transport of freight.

**13.16** The NPPF states that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes. The Issues and Options consultation showed overwhelming support for the safeguarding of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, including links with wider passenger and rail freight networks.

**13.17** Beyond the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, other potential reopening opportunities exist. Examples of such potential schemes are: the South Tynedale Railway, which has potential for leisure purposes; and the possible reopening of Belford Station on the East Coast Main Line. Other opportunities may exist that have yet to be identified. The Core Strategy should provide a positive policy context for this.

**13.18** The Issues and Options consultation reinforced the importance of rail links across the county, as well as the need to ensure that such links are not lost. The consultation identified the need to safeguard the route and alignment of disused railway lines, and it is clear that there is support for the use of such routes in the short to medium term for walking and cycling. These uses would actively safeguard routes and will be supported through the Core Strategy. There was also support for the inclusion of the Aln Valley railway, which is currently being reintroduced. Response from the consultation also suggested that the Core Strategy should set a positive planning policy context for the safeguarding and reintroduction of passenger and freight services where appropriate.

**13.19** The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that this approach is likely to have major positive benefits for the local economy with regard to the movement of freight and improving access to employment opportunities. It is also considered beneficial in terms of facilitating the use of public transport and the integration of transport facilities, thus helping to reduce transport-related emissions.

**13.20** In addition, there is a need to safeguard existing rail freight interchanges in Northumberland to maximise opportunities for rail to be used for the movement of goods and waste. As highlighted in the Waste chapter, there is potential for an additional rail facility near West Sleekburn for the transport of waste. This section should be read in conjunction with the chapters relating to minerals and waste, since handling facilities for such uses are dealt with in these chapters.

**13.21** There are a number of different facilities relating to rail freight within Northumberland. Some are privately owned and/or operated, and there is a need to ensure that strategic freight interchanges, identified in Policy 42, are identified and safeguarded for future use. It is recognised that although the Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium smelter closed in 2012, it is important that the associated freight facilities are retained for future use.

**13.22** There was strong support for this approach through the Issues and Options consultation.

## 13. Transportation

**13.23** The Sustainability Appraisal also highlighted that the approach to safeguarding existing rail freight facilities is likely to have major positive benefits for the local economy with regard to the movement of freight and improving access to employment opportunities. It is also considered beneficial in terms of facilitating the use of public transport and the integration of transport facilities, thus helping to reduce transport-related emissions. In addition, it highlighted rail freight infrastructure can also provide wildlife corridors which provide valuable habitats for plants and wildlife.

### Policy 42

#### Rail transport and safeguarding facilities

The Council will work with stakeholders and operators and will support proposals which will secure the future use of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, where it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment and communities.

Development that would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services and continued rail freight use of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, associated freight branches and necessary infrastructure will not be permitted.

The route and alignment of disused railway lines, along 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 continues to safeguard them for future rail use.

Rail freight facilities, where continued or future use for this purpose is viable, will be safeguarded, including:

- a. Battleship Wharf, Port of Blyth;
- b. Rio Tinto Alcan facilities:
  - i. Aluminium Smelting Plant
  - ii. Lynemouth Power Station
  - iii. Alumina handling facilities, Port of Blyth.

Development which would prejudice this will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities for freight use.

### Question 45

This is our preferred policy for rail transport. Do you have any comments?

### Improving the road network

**13.24** The road network plays an important economic role in facilitating the movement of people and freight. It is important that the road network within Northumberland is fit for purpose.

**13.25** Development requiring new road facilities onsite as well as that linking to the existing road network will need to do so in a way which does not have an adverse impact on the environment and communities. The scale of new development may require mitigation of potential impacts on the road network. Whilst the Core Strategy seeks to provide a policy context to increase the opportunity for non-car borne trips, it has to be recognised that there will still be a need to accommodate the impact of motorised transport journeys both within and arising from development.

**13.26** Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the need to ensure that, where development has adverse impacts on the road network, appropriate measures are put in place in order to mitigate the effects of development.

**13.27** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach to improving the road network is likely to have positive benefits for economic and social objectives by ensuring access to education, employment and training opportunities. Improvement of the road network can also improve traffic flow and reduce congestion, leading to beneficial effects on air quality and health.

#### Policy 43

##### The effects of development on the road network

Development which will impact on the road network will be required to:

- a. Include appropriate measures to mitigate the adverse effects;
- b. Minimise conflict between different types of road user, including measures for traffic management;
- c. Facilitate the safe use of the road network, including footways and cycleways;
- d. Provide appropriate access and egress to/from the development;
- e. Minimise any adverse impact on communities, including noise and air quality;
- f. Where necessary, contribute to the improvement of access to key services and facilities; and
- g. Provide access to sustainable transport provisions, where appropriate.

The Council will consider a 'ringmaster' approach where the cumulative effects of multiple developments impact at the same transport corridors.

#### Question 46

This is our preferred policy on the effects of development on the road network. Do you have any comments?

## 13. Transportation

### Improving Northumberland's Strategic Highway Routes

**13.28** The table below identifies Northumberland's core road network and the highways authorities responsible for these roads. For the purposes of the Core Strategy, these will be collectively referred to as 'Strategic Highway Routes'.

**Table 13.1 Strategic Highway Routes in Northumberland**

Strategic Road Network (Trunk Roads) <sup>(i)</sup>	National Primary Routes <sup>(ii)</sup>
A1(T) A19(T) A69(T)	A68 A189 A696 A697 A1068 (part)

i. Managed by the Highways Agency

ii. Managed by Northumberland County Council

**13.29** Improvements to the A1/A19 Seaton Burn Interchange and Fisher Lane junction have been confirmed through the 'pinch point programme', which seeks to address specific pinch points on the strategic road network. This would see an investment of £6.1m to reduce congestion by improving the A1 northbound and southbound diverge and merge facilities, widening the A1068, A1 and A19 approaches to Fisher Lane roundabout and installing traffic signals on the B1318 approach. This scheme is scheduled to begin in 2014, with completion in the same year.

**13.30** The response to the consultation identified general support for the Council's approach to improving the road network. Comments included the following:

- Pressing for full dualling of the A1 in to be added to the national programme and, in particular, early improvements to address road safety issues and bring the road up to current standards;
- Improving links to the A1 as an economic lifeline – particularly the programmed Morpeth Northern bypass to link with South East Northumberland;
- Addressing congestion on Telford Bridge in central Morpeth;
- Pursuing improvements to A19 junctions with the A1, A189 and A1068, (including through developer contributions), to address congestion; and
- Developing a business case for a new link between Rotary Way and the A189 to improve access to Blyth to address congestion on Cowpen Road and support expected growth, particularly at the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone.

**13.31** The Issues and Options consultation also included a proposal that the Core Strategy should continue to seek to safeguard the route of a bypass for Ponteland. While the consultation responses included some opposition to the building of the bypass, it is considered that its safeguarding should continue until any further review through the Local Transport Plan and pending the outcome of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that is being developed alongside the Core Strategy.

**13.32** The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that improving the road network should be beneficial in terms of social and economic objectives enabling better access to housing, employment and a range of services and facilities. Individual road improvement schemes would need to be carefully considered to assess their environmental impact.

### Policy 44

#### Improving Northumberland's Strategic Highway Routes

Support will be given to the improvement of Northumberland's Strategic Highway Routes by:

- a. seeking to support and safeguard the lines of improvements;
- b. identifying where further examination and investigation of particular projects will be needed in association with future expansion or other development plans;
- c. seeking contributions towards such improvements from developers, where there is a need for the impacts of development on the existing road infrastructure to be mitigated. This will be informed by the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule.

Support will also be given to other road schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan.

### Question 47

This is our preferred policy for improving the strategic highway network. Do you have any comments?

### Ports and harbours

**13.33** Although ports are subject to a separate national policy statement, the Core Strategy should take account of their role within the county. There are 11 ports, harbours and beach launches in Northumberland.

**13.34** The Port of Blyth is the main functioning port in Northumberland, capable of handling large freight vessels. The second largest is Berwick-upon-Tweed. It is expected that both ports will play a key role in facilitating the sustainable transport of freight.

**13.35** The response to the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the need to ensure that port, harbour and beach launch facilities are protected for economic as well as potential leisure and tourism use, whilst ensuring that development is sensitive to the environment and communities.

## 13. Transportation

**13.36** The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that the approach is likely to have positive effects relating to preserving and enhancing cultural heritage with particular regard to fishing and port activity. It could also have positive effects relating to strengthening the local economy and the reduction of carbon emissions through a potential increase in freight being transported by sea rather than by road.

**13.37** Much of Northumberland's coast carries statutory and non-statutory designations. There is a European Marine Site and the Northumberland Coast AONB, as well as a number of other international and national nature conservation designations and a defined Heritage Coast. Further detail is provided in the Natural and Built Environment chapter. The development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities will need to be sensitive to these issues.

**13.38** The Council will work with the Marine Management Organisation and other relevant statutory bodies to ensure that the development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes full account of the sensitivity of the marine environment and related shoreline environmental issues, applying an ecosystem approach. Developers should liaise with the Marine Management Organisation where appropriate.

### Policy 45

#### Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities

The Council will support:

- a. Appropriate expansion of port facilities to allow growth in sustainable freight movement;
- b. The development of harbour and beach launch facilities to maintain and sustainably grow the fishing industry; and
- c. Appropriate leisure and tourism developments, provided that they will not adversely impact on the functioning of the fishing industry.

Development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities will be planned, taking full account of the interaction between communities, the local economy and the environment. This will include careful consideration of the sensitivity of the European Marine Site, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, the Northumberland Coast AONB, as well as more local designations, having regard to the purposes of the North Northumberland Heritage Coast.

### Question 48

This is our preferred policy for ports, harbours and beach launch facilities. Do you have any comments?

### Newcastle International Airport

**13.39** Newcastle International Airport is an economic driver for investment and jobs in Northumberland, and the international gateway for business and tourist passengers, as well as freight. Part of the northern side of the operational area of the Airport is within Northumberland.

**13.40** The response to the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the importance of Newcastle International Airport and its support of the county's economic future, particularly through business and tourist use. The importance of other airport-related businesses was also identified. However, the need to ensure that such development is sensitive to the environment and communities was reinforced.

**13.41** The Sustainability Appraisal indicated that this approach is likely to have a positive effect in relation to economic objectives, regarding the airport itself as well as airport-related activities, and also potentially as a result of increased investment and further development at the airport.

**13.42** The Council will seek to co-operate with neighbouring authorities regarding airport-related development.

#### Policy 46

##### Newcastle International Airport

The Council will support the sustainable development of Newcastle International Airport. The Council will maintain a supply of expansion land to accommodate possible growth for passenger or freight facilities, and activities supplementary to the airport's operation.

#### Question 49

This is our preferred policy. Do you have any comments?

## **14. Information and communication technologies**

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### **14. Information and communication technologies**

**14.1** Information and communication technologies (ICT) play an important role in connecting communities and businesses. Modern telecommunications are essential to the national and local economy. Mobile telecommunications and access to high speed, reliable broadband are now considered essential to the success of many businesses and lifestyles across Northumberland. As a result, the implementation of effective information and communication technologies policies will deliver across a range of Core Strategy objectives, particularly: Objective 3, which seeks to maintain and create sustainable communities; Objective 4, to facilitate investment which stimulates employment opportunities and supports job retention; and Objective 8, to ensure that all development makes best use of, and safeguards Northumberland's infrastructure.

**14.2** The rapid growth in mobile communications in the UK has necessitated upgrades in technology with operators having to continually expand their networks to accommodate services and improve quality.

**14.3** The key issues for the Core Strategy are the need to plan for broadband infrastructure and telecommunications infrastructure across the County, while minimising potential adverse impacts on the environment and communities.

#### **Planning for mobile telecommunications infrastructure**

**14.4** Demand for new telecommunications infrastructure across Northumberland is continuing to grow. The NPPF recognises that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. Therefore the Core Strategy needs to support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications.

**14.5** The Council supports the enhancement of telecommunications infrastructure across the county, provided they will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or communities which would outweigh the benefits of development. This approach was supported through the feedback on the Issues and Options consultation. The consultation also highlighted concern regarding the location of such infrastructure, particularly when in close proximity to residential properties and educational institutions.

**14.6** The Sustainability Appraisal indicated that there is likely to be a positive impact on the economy through enabling the use of innovative technology, as well as positive impacts on safety, and community benefits in terms of improved access to services.

**14.7** The NPPF states that the Core Strategy should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, nor should it insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development.

**14.8** While health and related concerns, such as the perception of risk, can be material considerations as a matter of law, the government has advised that the planning system is not the appropriate place for determining health safeguards. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should not determine health safeguards if the proposal meets guidelines for public exposure set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation

## 14. Information and communication technologies

Protection (ICNIRP). All mobile phone base stations in the UK are required to meet these guidelines and operators have committed to include ICNIRP certificates with planning applications. Therefore, Policy 47 does not deal with health and related concerns.

**14.9** The draft policy on planning for mobile telecommunications should be read in conjunction with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development.

### Policy 47

#### Planning for mobile telecommunications

Proposals for mobile telecommunications development will be supported provided that the following criteria are met:

- a. The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures seek to minimise impact on the visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area;
- b. Where apparatus and associated structures are located on a building they should be sited and designed in order to seek to minimise impact to the external appearance of the host building;
- c. Were a new mast is proposed, it should be demonstrated that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, sites, masts or other structures;
- d. The development should not have an unacceptable effect on areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historic interest.

When considering applications for telecommunications development, the Council will have regard to the operational requirements of telecommunications networks and the technical limitations of the technology.

### Question 50

This is our preferred policy for mobile telecommunications. Do you have any comments?

#### Planning for broadband infrastructure

**14.10** Better connectivity can help businesses, particularly those in rural areas, to grow and remain competitive. It can also facilitate learning and skills development at home, as well as allowing access to community and other services online.

**14.11** The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the role that broadband services can play in the expansion and provision of local community facilities and services. The Core Strategy, therefore, needs to support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and broadband.

## 14. Information and communication technologies

**14.12** The policy context for broadband services in Northumberland is set by the Council's Local Broadband Plan. This document details the strategy for upgrading the broadband network in the County. It aims to ensure that all target premises will have access to a minimum 2Mbps service by 2015. In addition, it aims to ensure that 90% of all target premises will have access to a superfast broadband service of at least 25Mbps by 2015, then 95% by 2018, and finally 100% by 2020.

**14.13** The response to the Issues and Options consultation identified that there is a need for the Core Strategy to recognise the importance of broadband infrastructure to the county's economy, particularly in rural areas. Facilitation of superfast broadband across the county will increase the competitiveness of Northumberland businesses and can provide opportunities for home-working. Facilitating broadband connectivity can also help to reduce the need to travel through the provision of access to online services. There is still, however, a need to ensure that any potential adverse impacts of such infrastructure on the environment and communities are minimised.

**14.14** The Sustainability Appraisal indicated that there will be a positive impact through enabling businesses, particularly those which are knowledge or ICT-based to thrive in the county with improved access to superfast broadband. It is also likely to be beneficial to the wider public, particularly those in more remote rural areas who will be able to access a range of services and facilities online, reducing the need to travel in some instances. The potential environmental impact is largely dependent on the exact location and design of infrastructure, however, the effects will be minimised by the criteria-based approach.

### Policy 48

#### Planning for broadband infrastructure

The Council will support:

- a. The development of broadband infrastructure and the enhancement of broadband coverage across the county for the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors;
- b. The sharing of infrastructure between utilities in order to minimise disruption, reduce installation costs and increase the viability of service provision; and
- c. The appropriate siting and design of infrastructure.

Proposals for new broadband infrastructure should identify how any adverse impacts on the environment and communities have been minimised.

### Question 51

This is our preferred policy for broadband infrastructure. Do you have any comments?

### 15. Community facilities

**15.1** Core Strategy Objective 3 seeks to maintain and create sustainable communities throughout Northumberland to support health, social and cultural well-being for all. A vital element of the ability to maintain and create sustainable communities across Northumberland is their ability to access key services. Providing accessible services and facilities in the county is a challenge, particularly in more rural areas, and other parts of the county which are not well-linked in terms of transport provision. Key community facilities include: shops, health care, educational establishments, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**15.2** The Core Strategy can facilitate the delivery of community services and facilities in locations which are accessible to as many people as possible, with an emphasis on sustainable modes of transport.

**15.3** New development may also necessitate the enhancement of existing, or provision of additional community facilities. For example by supporting appropriate development in rural areas which help maintain the vitality and viability of small settlements and ensuring that growth is supported by the provision of new facilities such as new school capacity or community centres.

**15.4** The community rights enshrined within the Localism Act are intended to allow communities to have a fairer chance to bid to take over services and bid to buy land and buildings of community value. These are the Community Right to: Challenge, Bid (for assets of community value), and Build.



## 15. Community facilities

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### Health

**15.5** Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is investing over £200million to significantly 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. This new hospital is due to open in 2015.

**15.6** The Trust also aims to improve and refurbish Wansbeck General Hospital once certain wards and departments have relocated to the SECH at Cramlington. In addition, Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital will be replaced with a new purpose-built facility opening in 2013 to form an integrated health and social care scheme. The Trust also identify that Berwick Infirmary will be replaced by 2017 with a new purpose-built facility to be located elsewhere in the town.

**15.7** The response to the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the importance of healthcare facilities in the county, and the need to ensure that such facilities are accessible to as many people as possible, by a range of modes of transport.

### Education

**15.8** Government policy is clear that there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state funded schools, which includes creation, expansion or alternation and has the power to require school sites to be available for academies and free schools.

**15.9** Although the Council is currently unable to commit to a large-scale programme of capital investment in schools, over the plan period there may be the need to make changes to school facilities and the Council continues to explore other options that could attract funding for schools in Northumberland.

**15.10** Northumberland College has seen some major changes to the education demands across the county in recent years. The College remains committed to serving the educational and training needs of the people and businesses of Northumberland and beyond.

**15.11** The Issues and Options consultation highlighted the importance of higher education facilities in the county, and it is proposed that the Core Strategy should set a positive planning policy context for the development of new and improved higher education facilities in Northumberland.

### Other community facilities

**15.12** As well as health, education and emergency services, the Council and other partner organisations provide many local community facilities that are widely regarded as essential to the quality of life of Northumberland's residents.

**15.13** The response to the Issues and Options consultation highlighted the importance of a number of specific facilities within the county and the need for the Core Strategy to remain flexible with regard to community facilities, as well as the need for further consultation with communities.

**15.14** The identification and safeguarding of specific sites will be considered following further consultation with communities through the Core Strategy process, and will also be informed by the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

**15.15** Overall, the Sustainability Appraisal indicated that the approach to community facilities is likely to have a significant positive effect on improving health and well-being, delivering safer communities and improving the range and accessibility of community services.

### **Policy 49**

#### **Community facilities**

The Council will strongly resist the loss of key services and facilities unless an appropriate alternative is provided, or there is evidence that the facility is no longer required and suitable alternative uses have been considered.

Proposals for the provision of new services and facilities will be supported particularly where this would address deficiencies in provision provided that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment and communities.

New development will be required to contribute to community facilities as part of the development, or if appropriate off-site, where no facilities exist or where existing facilities are insufficient.

Further details will be developed as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **Question 52**

This is our preferred policy for community facilities. Do you have any comments?

## 16. Natural and historic environment

### 16. Natural and historic environment

**16.1** Northumberland's natural and historic environment is distinctive and valued. It is a significant asset to both people that live in the county and the wider region. It makes an important contribution to the character, quality of life, sense of place and the economy, particularly tourism, in Northumberland and is a valuable resource for communities, businesses and visitors.

**16.2** Natural and historic environment and green infrastructure policies will deliver a number of the Core Strategy objectives, particularly Objective 6, which seeks to protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive valued natural, historic and built environment. The protection and enhancement of the natural, historic and built environment is a cross cutting theme that underpins many of the other objectives for the Core Strategy.

**Table 16.1 Northumberland's current designated natural, historic and heritage assets**

International	National	Local and regional <sup>(37)</sup>
The Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site and its buffer zone	More than 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), nine are also National Nature Reserves	More than 200 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGSs);
Four international Ramsar Convention wetland sites	Northumberland National Park	More than 25 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
Six bird-related European Special Protection Areas (SPAs);	North Pennines AONB and Northumberland Coast AONB	Northumberland Wildlife Trust Nature reserves;
14 Special Areas of Conservation	18 Registered Parks and Gardens and four Registered Battlefields	Ancient Woodlands, continually wooded since at least 1600AD (not a statutory designation);
(SACs) habitats of European importance	Nearly 1,000 Scheduled Monuments and more than 5,500 Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings and their settings	The North Northumberland Heritage Coast (not a statutory designation)
One European Marine Site (EMS) extending north from Alnmouth	Two nationally recognised Local Nature Partnerships: Northern Uplands Chain LNP and Northumberland Lowland and Coastal LNP	69 Conservation Areas
One European geological heritage 'Geopark' over the North Pennines AONB	Three proposed Marine Conservation Zones extending landward of Mean Low Water.	Local Listed Buildings and their settings.

**16.3** Given the importance of Northumberland's natural and built environment it is considered appropriate for the Core Strategy to have an overarching policy which sets out the high level principles for protecting and enhancing the environment.

37 The Northumberland Green Belt, part of the Tyne and Wear Green Belt, has other purposes in addition to conservation and is dealt with in a separate Core Strategy Green Belt chapter

### Policy 50

#### Natural and historic environment

Development proposals should seek to conserve, protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural and historic environment by:

- a. Giving great weight to the protection of the integrity, special qualities and statutory purposes of international and national designated nature and historic conservation sites including Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Northumberland National Park and North Pennines and Northumberland Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- b. Applying an ecosystem approach to minimise impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible;
- c. Understanding the significance of heritage assets and their settings and the potential effect of proposals, as well as considering opportunities to enhance heritage assets;
- d. Protecting and enhancing the character, quality and distinctiveness of the landscape, including through high quality design that complements identified landscape character;
- e. Preventing harm to geological conservation interests and where appropriate providing opportunities for public access to geological features;
- f. Preventing harm from unacceptable levels of soil, air and water pollution as well as adverse impacts on land stability;
- g. Soil is recognised as a vulnerable natural resource and where appropriate it should be protected through sustainable use and re-use ;
- h. Limiting the impact of urbanising effects in those areas identified as tranquil, including light pollution in areas characterised by dark skies; and
- i. Identifying opportunities to enhance understanding and enjoyment of the natural, historic and built environment.

Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services the Council will work in particular with Natural England, adjoining local planning authorities and local nature partnerships to identify opportunities for habitat improvement, restoration and creation.

Recognising the social and economic benefits of Northumberland's rich historic environment, the Council will work in particular with English Heritage to ensure that the distinctive historic environment, heritage assets and their settings are conserved, protected and enhanced.

### Question 53

This is our preferred overarching policy for the natural and historic environment. Do you have any comments?

## 16. Natural and historic environment

### Natural environment

**16.4** Northumberland's rich natural environment ranges from internationally important designations to undesignated locally significant sites. The diverse landscape, reflecting geology, land use and altitude, is dominated by arable farming in the north and south-east and improved grassland and moorland elsewhere. Woodlands cluster along river corridors; estates provide areas of mixed woodland; and a network of shelter belts and hedgerow trees across lowland areas. Uplands are mainly open with little native planting but commercial coniferous forestry, such as in Kielder Forest, takes place on a large scale. The coastal strip comprises large sandy bays and rolling sand dunes backed by small settlements and farmland and rocky shores, headlands and islands.

**16.5** The Natural Environment White Paper highlights the important role a healthy, properly functioning natural environment has in sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. This is recognised in the NPPF, which states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

**16.6** The Core Strategy therefore needs to provide clear policy criteria for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. It needs to recognise Northumberland's statutory designated assets, as in Table 16.1 and Figure 16.2 while taking an appropriate approach that complements Northumberland's locally distinctive wildlife in accordance with their status.

**16.7** Northumberland's rich natural heritage is reflected in the large number of international, European, national and local nature conservation designations, particularly on the coast, and as shown in Figure 16.2. In addition to these areas, Northumberland also supports 11 European Protected Species, species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act; and a number of species listed in the national list of Habitats and Species of Principle Importance, for which guidance is available from the Ecosystems Knowledge Network, UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs).

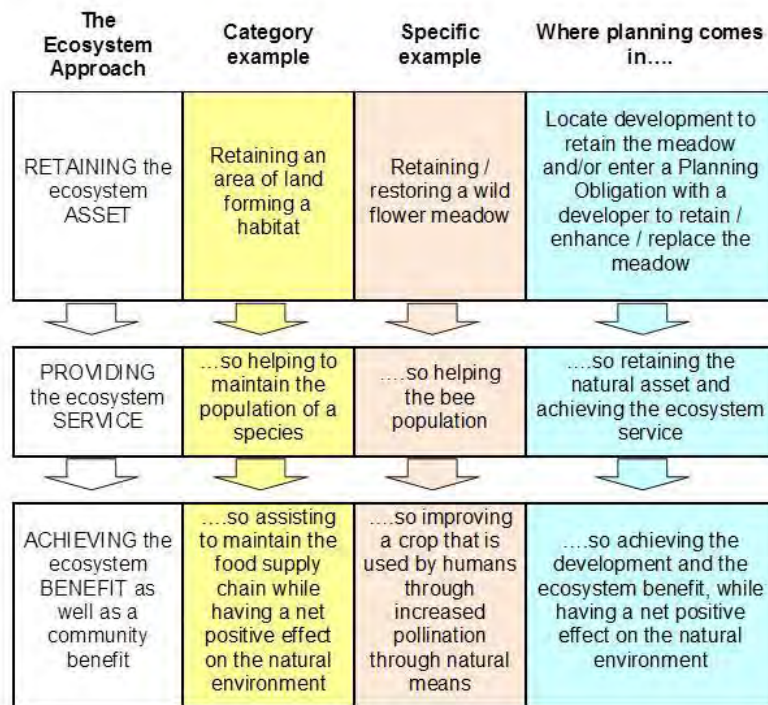
**16.8** Locally significant assets are covered in Northumberland's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) which lists habitats and species with action plans. The government encourages a wider range of people to be involved in how decisions are made about the natural environment in their local area and Northumberland now includes two Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs): the Northern Upland Chain LNP comprising Northumberland National Park, North Pennines AONB, Nidderdale AONB and the remainder in the Coastal LNP. The role of the LNP is to help their local area to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy<sup>(38)</sup>.

**16.9** The natural environment has to be considered in an integrated way, therefore the Council considers the 'ecosystem approach', which is recognised internationally as the best way to manage complex, dynamic, natural systems, will particularly help to protect and enhance Northumberland's natural environment. Decisions about how land is developed, that treat human activity as part of the ecosystem approach, can become part of the overall management of natural systems across wide areas beyond protected sites and species.

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38 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/local-nature-partnerships/>

**Figure 16.1 Spatial planning as part of the ecosystem approach**



**16.10** Ecosystem services are defined as “the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living”<sup>(39)</sup>. Examples include food production, flood risk mitigation and less tangible recreational and spiritual benefits. Actions at particular locations can bring ecosystem benefits elsewhere, for example benefiting migratory birds or influencing global climate change, as seen in various Northumberland projects that diffuse pollution, mitigate flood risk, provide carbon sequestration and sustain wildlife populations. There was general support through the Issues and Options consultation of the Core Strategy incorporating this approach.

**16.11** In relation to other parts of the country, Northumberland does not have the highest grade agricultural soils. The majority is classified as Grade 3, with areas of Grade 4 and 5 in the upland areas, however all soil is important. Because of the extremely slow process of formation it can be considered as a non-renewable resource, which is not inert but combines organic, non-organic and microbiological elements to help to provide food, biomass and raw materials; it stores, filters and transforms water and nutrients; and is the biggest global carbon store. The Core Strategy needs to ensure that soil loss and degradation through development is minimised through protection, careful storage and sustainable use of soil; and restoration of degraded soils and contaminated sites.

### Policy 51

#### Natural environment

Development proposals should seek to conserve and enhance Northumberland's natural environment. Proposals that would result in significant harm to Northumberland's natural environment will only be permitted where the harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated. The greatest protection will be given to international and national designations, followed by local designated sites and then non-designated sites.

In applying the ecosystem approach development proposals will be considered in terms of their wider effects on natural systems and their understanding of the significance and sensitivity of the natural resource.

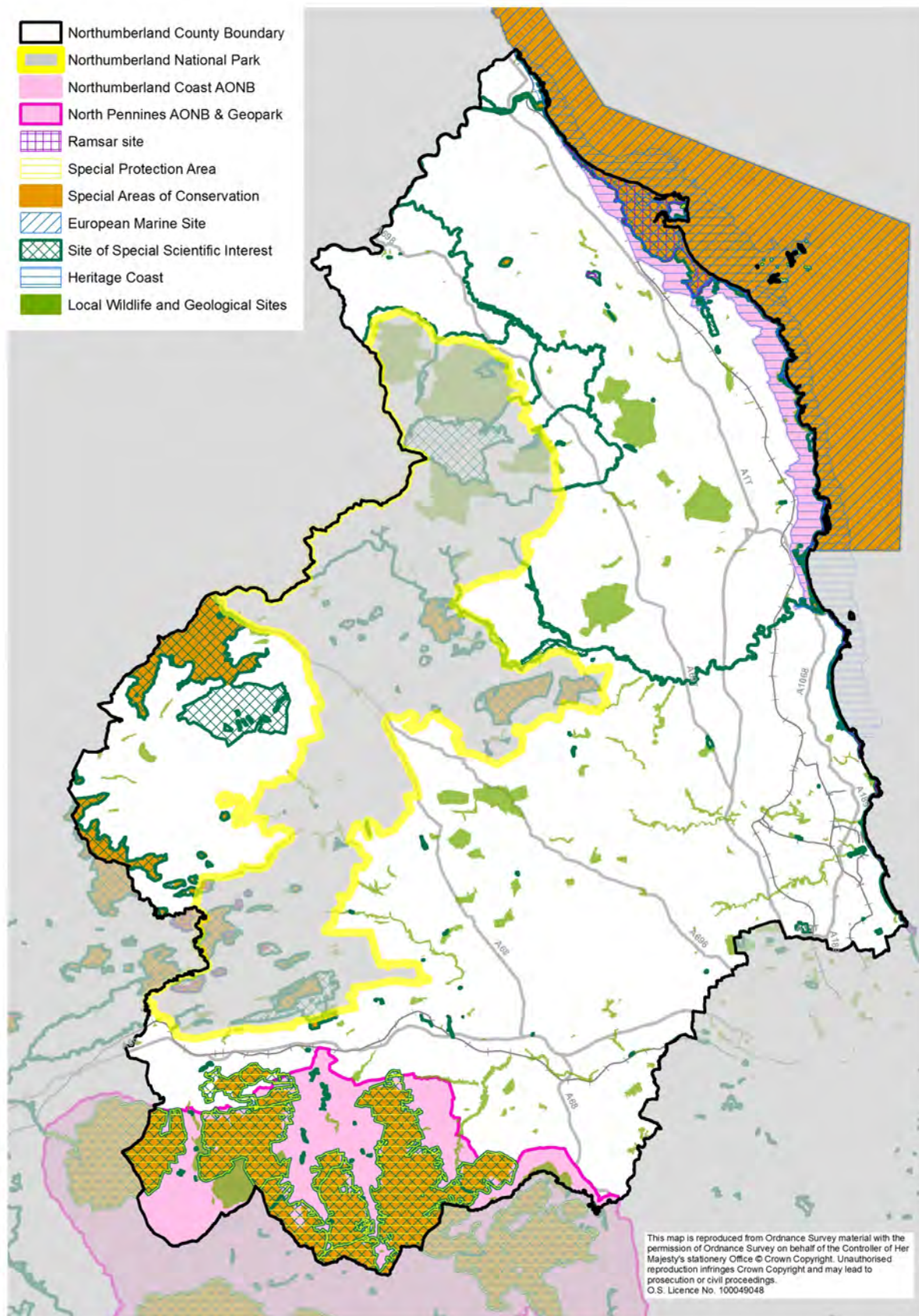
Consideration will be given to how development proposals:

- a. Provide ecosystem services, such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions or flood risk mitigation, including services that may be necessary to counteract any adverse effects on local or wider ecosystems;
- b. Mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change on the natural environment, including those that may be affected by the proposed development;
- c. Complement measures identified in relevant management plans of the Northumberland National Park Authority, North Pennines AONB, the Northumberland Coast AONB Partnerships and Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site and any other relevant management plans to protect and enhance natural features, habitats and species;
- d. Include opportunities to enhance biodiversity such as;
  - i. creating habitats and adding to wildlife corridors and habitat networks to enhance migration, dispersal or genetic exchange, particularly where there is a danger of increased habitat fragmentation;
  - ii. minimising the wider disturbance effects on habitats and species;
  - iii. contributing to national and local biodiversity targets, particularly where development would add to cumulative development pressures known to have adverse effects on biodiversity and geodiversity; and
  - iv. ensuring the continued management of natural habitats after the plan or development is in place.

### Question 54

This is our preferred policy for the natural environment. Do you have any comments?

**Figure 16.2 Nature conservation designations in Northumberland**



## 16. Natural and historic environment

### Landscape

**16.12** Landscape derives from the natural environment and historical human activity. Northumberland's rich geodiversity underlies its landscape assets that include: spectacular upland moors and forests, which sweep into Cumbria, Newcastle and the Scottish Borders; rolling farmland interspersed with country estates and wooded valleys; mixed farmland in the Tyne valley; and a spectacular coastline of rocky headlands and sandy bays backed with dunes.

**16.13** Northumberland's settlements have distinctive architecture using local building stones and the more densely populated south east area offers a unique landscape based on deep and opencast coal mining, which led to the expansion of fishing villages into larger coastal towns. Early mining restoration led to some featureless agricultural land but, through the planning process, recent projects have included sensitive historic landscape restoration and significant land art.

**16.14** Local communities and visitors attach great importance to the whole landscape of Northumberland but some areas merit national protection. The Northumberland National Park, while entirely within Northumberland, is a separate planning authority with its own planning policies. However, there are key landscape and ecosystem connections between the National Park and the rest of Northumberland and the Council has a statutory responsibility to only permit development that does not impact on the National Park's special qualities and statutory purposes.

**16.15** Other special landscapes are nationally designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Northumberland Coast AONB covers 64 kilometres of coastline from Berwick-upon-Tweed to the River Coquet at Amble. It is characterised by beaches, rolling sand dunes, high rock cliffs and isolated islands. It includes farmland, small settlements, historic castles and an airfield, numerous statutory conservation designations and extensive views to sea and inland towards the Cheviot Hills. The North Pennines AONB shaped by human activity related to lead and minerals mining, and recognised internationally as a European Geopark, is located in the south of the county, extends into County Durham and Cumbria. It contains a unique landscape of wild upland moor dissected by wooded dales and is now an especially tranquil wilderness location.

**16.16** NPPF clearly identifies that the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the landscape and countryside of National Parks and AONBs should be given great weight in planning decisions. The National Park and AONBs have statutory management plans. The AONB management plans have been endorsed as supplementary guidance by the Council<sup>(40)</sup>

**16.17** The existence of the National Park and AONBs contribute to Northumberland being ranked first out of 87 authorities in terms of tranquillity. The Core Strategy recognises tranquillity as a distinctive characteristic of Northumberland's remote countryside and will seek to avoid urbanising effects in these areas where possible. From the Issues and Options consultation it is clear that people consider such effects include light pollution and considered that the Core Strategy should preserve unpolluted skies across the remote

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40 Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site, 2009 Management Plan 2009-2014; North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014; North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, April 2011. Planning Guidelines; North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, April 2011. Building Design Guide.

parts of Northumberland. Kielder Forest is the location of the only dark sky, purpose-built public observatory in Europe. The Northumberland National Park Authority and Kielder Water and Forest Park Development Trust are consulting on a bid to secure from the International Dark Sky Association, 'Dark Sky Reserve' status for the National Park and 'Dark Sky Park' status for Kielder Water and Forest Park: nearly 400 square miles of rural Northumberland. If approved, this would be the largest area of protected dark sky in Europe and the World's third largest.

**16.18** The Core Strategy approach to the protection and enhancement of Northumberland's diverse landscape is based on the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment, August 2010, which developed 9 National Character Areas in Northumberland, excluding the National Park. These were divided into 44 local Landscape Character Types and 108 Landscape Character Areas, due to diverse influences such as geology, landform, vegetation, micro-climate and land use. The landscape character approach reflects the European Landscape Convention's recognition that all landscape matters and removes the need to define locally protected landscapes. The Assessment set out guiding principles that can be applied at a strategic level to each of the 44 Northumberland Landscape Character Types as shown in Figure 16.3:

- Protect - where conservation of landscape character is required in the face of pressures for change
- Manage - where some changes can be absorbed but changes arising from social, economic and environmental processes need to be managed;
- Plan - where important landscape character has been eroded and strong action is needed to enhance or restore this.

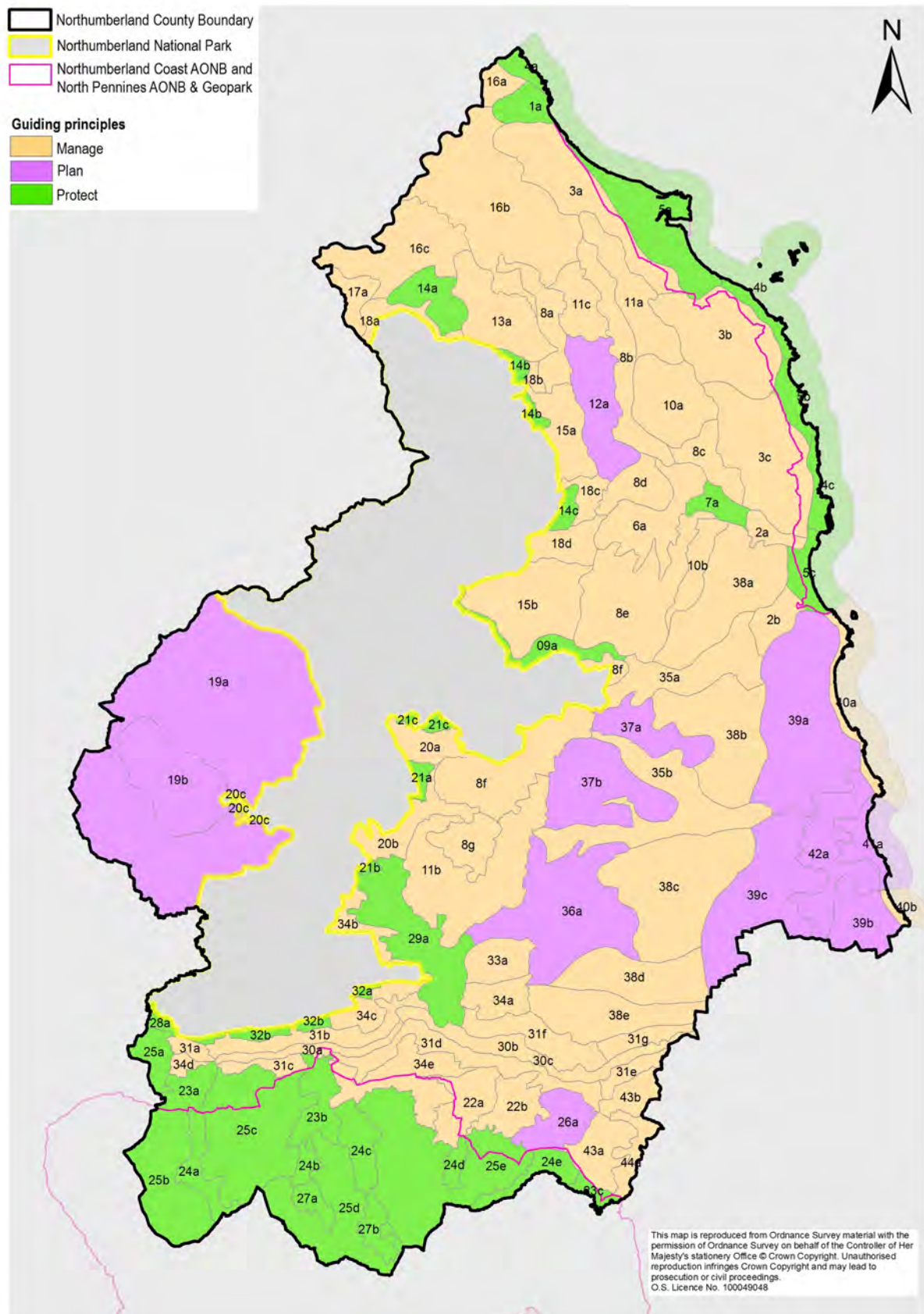
**16.19** Response to the Issues and Options consultation was split on whether to implement the guiding principles or take a more flexible approach. Some considered that if implemented, the principles could have the effect of imposing blanket planning restrictions across certain areas while placing little weight on the sensitivity of the landscape across others. The preferred policy approach is therefore to have regard to the guiding principles but does not identify them as a designation. They would form the starting point in the assessment of a proposal, but would be considered against more detailed local landscape assessments and other considerations.

**16.20** As part of developing the Landscape Character Assessment, a 'Key Land Use Impact Study' was also prepared. This implemented an approach developed in Scotland that assigned high value to particular clusters of character areas: adjacent to the Northumberland National Park; along the coastline, or Heritage Coast, north and south of the Northumberland Coast AONB; and the river valleys of the Coquet and Tweed that links the National Park to the coast.

**16.21** From the responses to the Issues and Options consultation it is clear that the Core Strategy needs to recognise the importance of the National Park and AONBs and, while the identified landscape character clusters are considered important, consultees provided examples of other important landscape clusters or areas throughout the County. The preferred policy approach therefore requires developers to consider the whole landscape and value its diversity on a case by case basis.

## 16. Natural and historic environment

**Figure 16.3 Landscape Character Types and Guiding Principles (Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment, August 2010)**



### Policy 52

#### Landscape

Development proposals should seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character and quality of Northumberland's landscape having regard to the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment. Consideration will be given to how development proposals:

- a. Impact on the whole landscape and the value of its diversity including the use of visual and sensitivity assessment;
- b. Safeguard the character and appearance of the historic environment including views to, through and away from heritage assets;
- c. Avoid development that has individual or cumulative negative impacts on landscape character; and
- d. In rural areas, avoid individual and cumulative urbanising effects of development such as light pollution, inappropriate signage, structures ancillary to countryside activities and excessive traffic.

### Question 55

This is our preferred policy for the landscape. Do you have any comments?

## Built and historic environment

**16.22** Northumberland's historic environment has been shaped by a unique combination of factors, which include: its agricultural quality and natural resources; its position as a national and maritime frontier; its importance for north-south communication between England and Scotland; and its political and physical remoteness. Such rich cultural heritage has left a diverse legacy of well-preserved archaeological sites, historic towns, buildings and other assets - many of national and international importance, including the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

**16.23** The NPPF defines the historic environment as "all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora." Heritage assets are defined as "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.)" Designated sites include the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Registered Parks and Gardens, registered Battlefields, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. For planning purposes non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance to designated assets should be considered subject to policies relating to designated assets.

## 16. Natural and historic environment

**16.24** The Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, was designated by UNESCO in 1987 and has a management plan to seek to ensure its preservation for present and future generations. One of the key objectives within the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan 2008-2014 is to secure protection of the World Heritage Site's Outstanding Universal Value, fabric, integrity and authenticity through appropriate legislative provision. Government guidance states that "it is essential that appropriate policies are included in the Core Strategy" and that the importance of maintaining the integrity of Hadrian's Wall and its landscape setting must be recognised.

**16.25** Through the response to the Issues and Options consultation, there was general support for the approach that was proposed to the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. However, there were suggestions that tighter definitions were required for example of 'archaeological setting' and 'detrimental effect'. The preferred approach is to take a positive flexible case by case approach that considers the type and scale of development as well as specific location within or adjacent to the World Heritage Site, with advice from English Heritage.

**16.26** The Hadrian's Wall Management Plan 2008 – 2014, relates to the designated World Heritage Site and the buffer zone shown in Figure 2. The concept of a buffer zone to provide additional protection to world heritage sites was introduced in 1977<sup>(41)</sup> and current UNESCO operational guidelines, 2005, strongly recommend inclusion of a buffer zone in the nomination of a new site. While recognising the Hadrian's Wall buffer zone, the Core Strategy seeks to strengthen protection of the World Heritage Site by referring to its 'setting', which may include areas outside the buffer zone.

**16.27** Response to the Issues and Options consultation supported the proposal that Core Strategy should ensure that historic environment and heritage assets are managed and developed in a sustainable way. Feedback also suggested that the Core Strategy should seek to protect and enhance the built environment, protect areas of high townscape value and promote high standards of design in new developments, which should reinforce and complement local character and distinctiveness. This is addressed in the preferred policy approach below, which includes historic villages as well as townscapes.

**16.28** The responses to the Issues and Options consultation also highlighted that the Core Strategy should recognise the importance of the historic environment and heritage assets to character and sense of place, as a potential catalyst for regeneration and tourism and as a key element of the sustainability agenda. It was also suggested that it needs to recognise that, as with the natural environment, some historic environments and heritage assets may be vulnerable to development pressure, for example from tourism.

**16.29** The NPPF gives strong protection to the historic environment, recognising the multiple ways it supports and contributes to the economy, society and daily life. Within this context, the Core Strategy sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of Northumberland's unique historic environment and heritage assets, including those most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats and it should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

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41 UNESCO, 1977. Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention

**16.30** A range of other local studies and resources such as conservation area character appraisals, conservation area management plans, the Historic Landscape Characterisation and especially the Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER), which contains wide ranging information on the entire historic environment including locally important non-designated heritage assets, provide a comprehensive evidence base which will inform the decision making process in guiding and determining applications.

**16.31** In order to support the positive strategy for the historic environment, where appropriate and with the resources available to it the Council will seek to:

- prepare and update Conservation Area Management Plans in accordance with their priority;
- consider the designation of additional Conservation Areas, which may inform Article 4 Directions to safeguard those areas from harm;
- prepare or support master plans or design briefs for significant sites where major change is proposed in relation to important heritage assets; and
- consider the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy to contribute towards the enhancement of individual assets or specific historic places.

### Policy 53

#### Historic environment and heritage assets

Development proposals should seek to conserve, enhance and promote the quality and integrity of Northumberland's distinctive and valued historic environment and heritage assets. Proposals that would result in significant harm will only be permitted where the harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated against or, as a last resort, compensated.

Designated and non-designated historic environments, heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced, in accordance with their significance. Consideration will be given to how development proposals:

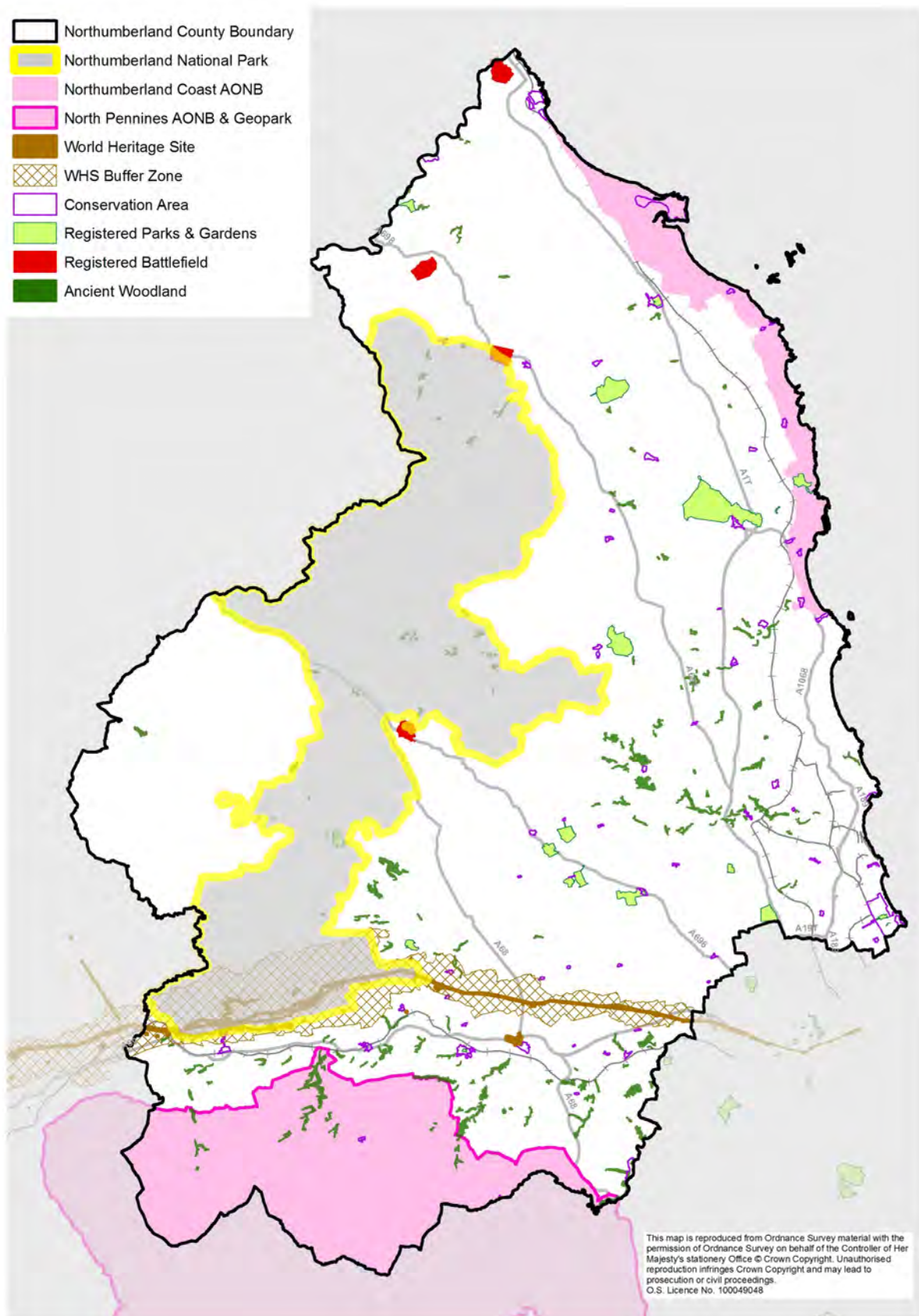
- a. preserve the outstanding universal value of the Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site and the fabric, integrity and authenticity of its archaeological sites;
- b. allow for the sensitive re-use of redundant and under-used historic buildings and areas;
- c. conserve and enhance heritage assets at risk or those that are vulnerable to becoming at risk, to retain the historic integrity of the asset and bring it back into use;
- d. protect or enhance the local character of historic villages and townscapes; and
- e. improve public accessibility to the historic environment and heritage assets.

### Question 56

This is our preferred policy for the historic environment. Do you have any comments?

## 16. Natural and historic environment

**Figure 16.4 Historic site and heritage designations in Northumberland**



### Green infrastructure

**16.32** Promotion of multi-functional green space will deliver a number of the Core Strategy objectives, particularly Objective 1, by placing sustainable development and responsible future economic growth at the heart of planning decisions in Northumberland. As well as Objective 3, by supporting health, social and cultural well-being for all. This reflects the Department of Health White Paper<sup>(42)</sup> that recognises the importance of the quality of the environment and availability of green space on people's health and well-being and the Natural Environment White Paper, which seeks to reconnect people and nature.

**16.33** Across Northumberland and into adjoining authority areas, 'green infrastructure' is a network of multi-functional, natural and managed open space<sup>(43)</sup> that:

- 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 through walking and cycling provision;
- Supports networks that link habitats and biodiversity sites - preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats;
- Protects and enhances natural, historic and built green infrastructure 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;
- Helps to get more children learning outdoors – removing barriers and increasing schools' abilities to teach outdoors;
- 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.

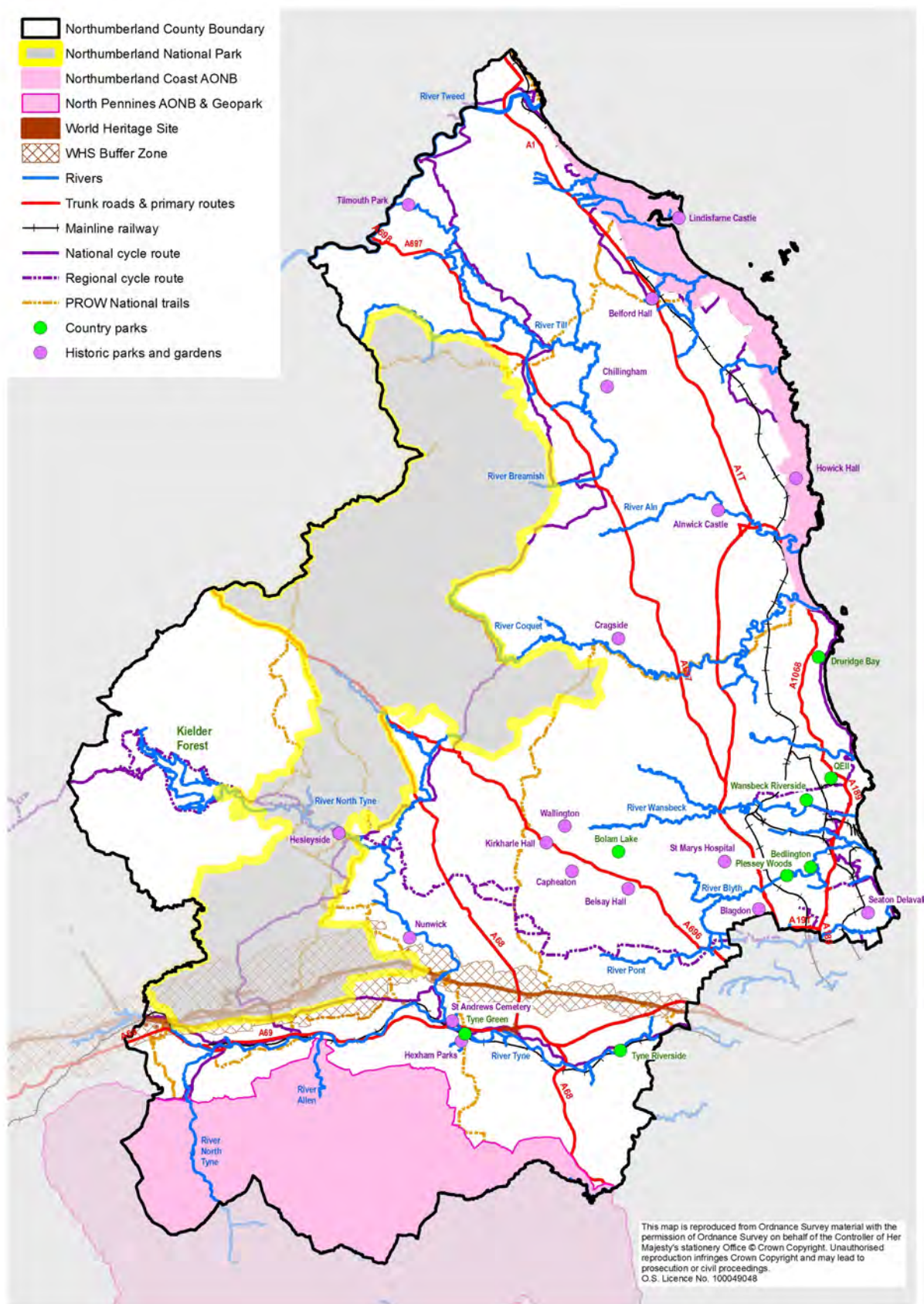
**16.34** Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure assets, which include international and national designations included in Table 16.1, such as Hadrian's Wall, as an overlying network of mainly linear assets that delivers a wide range of quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure does not stop at local authority boundaries. Work is currently on-going with neighbouring authorities to seek to ensure that strategic green infrastructure assets are aligned.

42 Department of Health, July 2012. White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support. London: HMSO

43 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

## 16. Natural and historic environment

**Figure 16.5 Strategic green infrastructure sites and corridors (adapted from Northumberland County Council, A Green Infrastructure Strategy, October 2011)**



**16.35** 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 to live, work, visit and invest in. However, for successful integration and multi-functionality, green infrastructure needs to be planned at all levels or scales. The Core Strategy needs to identify 'strategic green infrastructure' that sets the large scale, county-wide framework for developing 'local green infrastructure' such as village greens<sup>(44)</sup>, bridleways, street trees or amenity planting. Local green infrastructure may be identified through subsequent planning documents, including Neighbourhood Plans or when preparing development proposals<sup>(45)</sup>.

**16.36** 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 accessibility for all.

**16.37** All aspects of green infrastructure planning should be based on sound evidence, such as ecological data from the Northumberland BAP or historical information from the Historic Environment Record. Figure 16.5 is based on the Council's green infrastructure evidence base studies and shows Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure network.

**16.38** The preferred approach to green infrastructure is to seek the integration of all of the wide range of natural, historic and built environment issues that need to be taken into account.

### Policy 54

#### Green infrastructure

The contribution of strategic and local green infrastructure to the health and well-being of Northumberland's communities and to its economy should be recognised in all relevant plans and planning decisions.

Development proposals should seek to protect, improve and extend Northumberland's green infrastructure network, where appropriate. 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, cycle routes and bridleways and high quality provision for the widest possible range of ages, abilities and interests;

44 Village greens registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965 or the Commons Registration (New Land) Regulations 1969 mainly limited to rural villages and hamlets.

45 Landscape Institute, September 2011. Local Green Infrastructure - Helping communities make the most of their landscape. London

## 16. Natural and historic environment

- c. Improve the potential of green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism without detriment to the protection of vulnerable environmental and heritage assets;
- d. 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;
- e. Consider the management and maintenance of new and existing green infrastructure throughout and beyond the plan period; and
- f. Provide opportunities for communities to protect local environments that are important to them, for example through Local Green Space or Local Nature reserve designations.

### Question 57

This is our preferred policy for green infrastructure. Do you have any comments?

### Local green infrastructure - open space, sport and recreational provision

**16.39** Good quality open space, sport and recreational facilities have many benefits for urban and rural environments, as well as promoting social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well-being. The Council is currently negotiating the transfer of assets to Parish and Town Councils, through the Local Council Charter for Northumberland<sup>(46)</sup>. The Joint County Council and Northumberland Association of Local Councils, Charter Implementation Group is working to ensure an ordered and supported transfer of services and assets that include many local green infrastructure assets:

**16.40** A wide range of such local green infrastructure assets were assessed through the 'Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy' and the 'Northumberland PPG17 Open space, Sport and Recreation Assessment', May 2011 in the following categories:

- Parks and gardens;
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace;
- Amenity green space;
- Outdoor sports facilities;
- Provision for children and young people;
- Allotments; and
- Cemeteries and churchyards.

**16.41** The NPPF makes provision for local communities, through local and Neighbourhood Plans to identify for special protection, green areas of particular importance to them as Local Green Space, which will prevent new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying such Local Green Space needs to be consistent with

46 Northumberland County Council, March 2012. The Local Council Charter for Northumberland Final draft version

## 16. Natural and historic environment

planned sustainable development and investment in homes, job and other services and the NPPF states that Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space and should only be used where:

- It is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- It is 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
- It is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.



**16.42** Responses to the Issues and Options consultation question on this issue showed that the majority support an overarching policy to ensure protection of local green spaces. This is in accordance with NPPF, which seeks to protect existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields from built development, except in certain circumstances. The NPPF enables local communities through Neighbourhood Plans to identify for special protection, local green spaces of particular importance to the local community and provides criteria for the designation of Local Green Space in well evidenced, special circumstances, and consistent with local planning of sustainable development.

**16.43** While there are over 4,000 hectares of accessible open space in over a thousand separate facilities, which equates to 13.4 hectares per 1,000 people, the assessment shows an imbalance in quantity of provision across Northumberland. To address such variations the Northumberland open space, sport and recreation assessment<sup>(47)</sup> recommended local standards for open space provision, which were set out in the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document. While there was support through the Issues and Options consultation for the Core Strategy to include a policy that protects and enhances open space provision, there was general concern that the proposed standards would be prescriptive and inflexible.

**16.44** While the alternative would be to use National Access to Natural Greenspace Standards it is considered that the Core Strategy should refer to the Northumberland assessment, which provides more relevant local evidence of open space needs. While there should be flexibility for subsequent delivery documents and Neighbourhood Plans

47 Northumberland County Council, May 2011. Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities: PPG17 Assessment

## 16. Natural and historic environment

to identify amendments to local open space standards based on up to date evidence due regard should be given to the accessible open space standards as set out in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment.

**16.45** In accordance with the NPPF requirement to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs the Issues and Options document sought to guard against the unnecessary loss of facilities by referring to the Northumberland assessment, which identified open space sites that require protection and/or improvement. The Northumberland Sports Facilities Strategy found no significant gaps in major sports facilities in the County and that:

- Swimming pools and sports centres are located in the larger towns with few overlapping catchment areas and unmet demand is limited to more thinly populated areas remote from these towns;
- Northumberland is relatively well off for some facilities such as golf courses and fitness centres; however
- There is a shortage of smaller scale facilities, especially synthetic turf pitches and accessible indoor spaces in some areas; and
- Current facilities need to be maintained to a high standard that maximises community use and replaced when they reach the end of their useful life.

**16.46** The Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy<sup>(48)</sup> however, found deficiencies for some sports, particularly mini soccer, youth football, cricket, rugby and hockey and while it recommends that all community accessible provision should be rated as 'Good' or above, across Northumberland over a third of pitch sites fall below this level. In the Issues and Options consultation there was clear support for the Core Strategy to address current and future requirements and maximise high quality, accessible sports facilities and playing pitches by seeking to:

- Protect and enhance existing pitches;
- Encourage dual-use of facilities and wider use of education pitches;
- Encourage quality improvements to allow more games on each pitch; and
- Secure new facilities on new sites.

**16.47** New open space, sport and recreational facilities will need to be provided to serve the occupants of new housing either within or close to the new developments. However the Issues and Options consultation provoked a mixed response to the suggested Core Strategy policy criteria. While there was support for the proposals, through the Issues and Options consultation, there were also concerns that the additional burden of sports provision would penalise developers and lead to less affordable housing being built; that provision would not always benefit the same area as the development; and that the approach would not take care of facility management and maintenance.

**16.48** Through the Issues and Options consultation there was general support for a suggested hierarchy of sports facilities and services although there were concerns about potential lack of provision for smaller settlements and a desire for more flexibility. The

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48 Northumberland County Council, May 2011. Playing Pitch Strategy.

Issues and Options consultation document's hierarchy was based on the tiered delivery approach to settlements however the policy below refers to the original published version<sup>(49)</sup>.

### Policy 55

#### Sport and recreational provision

The contribution of open space, sports facilities, playing pitches and recreational provision to the health and well-being of communities should be recognised in all relevant planning decisions.

Development proposals should seek to protect, improve and extend Northumberland's open space, sports facilities, playing pitches, recreational provision, where appropriate, having regard to the Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy and the Northumberland Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment. Consideration will be given to how development proposals:

- a. Reflect the Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy facility hierarchy;
- b. Enhance sustainability of communities and residential environments by protecting and enhancing existing recreational facilities and services and/or providing new ones;
- c. Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location, scale and type of recreational facilities and services, in relation to housing and economic development, that takes into account up to date evidence of local and adjacent need;
- d. Guard against the unnecessary loss of recreational facilities and services by considering up to date evidence, local need and the replacement of facilities and services when they reach the end of their useful life;
- e. 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
- f. Ensure that new and existing facilities and services are maintained to a high standard that maximises community use, including dual-use, wider use of 'education' pitches and quality improvements.

### Question 58

This is our preferred policy for sport and recreational provision. Do you have any comments?

49 Northumberland County Council, May 2011. Playing Pitch Strategy, Table 5.6, pages 122-123

## 17. Water environment

### 17. Water environment

**17.1** The water environment is vital to the delivery of sustainable development and the establishment of sustainable communities and it is, therefore, important to consider Northumberland's water environment when planning where new development is located, so as to avoid areas at greater risk of flooding. The design of new development is also important, to ensure that it is resilient to flooding, that surface water flows are managed and that water is used effectively. Additionally, there needs to be careful consideration of the potential impact on water quality, water supply and sewerage facilities and whether Northumberland's infrastructure can cope with extra development, including consideration of whether additional infrastructure is required in association with new development.

**17.2** The water policies will deliver a number of the Core Strategy objectives, particularly Objective 5 relating to making Northumberland more resilient to climate change and contributing to mitigating against its effects and Objective 7 on managing the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources. Good water quality, water supply and sewerage facilities are vital to meeting objective 3 in terms of maintaining and creating sustainable communities.

### Flood risk

**17.3** Flood risk is an important consideration when assessing the location of development. The Issues and Options consultation identified the preferred approach, which was to include a suite of policies in order to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding. It was proposed the policies would reflect the approaches contained within the Catchment Flood Managements Plans<sup>(50)</sup>, ensure that new development is directed away from areas at risk of flooding, apply the sequential test, support the implementation of flood alleviation schemes, make development more resilient to flooding, and manage surface water in new developments.

**17.4** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the preferred policy approach is likely to provide a strong framework for minimising and mitigating the adverse effects of flooding, having strong positive benefits in relation to climate change adaptation and the water quality.

**17.5** Feedback through the Issues and Options consultation highlighted strong support for the suite of policies. Comments identified: the need to consider the effects of flood risk both on-site and off-site; that development must be safe over its lifetime; the need to recognise that new developments can assist with the alleviation of flood risk; the need to be more specific in relation to detailed flood risk assessment; and the need to recognise that there will be instances where SuDS are not viable. The Council is proposing to continue with the proposed approach to flood risk but has amended the draft policy and supporting text to reflect the comments received.

**17.6** National policy is very clear that planning policy should minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development to away from areas of highest risk of flooding.

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50 Catchment Flood Management Plans are produced by the Environment Agency and can be accessed at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/114022.aspx>

**17.7** The main sources of flood risk within Northumberland are from fluvial (rivers and watercourses), coastal, surface water runoff and sewerage, with groundwater flooding being very localised in nature. The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Northumberland provides an overview of the areas susceptible to flooding and identifies the risks posed by flooding from rivers, the coast, groundwater, surface water run-off and sewerage. The SFRA suggests detailed stages for the sequential test<sup>(51)</sup>, which aims to steer development towards low risk areas.

**17.8** Where buildings are likely to be affected by flood waters, they can be designed to be resistant to flood waters entering ('dry proofing'), or, if this cannot be achieved, to be as resilient as possible should the water enter ('wet proofing'). The SFRA has identified a number of resistance and resilience measures for the Council to consider when assessing development proposals which would make developments better placed to deal with flooding. This detailed guidance broadly covers building materials, foundations, floors, walls, doors and windows, fittings and utilities.<sup>(52)</sup>

**17.9** Relatively small changes in hard surfacing and surface gradients can cause flooding (i.e. garden loss and reuse of brownfield sites) and as a result, surface water flooding can become more frequent. Surface water flooding is an issue within parts of Northumberland resulting in the need for surface water management planning to reduce the risk of flooding from new development.

**17.10** The management of surface water can be achieved via a requirement to restrict runoff from developed sites. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are the key method for doing this. There are many different types of SuDS that could be used in new developments including use of surfaces that water can easily pass through (permeable surfaces), re-use of rainwater, green roofs, filter drains to separate surface water from waste water, and ponds and wetlands to deal with excess water. The various methods are intended to either increase the amount of rainwater soaking into the ground, or holding back excess water away from development. Different areas will have different types of SuDS which are the most effective. The provision of green infrastructure can play an important role in flood management and mitigation. SuDS and green infrastructure can also prevent pollution by filtration of surface water run-off thereby contributing to improvements in the quality of water courses in line with legislation.

**17.11** There are also two specific local surface water issues within Northumberland:

- Areas of south east Northumberland are reliant on a system of pumps to deal with surface water. The impact of new development on this system must be carefully considered. Evidence suggests that SuDS will be essential; and
- A small part of the wastewater from South East Northumberland and South and West Northumberland is treated at Howdon Wastewater Treatment Works in North Tyneside, along with wastewater from neighbouring authorities.

**17.12** There are potential future capacity issues relating to the Howdon 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 developments, leading to unnecessary treatment of surface water. To ensure wastewater from future new development can be accommodated at the treatment works, there is currently on-going

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51 Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Paragraph 5.3.

52 Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Table 6-1.

## 17. Water environment

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 in new developments, and separate it from the sewerage system.

**17.13** 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. Despite existing and proposed flood defences there are still many settlements and areas affected by flooding where there will be a need to plan for additional flood defence and management schemes. Following the 2008 flood at Morpeth, funding had been achieved and work has begun on a major flood alleviation scheme involving raised flood defences and storage of flood water upstream.

### Water quality

**17.14** It is important to consider the protection of water resources from pollution and to maintain current water quality, as well as seek to improve areas which are not currently meeting required European and national standards. It is therefore important 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.

**17.15** The Issues and Options consultation identified principles to be included in a Core Strategy water quality policy. Feedback from the consultation highlighted strong support for the principles identified which would form the basis of the Core Strategy policy on water quality. Comments identified the need for the Core Strategy to: ensure there is no deterioration in the biological status of water bodies; refer to Source Protection Zones (SPZs) and protect them; include references to improving land management techniques, infrastructure and private drainage, such as non-mains systems as a means of addressing failure in Northumberland's water bodies; and make references to the positive benefits which the natural environment can provide towards improvement in water quality.

**17.16** European legislation requires all inland and coastal waterbodies to achieve a 'good' or 'good potential' ecological, biological and overall water quality status by 2015. Just under half of the inland waterbodies in Northumberland are already achieving this target. For those that do not achieve this status, River Basin Management Plans<sup>(53)</sup> have action plans to assist in bringing them up to standard.

**17.17** Waterbodies are valuable ecological habitats and landscape features and as such, water management has strong links with green infrastructure and the ecosystems approach relating to biodiversity and designated sites of European and local importance and it is therefore vital that there is no deterioration in the status of waterbodies.

**17.18** Groundwater is an important resource 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 in the Berwick and Fowberry Water Resource Zone (WRZ). There are also a number of Secondary Aquifers, such as the Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit, which are capable of supporting water

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53 River Basin Management Plans are produced by the Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Northumberland is covered by the [Northumbria River Basin Management Plan](#) and the [Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan](#).

supplies at a local scale. These aquifers support a number of licensed groundwater abstractions, such as Abbey Well in Morpeth. Given the rural nature of the County both the Principal and Secondary Aquifers also support a significant number of private water supplies (unlicensed). A number of Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been designated in Northumberland to protect the groundwater abstractions in the Berwick, Wooler and Morpeth areas and it is important these water resources are protected.

**17.19** 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. These can have adverse impacts on water quality if they are not properly managed; therefore consideration of the appropriate siting and design of non-mains systems to ensure that they do not have an adverse impact on ground and surface waters is important.

### Water supply and sewerage

**17.20** In accordance with national planning policy, there is the need to ensure that the expected level and distribution of development proposed is deliverable and will not result in water supply and sewerage infrastructure issues that cannot be resolved. Feedback from the Issues and Options consultation highlighted there was strong support for the principles identified which would form the basis of the Core Strategy policy on water supply and sewerage infrastructure. Concerns were expressed in relation to the principle which aimed to minimise the need for new infrastructure by directing development to areas where there is existing or planned capacity in the sewerage infrastructure and an adequate supply of water, as some of these areas may not necessarily be the most sustainable locations and could also result in a lack of development in smaller settlements. Comments were also made that this criterion should also be balanced against other locational factors.

**17.21** Northumberland is identified as an area of low water stress<sup>(54)</sup> and most of the river catchments in Northumberland are classified as having 'Water Available'; however the rivers Coquet and Font have been identified as experiencing water resource availability issues. The supply of water in Northumberland is split into two 'water resource zones' (WRZ); Kielder WRZ and the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ. The Kielder WRZ serves the majority of development and population in Northumberland and the majority of proposed new development which would fall within this WRZ is capable of being supported. The Berwick and Fowberry WRZ serves the far north of Northumberland and whilst there is a surplus water supply, shortages of supply have been experienced during periods of high demand. Work has been undertaken by NWL to improve this situation however there may be a need for further action, including improving infrastructure, demand management and leakage control.

**17.22** The capacity for existing sewerage infrastructure to cope with new development in the County is also an important issue and the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study (WCS) has undertaken a high level assessment to assess the capacity of both the sewer network and the wastewater treatment works. The WCS has helped to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and will be used to inform the strategic allocations in the plan.

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54 Environment Agency, Areas of Water Stress: Final Classification, October 2007.

## 17. Water environment

**17.23** In terms of network infrastructure, a number of potential development areas have experienced incidents of sewer flooding which could mean that the use of the existing network is not an option. Any further development in these areas could require upgrades to the system, although this is likely to impact on the phasing of development rather than the overall amount of development.

**17.24** A number of Northumberland's wastewater treatment works have capacity to accommodate wastewater from new development, however several treatment works do not have any spare capacity to accept and treat further wastewater from new development either at the current time or in the near future and solutions would be needed to treat additional wastewater generated as a result of proposed development.

### Policy 56

#### Water environment

##### Flood risk

Development proposals will be required to consider the effects of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site, having regard to the policy approaches contained within the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plan.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure by:

- a. Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk. Applicants should apply 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;
- b. Ensuring that development proposals are safe over their lifetime, taking account of climate change, and do not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;
- c. Assessing the impact of the development proposal on existing flood risk management infrastructure, including whether there is a need to reinforce such infrastructure or provide new infrastructure;
- d. Ensuring that development proposals are resilient and resistant to flood risk, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; and
- e. Ensuring that development proposals control, separate and minimise surface water runoff. In order to manage surface water drainage, development proposals should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), unless it is clearly demonstrated that SuDS are not appropriate. Where SuDS are provided arrangements must be put in place for their whole lifetime management and maintenance.

Proposals for additional flood defence schemes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal represents the most sustainable solution and that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the disbenefits in terms of their impact upon the environment.

### Water quality

The strategy for water quality is to maintain and improve the water quality of Northumberland, having regard to local river basin management plans and the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, by:

- f. Avoiding inappropriate development which would result in an adverse impact on waterbodies and groundwater resources, in terms of their quantity, quality and the ecosystem that they support.
- g. Ensuring that, through effective water management, development proposals do not result in the deterioration in existing water quality, and where appropriate contribute towards improving water quality.
- h. Ensuring that new or improved water and sewage treatment facilities, including coastal outfalls, contribute towards improvement in water quality and demonstrate there is no significant adverse impact upon the natural environment, including the coastal and marine environment.

Where non-mains drainage systems, such as package treatment plants and septic tanks, are required careful consideration of the siting and design of such systems will be required to ensure there is no significant adverse impact upon water quality.

### Water supply and sewerage

The strategy for water supply and sewerage is to ensure that there is adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure to serve existing and proposed developments by:

- i. Minimising the need for new infrastructure by directing development to areas where there is existing or planned capacity in the sewerage infrastructure and an adequate supply of water can be guaranteed, having regard to the infrastructure provider's Water Resource Management Plan and Strategic Business Plan as well as the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study.
- j. Ensuring that where new infrastructure is needed to serve a new development it does not have a harmful impact on existing systems, the amenity of local residents and the environment.
- k. Ensuring that new infrastructure provision is phased alongside new development.

### Question 59

This is our preferred policy for the water environment. Do you have any comments?

## 17. Water environment

### Coastal erosion and coastal change management

**17.25** The Northumberland coastline covers approximately 130km and stretches from the Scottish Borders down to Seaton Sluice in the south east of the County. A large part of the coastline has important natural assets and distinctive land and seascapes. It broadly comprises a series of dune systems and wide, sandy bays separated by lengths of cliffs and small islands (such as Holy Island, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island). The remainder is fronted by a number of Northumberland's settlements including Berwick-upon-Tweed, Seahouses, Amble, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Blyth and intervening villages such as Beadnell, Alnmouth, Craster, Cresswell, Cambois and Seaton Sluice. All of these are important communities and contributors to the local economy. Only a small proportion of the coastline is protected by man-made defences, most notably in the more urban areas.

**17.26** The Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2)<sup>(55)</sup> provides a large-scale assessment of the risks to places and people as well as the historic and natural environment from coastal erosion and sea flooding. It presents a policy framework to manage these risks over the next 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 ensure the implementation of shoreline management policies 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.

**17.27** Management of coastal change and planning are strategic issues which require an integrated approach and the Council is working closely with its partners and neighbouring authorities to ensure an integrated management approach is applied along the Northumberland Coast. In line with national policy, the Council will continue to work with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) under the Duty to Co-operate in order 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.

**17.28** 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 Core Strategy has a role to play in overseeing and planning for this coastal change over time and directing development accordingly.

**17.29** The Issues and Options consultation document identified that the Council's preferred policy approach was for the Core Strategy to include a high level criteria-based policy on coastal erosion and coastal change management with the subsequent Delivery DPD defining Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs); including setting out the type of development that will be appropriate, the circumstances in which certain types of development may be permissible and the allocations of land for appropriate development within these areas.

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55 Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2, May 2009.

**17.30** Through the Issues and Options consultation there was strong support for this approach and for the factors identified which would form the basis of the Core Strategy policy on coastal erosion and coastal change management. The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the preferred approach is likely to have significant positive effects on adaptation to climate change and the water environment. There are likely also to be positive impacts, in net terms, on the biodiversity and landscape.

**17.31** The Council is therefore proposing to continue with this preferred policy approach.

### **Policy 57**

#### **Coastal erosion and coastal change management**

Development proposals should avoid areas vulnerable to coastal change or add to the impacts of physical changes to the coast. Such development proposals must be proven appropriate and sustainable when assessed against the relevant management approach for the area as set out in the Shoreline Management Plan.

Development proposals in areas vulnerable to coastal change will be required to:

- a. Demonstrate the need for a coastal location that overrides the risk of coastal change and provides wider sustainability benefits, such as substantial economic and social benefits to communities.
- b. Provide a Coastal Change Vulnerability Assessment which demonstrates that the development is safe over its planned lifetime and that it will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change. Such an assessment should be appropriate to the degree of risk and the location, scale and nature of the development.
- c. Demonstrate that the coastal environment, including ecological and heritage assets and designations, including the Northumberland coastal path are not significantly adversely affected.
- 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.

Proposals for new or replacement coastal defence schemes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the works are consistent with the relevant management approach for the area as set out in the Shoreline Management Plan and that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the coastal environment, including ecological and heritage assets and designations.

### **Question 60**

This is our preferred policy for coastal erosion and coastal change management. Do you have any comments?

## 18. Making it happen

### 18. Making it happen

**18.1** The Core Strategy sets out a vision and aspiration for Northumberland to 2030. It is the county's key document in delivering sustainable development and managing land use change.

**18.2** Covering a 15 year timeframe, the plan provides a positive and realistic framework. Delivery is central to the Council's approach, ensuring objectively assessed development and infrastructure needs are met, balanced with appropriate environmental protection.

#### Decision taking

**18.3** Importantly, the relationship between the Northumberland Core Strategy and decision taking on planning applications should be seamless. The plan will be positively translated into high quality development on the ground.

**18.4** Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal will be included in the plan. Significant adverse impacts on any of the economic, social and environmental dimensions will be avoided. Where such effects are unavoidable, adequate mitigation or compensation will be secured through planning obligations and conditions.

#### Infrastructure delivery and Community Infrastructure Levy

**18.5** Developers currently contribute to infrastructure and other site specific facilities or services through normal development costs, which can include securing infrastructure through conditions attached to planning permissions or through planning obligations (often referred to as section 106 agreements). Whilst planning obligations may still be used to secure certain types of infrastructure, changes to legislation and national policy mean that shared infrastructure is likely to be delivered through a Community Infrastructure Levy in the future. This will support and incentivise new development particularly by returning a meaningful proportion of the levy receipts to the neighbourhoods where development takes place.

**18.6** The Council is currently undertaking a Strategic Infrastructure Study for Northumberland. A Baseline and Options Assessment has recently been completed and can be viewed at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy). The Strategic Infrastructure Study will be used to inform the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP will establish key infrastructure requirements across the county including transport, utilities, community facilities and other aspects vital to the proper functioning of Northumberland.

#### Cross boundary working

**18.7** Through implementation of the Northumberland Core Strategy, the Council will continue to work collaboratively with adjoining authorities and stakeholders regarding strategic issues which may have significant cross boundary impacts. A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed with the five Tyne and Wear authorities and Durham County Council regarding approaches to key issues such as population and housing, economic development, transport and infrastructure. In addition, the Council will also be

working with authorities in Cumbria and Scotland and the Marine Management Authority in relation cross border issues. This approach will ensure appropriate land and infrastructure is provided as necessary to support current and future levels of development.

### Neighbourhood Plans

**18.8** In translating the Northumberland Core Strategy into implementation the Council will support the new system of neighbourhood planning recently introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Already the Council has a number of neighbourhood planning ‘front-runners’ who are in the process of testing these new planning powers as part of a national pilot programme. Neighbourhood planning will provide opportunities for local communities, through their Parish Councils, to help shape their neighbourhoods through delivery of sustainable development in their areas.

### Monitoring and ensuring delivery

**18.9** The Northumberland Core Strategy must be deliverable. The Council will pay careful attention to viability and costs. Policy obligations and burdens should not be such that otherwise acceptable developments are stopped. This will be carefully assessed through an investigation into the viability of the majority of development required to deliver the spatial strategy for the County having regard to all of the policies in the Core Strategy – an approach referred to as ‘whole plan viability’.

**18.10** However, recognising that the plan proposes to cover a 15 year period, it is important that sufficient flexibility is incorporated to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances. As such the plan will be kept up to date through annual monitoring and its policies will be reviewed as necessary.

### Glossary

**Affordable Housing** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

**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.

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

**Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)** A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving biological diversity. Northumberland has a BAP and there are individual BAPs for different key habitats and species.

**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.

**Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ)** Spanning the north and south banks of the River Blyth. A partnership of public and private organisations is working to bring further investment into this zone from the renewable energy sector, particularly in relation to offshore wind.

**Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)** One of the world's leading assessment methods for sustainable buildings, primarily commercial.

**Cambois Zone of Economic Opportunity** An area of expansion land at Cambois, designated in the existing Wansbeck Local Plan for development by businesses requiring large sites in non-estate locations.

**Clean Coal** Technologies that may reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases associated with power generation from coal. This includes carbon capture and storage and coal gasification.

**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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, such as those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, power stations, factories and homes.

**Community Right to Build** An order made by the Local Planning Authority under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) that allows local communities to undertake small-scale, site-specific, community-led developments without going through the normal planning application process

**Code for Sustainable Homes (CFSH)** A national standard developed by the Government, the Building Research Establishment and the construction industry, which measures the sustainability of a home against measures of energy and water use, surface water run-off, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other pollution, waste production etc.

**Commercial and Industrial Waste** Controlled waste arising from premises, used wholly or mainly, for industry and commerce of various kinds.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** A Levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area to help fund infrastructure necessary as a result of new development. Charges are based on the size and type of the new development. While there is more flexibility than Section 106 Agreements in terms of how the money can be spent, the system gives developers greater clarity from the start as to these additional development costs.

**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 condition')** 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.

**Core Strategy** A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area, having regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy. This document forms the first stage of the Core Strategy for Northumberland excluding the area of Northumberland National Park.

**Delivery Area** Any of four areas defined for planning purposes for the core strategy, based on those in the Sustainable Community Strategy and on housing market areas.

**Delivery Development Plan Document** The development plan document that will be prepared following the Core Strategy in order to set out more detailed policies, proposals and allocations the main purpose of which is to ensure that the Core Strategy policies are realised on the ground.

**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.

**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** This includes adopted council development plan documents such as core strategies and any future adopted neighbourhood plans setting out the authority's policies for the development and use of land (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act).

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** DPDs are adopted plans and documents that form part of the development plan. Once adopted, planning decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise. DPDs can include core strategy, land allocation and delivery plans, area action plans, and neighbourhood plans.

**District Centres** A second tier of shopping / service centres identified in the Town Centre and Retail Study for Northumberland consisting of five centres: Amble, Bedlington, Ponteland, Prudhoe and Haltwhistle.

**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.

**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.

**Environment Agency** A governmental body that deals with issues of the environmental effects of activities including those arising from development – e.g. pollution, waste arising, water issues including flood protection advice.

**Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)** Undertaken to ensure that equality issues are taken into account throughout the Core Strategy process, and that it promotes equality and diversity and does not adversely affect or discriminate against any of the protected Equality groups.

**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. It includes a wide range of numerical data and other information, including, surveys, studies, discussions and consultations.

**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.

**Geodiversity** The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Geotourism** Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place, in relation to the local environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.

**Green Belt** (not to be confused with the term 'greenfield') A land designation with the fundamental aim to prevent 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 (GI)** Green spaces in towns, villages or elsewhere, serving different purposes, which together form a network that can provide local communities with a better environment and quality of life and help wildlife.

**Greenfield Land or Site** Land (or a defined site) which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

**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.

**Groundwater** An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.

**Growth Point** A Government initiative to support local authorities with plans for long-term sustainable housing-led growth. South East Northumberland, comprising the former Blyth Valley and Wansbeck Districts and some parts of the former Castle Morpeth district to the north, achieved Growth Point status in July 2008

**Gypsies and travellers** (for planning purposes) 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** Wastes that have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment, for example contaminated soil.

**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

**Household** A person living alone or a group of people living together at the same address and with common housekeeping.

**Housing requirement** The amount of housing that has to be built in a given period to meet needs and demands. In the past it has been set at regional level but, in future, it will be calculated separately for Northumberland based on evidence.

**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)** 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.

**Inset boundary** The inner boundary of the Green Belt around a town or village that is within the general extent of a 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.

**Inspector's Report** A report issued by an Independent Planning Inspector regarding the planning issues debated at the independent examination of a development plan or a planning inquiry. For DPDs it will contain recommendations to the authority on changes to the plan and an opinion as to whether it is a sound plan.

**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.

**Lifetime Homes Standards** A series of sixteen design criteria intended to make homes more easily adaptable for lifetime use.

**Lifetime Neighbourhoods** Places where most people would choose to be able 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.

**Listed Building** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II\* or II.

**Local Centre** A tier of shopping / service centres including a range of small shops and limited services serving either a small catchment or a sparsely populated larger catchment.

**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 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. The term also describes older planning documents prepared by the former Northumberland authorities. Many policies in these plans continue to be “saved” and form part of the Development Plan for decision-making purposes.

**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** Energy which requires the burning of fossil fuels (i.e. not renewable) but generated through processes and technologies that release less carbon dioxide than conventional means, for example combined heat and power plants (CHP), and heat pumps.

**Low Cost Market Housing** Usually refers to new build dwellings that are sold for 100% owner occupation but at a price that is discounted from the price than they could be sold for on the open market. These are not part of the definition of affordable housing.

**Major Developed Sites** Sites within and washed over by the Green Belt where there is a major development, in use or abandoned, such as a hospital, military site, industrial or commercial buildings.

**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 nationally important planning issues. It replaces Planning / Mineral Policy Statements and Guidance Notes.

**Neighbourhood Plan** A plan prepared for a defined area by a “qualifying body”, a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum. When adopted a neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

**Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan** A development plan document prepared by the former Northumberland County Council that covered strategic matters. Only one policy remains saved from that plan (policy S5), defining the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth.

**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.

**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)** All World Heritage Sites must have cultural and/or natural heritage which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity (in Northumberland's case, Hadrian's Wall WHS).

**Permitted Development** Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed without the need to make an application for planning permission.

**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.

**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 (generally comprising the primary and secondary frontages). Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing, and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas, and businesses.

**Ramsar Sites** Sites designated under the European Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats.

**Recovery (of waste)** Value can be recovered from waste by recovering materials through recycling, composting or recovery of energy.

**Regeneration** The economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of rural and urban areas.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** This remains part of the development plan until abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act of 2011. It identifies the scale and distribution of new housing and specified priorities for regeneration, the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment. Many of these elements must now be dealt with in the Core Strategy.

**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 Energy** Energy produced using renewable sources such wind, water or biomass. Off shore renewable energy generation projects such as offshore wind or wave power are dealt with by the Marine Management Organisation and the Infrastructure Planning Unit rather than local planning authorities.

**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 where housing use would not normally be granted permission, which are nevertheless released for affordable housing in order to meet the local community's housing needs.

**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).

**Scheduled Monument (SM)** 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 / sequential test** A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before the consideration of others. For example, town centre retail sites, followed by edge-of-centre sites and then out-of-centre sites or housing in relation to various levels of flood risk.

**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.

**Spatial Vision** A brief description of how the area is envisioned to have changed by the end of the plan period, as a result of the policies being implemented.

**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.

**Superfast Broadband** Superfast broadband infrastructure is infrastructure capable of delivering speeds higher than 24Mbps. Superfast broadband speeds are headline download speeds of greater than 24Mbps.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** Non-statutory documents which add further detail to the policies in statutory documents such as the core strategy – 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.

**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 Community Strategy (SCS)** A long-term programme of action, published on behalf of the community which reflects the needs and aspirations of the area.

**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.

**Town Centre** There are two specific meanings in the context of the Core Strategy:

1. A tier of shopping and service centres identified in the Town Centre and Retail Study as seven centres (Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Morpeth, Blyth, Ashington, Cramlington, Hexham).
2. Defined areas in settlements that include the Primary Shopping Area and adjacent areas where other town centre uses are located. In some settlements, the Town Centre and the Primary Shopping Area may be the same.

**Washed-over** The way in which the Green Belt sometimes includes areas of built development such as villages or hamlets said to be "washed over" by the Green Belt

## Glossary

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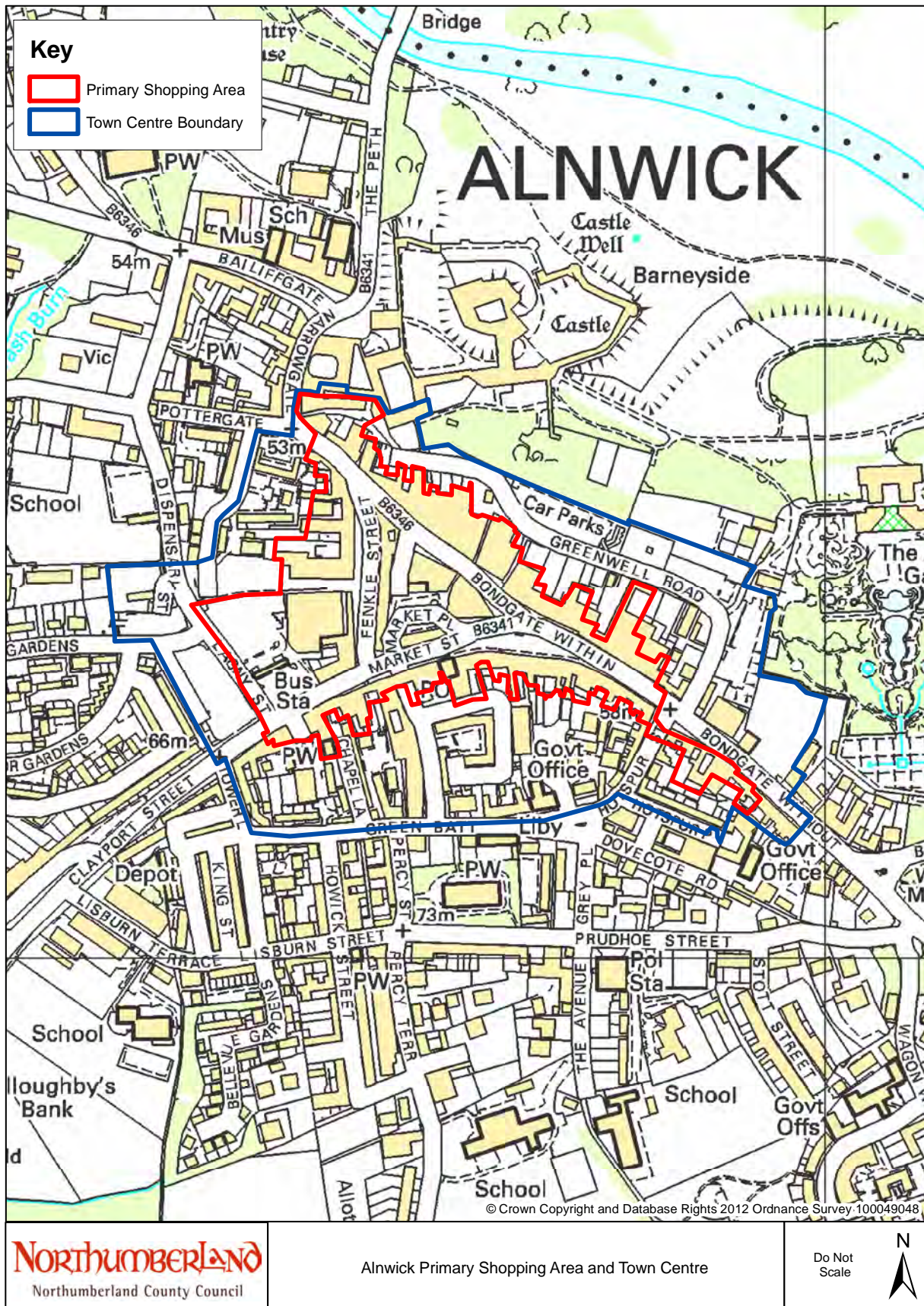
**Waste Streams** Sub-divisions of waste, such as household waste, commercial waste, hazardous waste etc., which will be dealt with in different ways.

**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.

**Zero Carbon Building** A building which has net zero carbon emissions.

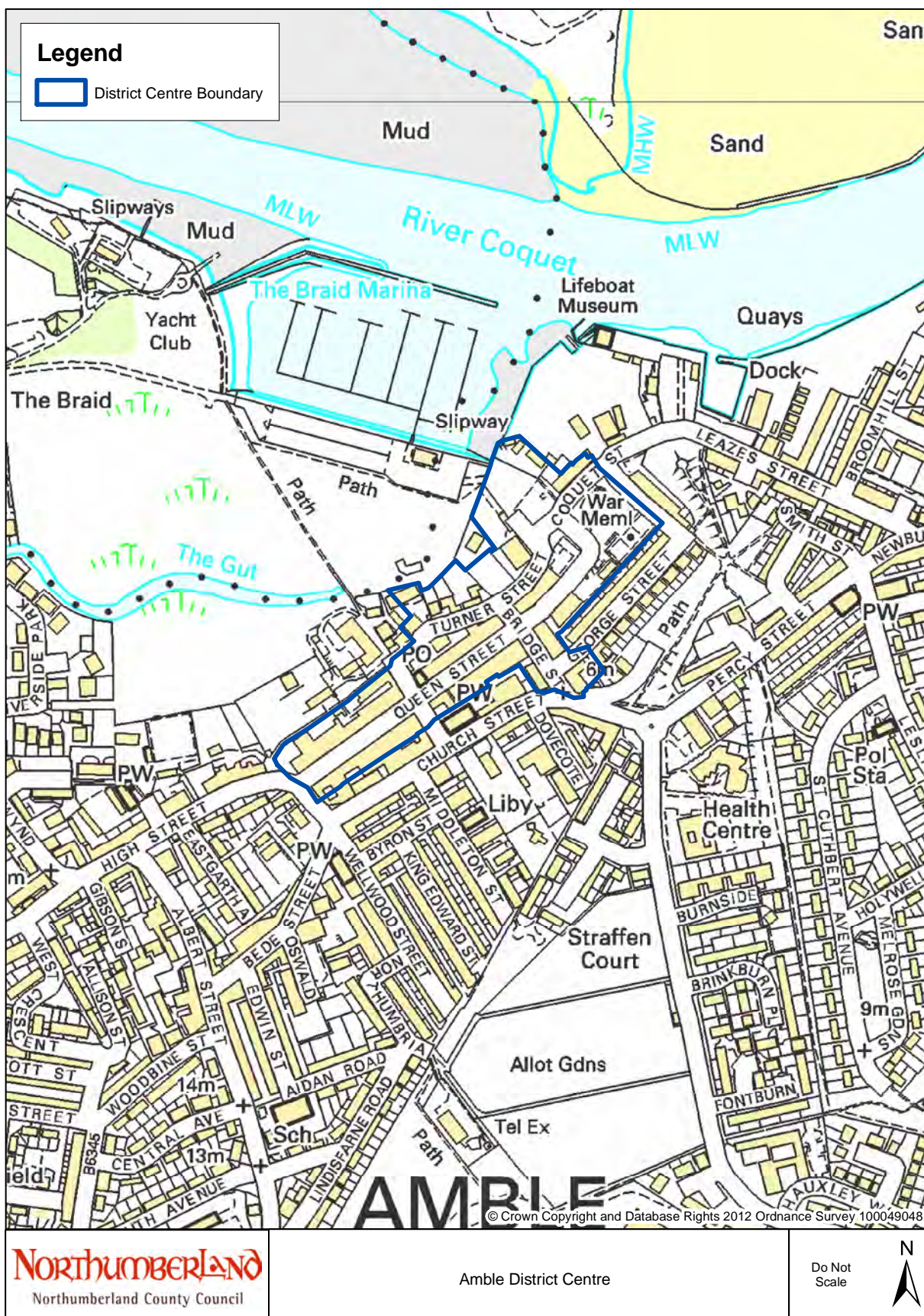
## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Alnwick



## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Amble

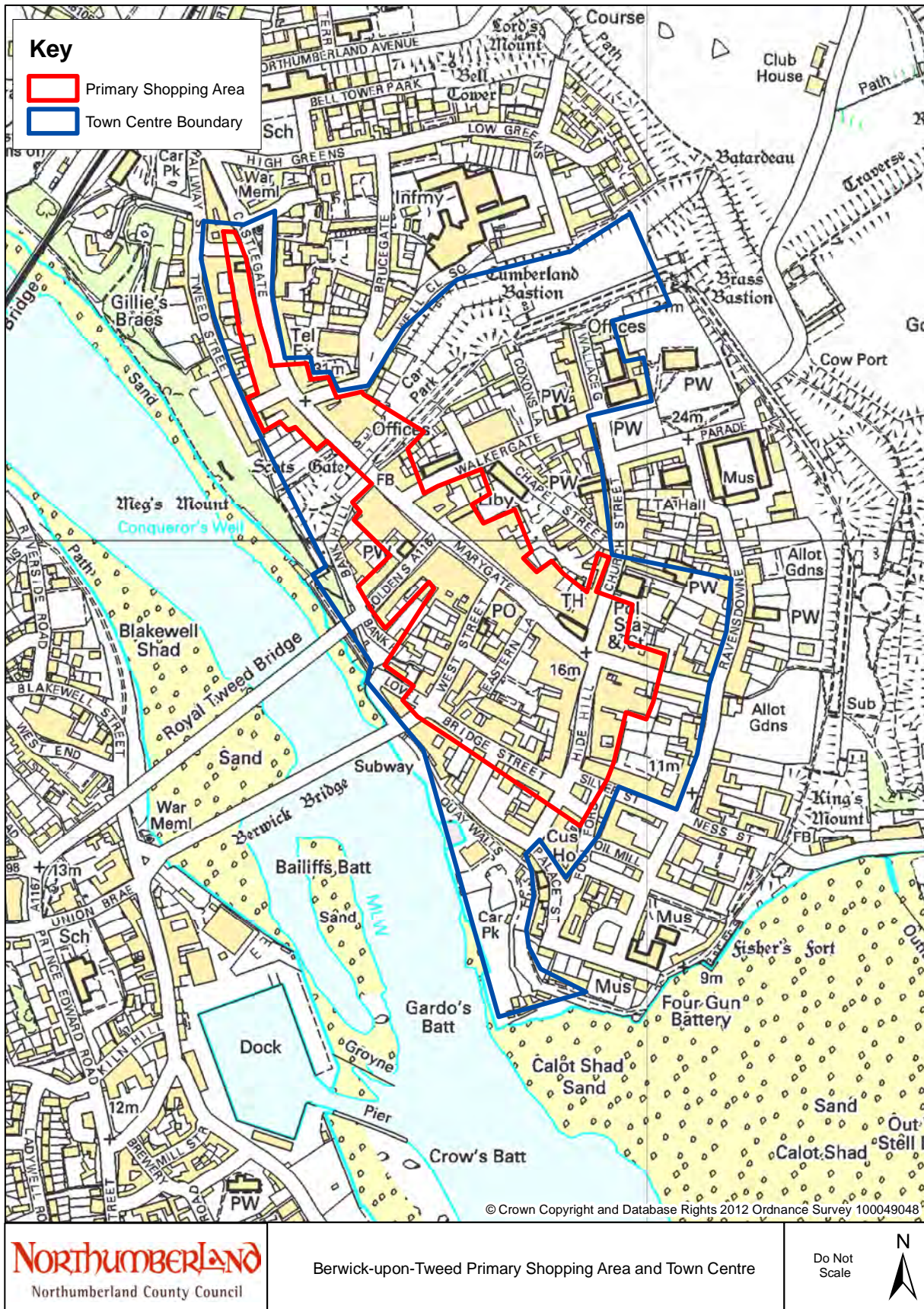






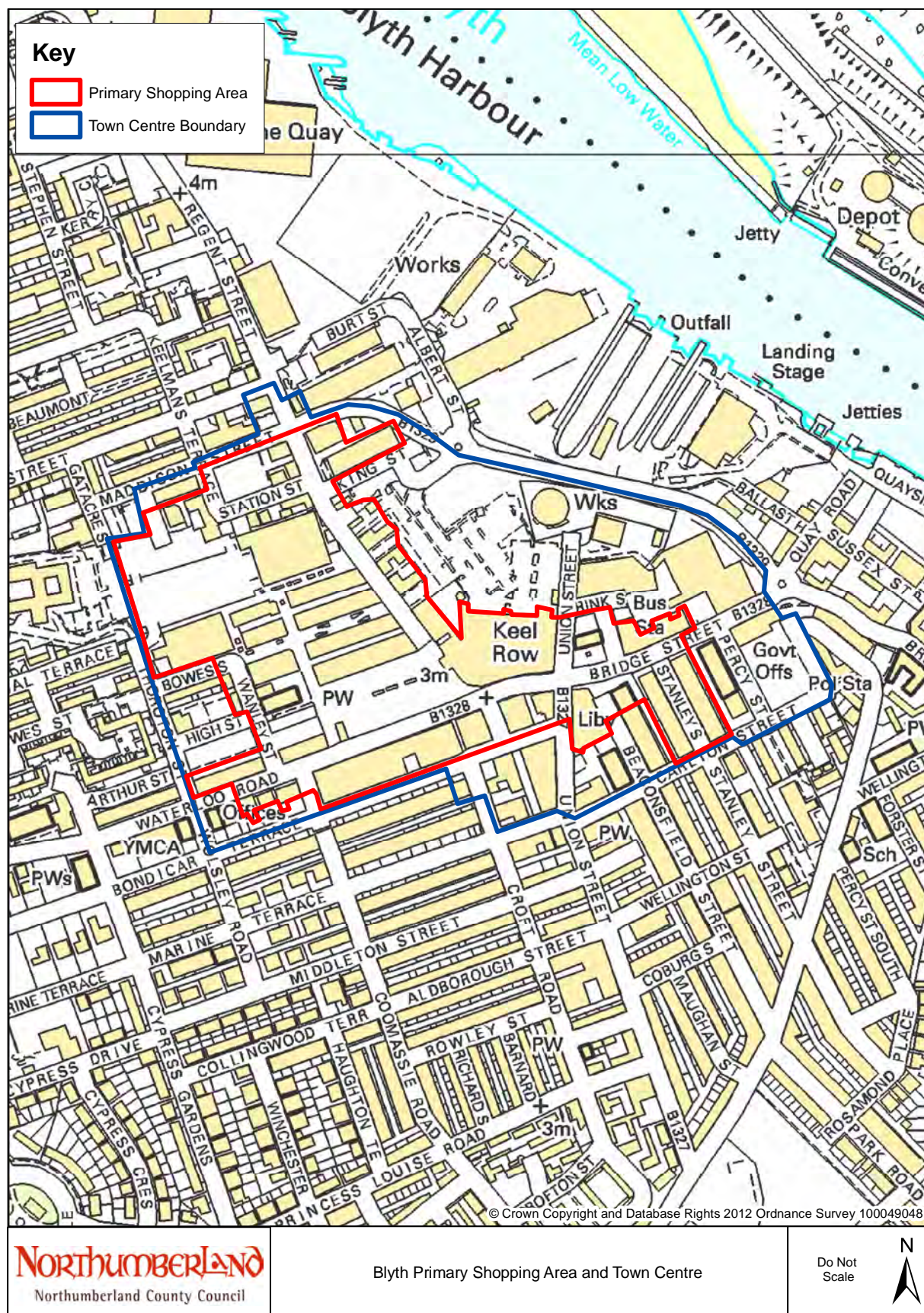
## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Berwick



## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

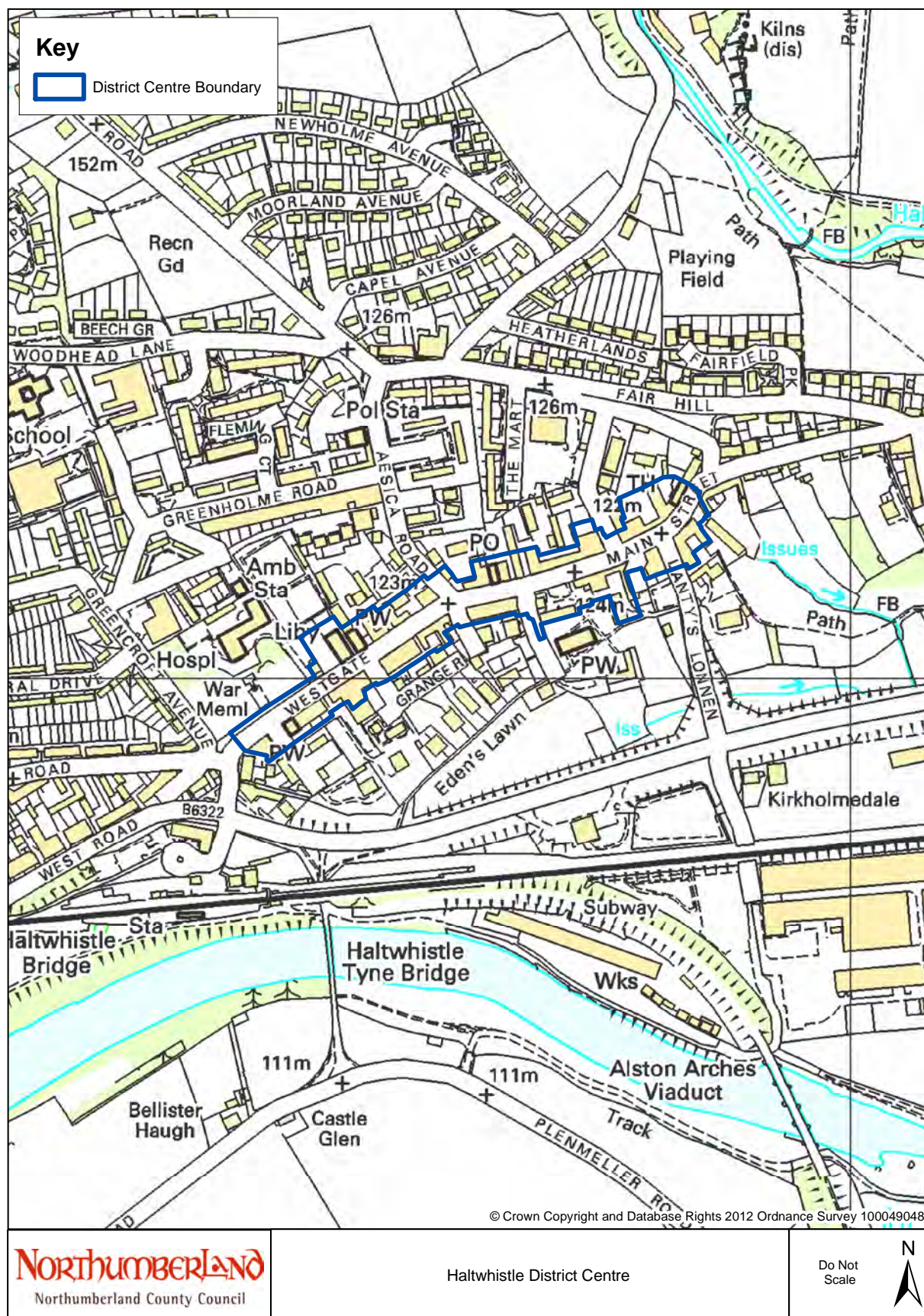
### Blyth





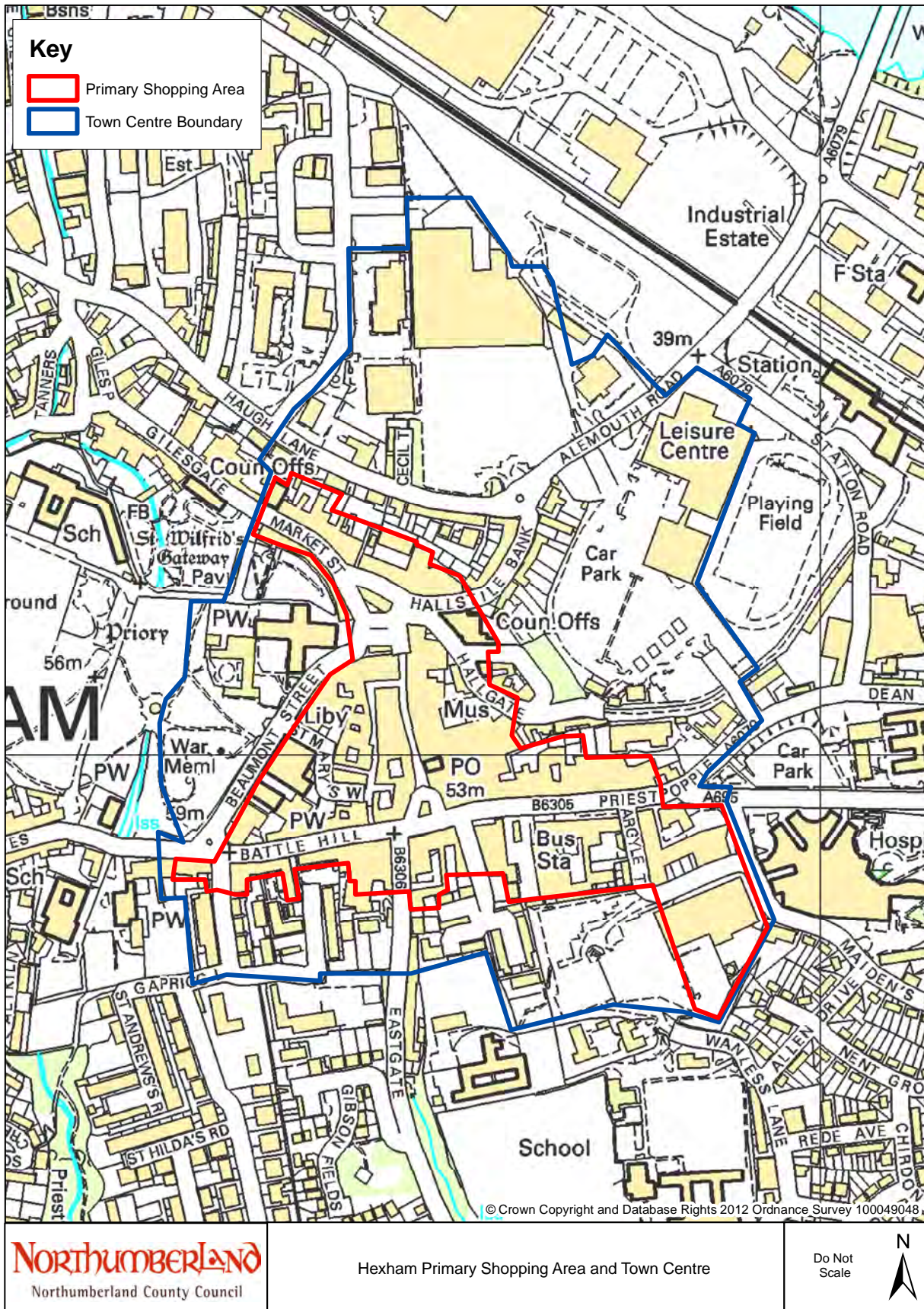
## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Haltwhistle



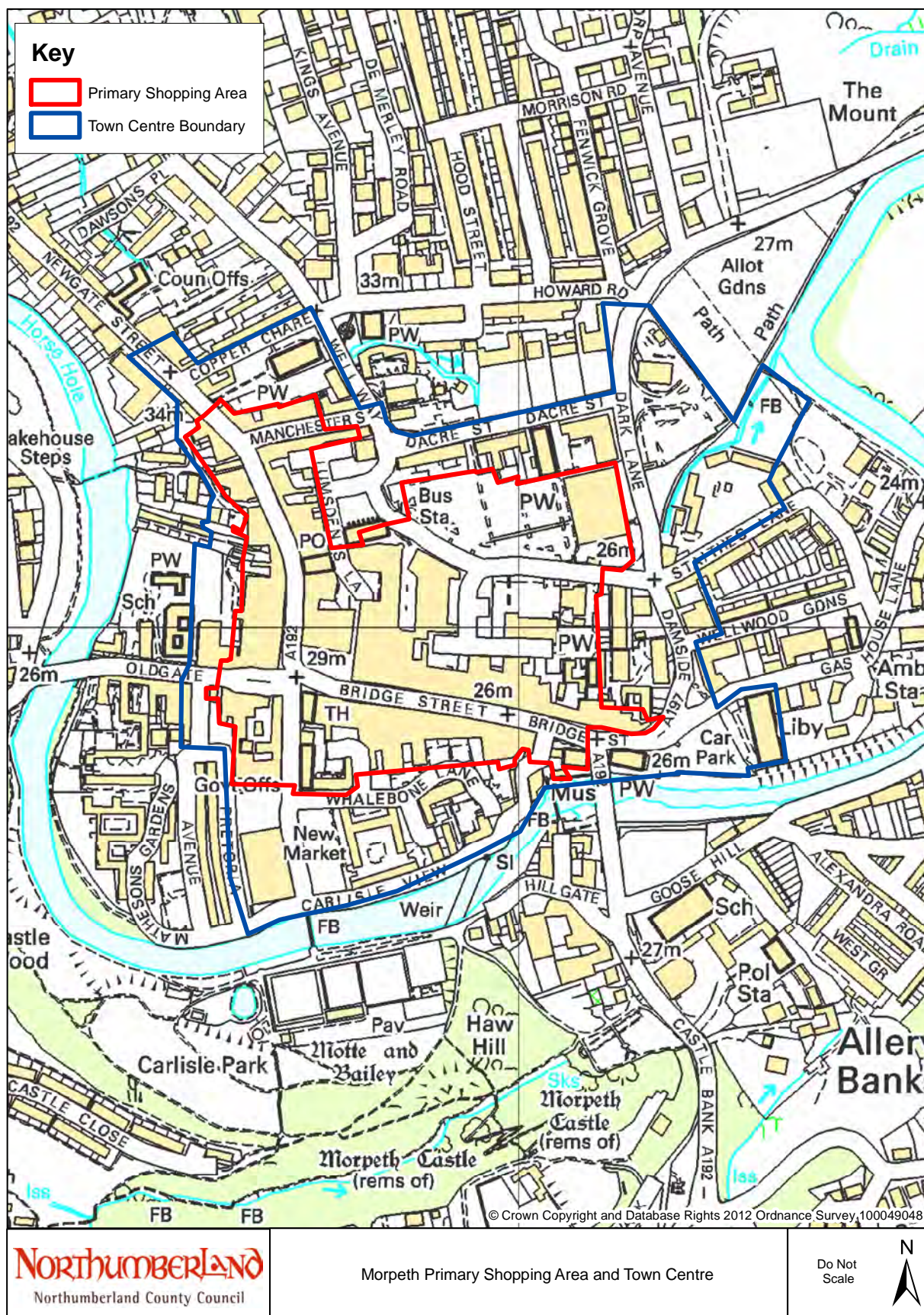
## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Hexham



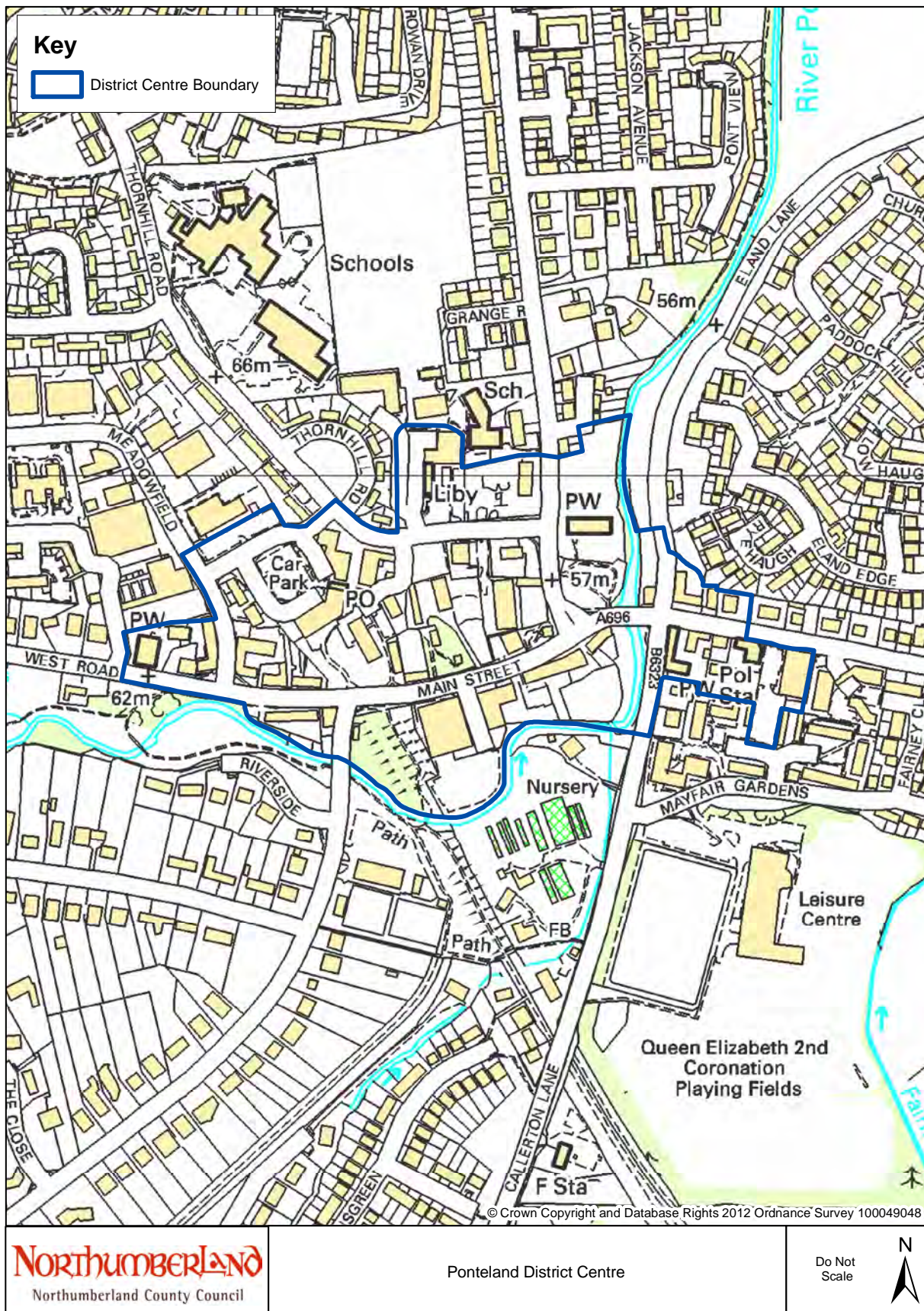
## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Morpeth



## Appendix A: Town and district centre boundaries

### Ponteland





### Appendix B: Car parking standards

#### Introduction

**B.1** It is important that any development should provide adequate facilities to cater for the anticipated parking demand while still aiming to reduce the need to travel, influence the rate of traffic growth and minimise environmental impacts.

**B.2** The Council will normally require car parking provision to be made in accordance with Column A of the table below. It is accepted, however, that the standards within Column A would not be appropriate in all circumstances. For example in the commercial centres of towns and larger villages a reduced provision may be appropriate in view of the intensive use of the buildings and the likely availability of public off-street car parks. Equally, in Conservation Areas, or other similarly environmentally sensitive locations, provision in accordance with Column A may be considered too intrusive.

**B.3** Column B of the table identifies a range of provision that would be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that there are no adverse implications for road safety or traffic management, and subject to consideration of the following criteria:

- a. Public parking is available in close proximity to the proposal;
- b. There is good access to public transport routes or alternative transport facilities;
- c. The impact of the proposed development on its setting.

**B.4** In such circumstances, developers will be expected to provide the figure in Column B unless it can be demonstrated, and/or agreed with the Council, that a lower level of provision may be more appropriate.

**B.5** There may be circumstances where the Council may be prepared to negotiate contributions towards the supply of off-street parking, measures to assist public transport, walking or cycling, or other equivalent solutions.

**B.6** Proposals for mixed use developments or for uses not listed will be assessed on their individual merits, location and use class.

#### General purpose houses and flats

**B.7** In Northumberland, experience suggests that car ownership varies in relation to the size of dwelling and the age group of residents. As a result, these standards include an allowance for property size.

**B.8** In general, a single standard will be applicable to the majority of developments in Northumberland (Column A). However, lower standards will apply within defined urban areas such as town centres (Column B) where public parking is available, and/or where there is good access to established public transport corridors.

**B.9** Parking provision for residents and visitors will normally be within the curtilage of dwellings. Where this cannot be achieved, the standards under 'Communal Parking' will apply.

## Appendix B: Car parking standards

### Operational space

**B.10** Operational parking space is the space required for cars and other vehicles regularly and necessarily involved in the operation of the business of a particular building. It includes usable space for delivering and collecting goods at premises but not for storing or servicing vehicles except where this is necessary as part of the business carried on at the premises. In the case of residential or care homes, space is required to park and manoeuvre ambulances. The minimum space required will normally be 50 square metres.

### General

**B.11** The table identifies the number of parking spaces that the Council will normally expect the developer to provide. As explained earlier, the table identifies the normal standards (Column A) and a lower range of provision (Column B) that may be accepted in particular circumstances.

**B.12 NB. Additional space will be required for disabled drivers and for parking cycles.**

**Table B.1 Car parking spaces per dwelling**

		In curtilage		Communal	
		Column A	Column B	Column A	Column B
General Purpose	1/2 Bed	2	1	1.5	0.75
	3/4 Bed	3	2	2.5	1
	5+ Bed	4	3	3	2
Aged Persons Non Sheltered		1	1	1	0.5

**B.13 Note:** On shared surface developments additional on-street visitor parking will be required:

- 1 additional car space per 5 dwellings (1/5). This requirement will be reduced to 1/7 and 1/10 where Column B applies. Such spaces shall be distributed uniformly throughout the shared surface.

**Table B.2 Car parking spaces for other types of development**

		Column A	Column B
Aged Persons Sheltered	Warden	1	1
	Resident Staff	1/1 staff	1/2 staff
	Residents	1/4 residents	1/6 residents
	Visitors	1/4 residents	1/6 residents

## Appendix B: Car parking standards

	Column A		Column B
Residential/ Care Homes	Staff	1/1 staff peak levels	1+1/2 staff
	Residents	1/4 bedrooms	1/8 bedrooms
	Visitors	1/4 bedrooms	1/8 bedrooms
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Day Care	Staff	1/1 staff	1/2 staff
	Patients	1/10 patients	1/20 patients
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Places of Worship	Operational	1+1/10 seats (min 10)	1+1/25 seats
		50 sq m min	(min 5) 50 sq m min
Assembly Halls	Staff	1/2 staff	1/5 staff
	Visitors	1/5 sq m	1/20 sq m
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Hospitals	Staff	1/3 beds	1/5 beds
	Out Patients	1/3 beds	1/5 beds
	Visitors	1/3 beds	1/10 beds
	Operational	200 sq m min + 100 sq m per 1000 sq m floorspace	200 sq m min
Clinics and Surgeries	Medical Staff	1/1	1/1
	Admin Staff	1/3	1/5
	Patients - (Appointments)	4/consulting room	2/consulting room
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Hotels/Guest Houses	Staff	1/3 staff	1/5 staff
	Guests	1/1 bedroom	1/1 bedroom
	Restaurant	1/5 sq m	1/10 sq m
	Bar	1/2.5 sq m	1/5 sq m
	Function Room	1/5 sq m	1/20 sq m

## Appendix B: Car parking standards

		Column A	Column B
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Restaurants	Staff	1/3 staff	1/5 staff
	Customers	1/5 sq m	1/10 sq m
	Bar	1/2.5 sq m	1/5 sq m
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Public House (if there are rooms to let or function rooms consider as hotel)	Staff	1/3 staff	1/5 staff
	Customers	1/2.5 sq m	1/5 sq m
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Libraries	Staff	1/2 staff	1/3 staff
	Customers	1/30 sq m	1/50 sq m
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Offices	Staff	1/30 sq m gross	1/50 sq m gross
	Visitors	1/150 sq m gross	1/300 sq m gross
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Warehousing	Staff	1/200 sq m	1/300 sq m
	Operational (up to 1000 sq m)	150 sq m	100 sq m
	Operational (1000 sq m +)	600 sq m	600 sq m
Industry	Staff	1/50 sq m gross	1/75 sq m gross
	Operational (up to 500 sq m)	150 sq m	100 sq m
	Operational (500 sq m +)	+ 100 sq m per 1000 sq m	+ 70 sq m per 1000 sq m
Car Repairs	Staff	1/40 sq m gross	1/50 sq m gross
	Customers	3/50 sq m service area	3/50 sq m service area
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Car Sales	Staff	1/40 sq m gross	1/50 sq m gross

## Appendix B: Car parking standards

		Column A	Column B
	Sales Customers	1/200 sq m display area	1/240 sq m display area
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Shops (up to 1000 sq m)	Staff	1/100 sq m gross	1/150 sq m gross
	Customers	1/20 sq m gross	1/30 sq m gross
	Operational	150 sq m	100 sq m
Supermarkets (above 1000 sq m)	Staff	1/100 sq m gross	1/150 sq m gross
	Customers	8/100 sq m gross	8/100 sq m gross
	Operational	600 sq m	600 sq m
Non Food Retail (above 1000 sq m)	Staff	1/100 sq m gross	1/200 sq m gross
	Customers	4/100 sq m gross	4/100 sq m gross
	Operational	600 sq m	600 sq m
Nursery Schools/ Playgroups	Staff	1/1 staff	1/1.5 staff
	Visitors	1/5 children	1/10 children
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
First Schools	Teachers	1/1 teacher	1/1 teachers
	Visitors	1/5 pupils	1/10 pupils
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Middle Schools	Teachers	1/1 teachers	1/1 teachers
	Visitors	1/10 pupils	1/20 pupils
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
High Schools	Teachers	1/1 teachers	1/2 teachers
	Staff	1/3 staff	1/5 staff
	Students/Visitors	1/20 students	1/40 students
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min
Colleges	Lecturers	1/1 lecturers	1/2 lecturers
	Staff	1/3 staff	1/5 staff

## Appendix B: Car parking standards

		Column A	Column B
	Students/Visitors	1/5 students	1/10 students
	Operational	50 sq m min	50 sq m min

## Appendix C: Audit of services and facilities survey data

### Settlement services audit for the North Northumberland Delivery Area (continued on next page)

Data source (correct at November 2010)	Local Land and Property Gazetteer / Northumberland County Council Education						Local Land and Property Gazetteer			NHS	NCC Employment Land Schedule 2009		Retail and Town Centres Study / Trading Standard <sup>s</sup>	Trading Standards	Local Land and Property Gazetteer				Northumberland County Council Transport					InfoNet	Comment
Settlement	Nursery	First School	Primary School	Middle School	Secondary School	High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station	Broadband	
Alnwick	4	3	x	3	x	1	1	2	3	3	6.41	41.50	13,860	3	7	6	1	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	✓
Berwick-upon-Tweed (including East Ord/Spittal/Tweedmouth)	7	5	x	2	x	1	1	3	4	5	22.12	53.74	22,290	4	8	5	1	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
Belford	1	1	x	1	x	x	x	1	x	1	1.59	0.00	830	1	2	2	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Rothbury	1	1	x	1	x	x	1	1	x	1	0.00	1.64	3120	1	3	2	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Seahouses/North Sunderland	1	1	x	1	x	x	x	1	x	x	1.21	1.15	2530	1	3	2	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Wooler	1	1	x	1	x	x	x	1	x	1	2.06	4.37	2200	1	4	2	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Acklington	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
Alnmouth/Lesbury/Hipsburn /Bilton	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	2	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	✓
Ancroft	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Bamburgh	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	1	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
Beadnell	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	✓
Iton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓
Boulmer	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Bowden	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓
Branton	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓

## Appendix C: Audit of services and facilities survey data

Settlement services audit for the North Northumberland Delivery Area (continued from previous page)

Settlement	Nursery	First School	Primary School	Middle School	Secondary School	High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station	Broadband	Comment
Loughoughton	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	2	1	1	1	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Lowick	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Milfield	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	
Netherton	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	PT	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Newton-on-the-Moor	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Norham	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Powburn	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Remington	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Rock	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Scremerston	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Shilbottle	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
South Charlton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	
Swarland	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	x	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Thropton	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	3	3	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Warkworth	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	2	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Whittingham	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	
Wingates	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	

## Appendix C: Audit of services and facilities survey data

### Settlement services audit for the West Northumberland Delivery Area (continued on next page)

Data source (correct at November 2010)	Local Land and Property Gazetteer / Northumberland County Council Education	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	NHS	NCC Employment Land Schedule 2009	Retail and Town Centres Study / Trading Standard 5	Trading Standards	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	Northumberland County Council Transport	InfoNet	Comment
Settlement	Nursery First School Primary School Middle School Secondary School High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals) Main health centres/GPs Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares) Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices) Churches Community Centres / Village and Church Halls Libraries Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly Railway Station			
Haltwhistle	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Allendale (including Catton)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Bellingham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Haydon Bridge	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Allenheads	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Barrasford	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Birtley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Byrness	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Capheaton	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Coanwood/Lambley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Colwell	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Falstone	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Featherstone	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Fourstones/Newbrough	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Gisland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Great Whittington	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Greenhead	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Halton Lea Gate	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Humshaugh/Chollerford	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
Kielder/Butterhaugh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	✓
										Settlement partially within National Park

## Appendix C: Audit of services and facilities survey data

### Settlement services audit for the West Northumberland Delivery Area (continued from previous page)

Settlement	Nursery	First School	Primary School	Middle School	Secondary School	High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station	Broadband	Comment
Kirkwhelpington	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Knarsdale	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Langley	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	
Otterburn	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	
Simonburn	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	x	#	#	#	x	✓	# Bus at Nunwick – 5 min walk.
Slaggyford	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Slaley	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	Van	2	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Wail	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Wark	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
West Woodburn	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Whitfield/Bearsbridge	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	Van	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	

## Settlement services audit for the Central Northumberland Delivery Area (continued on next page)

Data source (correct at November 2010)	Local Land and Property Gazetteer / Northumberland County Council Education	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	NHS	NCC Employment Land Schedule 2009	Retail and Town Centres Study / Trading Standard	Trading Standards	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	Northumberland County Council Transport	InfoNet																
	Nursery	First School	Primary School	Middle School	Secondary School	High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station	Comment	
Settlement	Hexham	8	4	x	2	x	1	1	3	5	4	2.76	49.18	18,240	3	10	7	1	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	# Excludes Sanderson Arcade.
	Morpeth	6	4	x	2	x	1	3	2	4	7	25.91	21.61	16,630#	4	7	8	1	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	
	Prudhoe	6	3	1	1	x	1	1	2	4	2	6.18	58.49	5480	3	4	4	1	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	
	Corbridge	2	1	x	1	x	x	1	2	2	2	0.00	0.49	2475	1	3	2	1	x	✓	x	x	✓	✓	
	Ponteland	3	2	x	2	x	1	x	1	3	3	0.00	4.34	5480	2	4	3	1	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	
	Acomb	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	2.57	0.07	✓	1	3	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
	Bardon	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	✓	x	✓		
	Mill/Henshaw/Redburn	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
	Belsay	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
	Blanchland	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Hartburn	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Hebron	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Heddon-on-the-Wall	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	525	1	2	1	1	1	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	
Hepscott	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Horsley	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Ingoe	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Kirkheaton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	Defunct hall
Longhirst	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	1	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	✓	
Longhorsley	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	0.40	0.40	✓	1	3	1	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	

## Appendix C: Audit of services and facilities survey data

### Settlement services audit for the Central Northumberland Delivery Area (continued from previous page)

Settlement	Nursery	First School	Primary School	Middle School	Secondary School	High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station	Broadband	Comment
Matfen	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Mickley/Mickley Square	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	0.30	0.00	✓	1	2	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	
Middleton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	
Milbourne	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Milford	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Netherwitton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Newton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	1	x	x	x	#	x	x	x	✓	# Bus along A69, not within settlement.
Ovingham	x	1	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	1	3	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	
Pegswood	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	0.00	1.14	900	1	1	3	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	
Riding Mill/Broomhaugh	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	2	2	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	
Ryal	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
Scots Gap/Cambo	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	0.44	0.44	✓	1	2	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	
Shotley Bridge	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	
Stamfordham/Hawkwell	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	2	x	x	x	x	x	x	3	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Stannington	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	
Stocksfield	2	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	1	0.30	0.30	✓	2	2	3	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	
West Thirston	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Whalton	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Whitley Chapel	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Whittonstall	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓	
Wylam	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	2	x	1	x	x	✓	1	3	1	1	1	x	✓	x	x	✓	✓	

## Settlement services audit for the South East Northumberland Delivery Area (continued on next page)

Data source (correct at November 2010)	Local Land and Property Gazetteer / Northumberland County Council Education	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	NHS	NCC Employment Land Schedule 2009	Retail and Town Centres Study / Trading Standards	Trading Standards	Local Land and Property Gazetteer	Northumberland County Council Transport	InfoNet													
	Nursery	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station		Comment		
Settlement	Amble	2	2	x	1	x	1	1	2	8.93	11.63	4030	2	5	2	1	x	✓	x	x	✓	
	Ashington	6	3	4	3	1	1	3	3	9	45.98	55.23	24,250	4	9	12	2	✓	x	x	✓	
	Bedlington (including Bedlington Station)	7	5	x	2	x	x	3	x	4	0.14	21.02	6490#	1	5	6	2	x	✓	x	✓	#4120 + 2370
	Blyth (including Bebside)	9	x	8	1	2	x	1	2	4	9	34.96	85.69	22,230	2	9	9	3	✓	x	x	✓
	Cramlington/East Cramlington	9	1	7	1	x	x	5	2	4	101.14	172.19	29,200	3	2	5	1	✓	x	x	✓	
	Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	1	x	1	1	x	x	1	1	2	0.30	0.00	2720	2	3	3	1	✓	x	x	✓	
	Seaton Delaval	1	1	x	1	x	x	1	1	2	0.27	16.58	1810	1	5	5	1	x	✓	x	✓	
	Bomarsund	x	x	x	x	x	x	0.91	0.91	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓		
	Bothal	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓		
	Choppington/Scotland Gate	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	3	1	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	
	Cresswell	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	
	East Hartford	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	
	Ellington	1	1	x	x	x	x	20.50	0.00	245	1	x	1	1	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	
	Guide Post/Stakeford/West	3	3	x	1	x	x	x	1	1	1	x	1425	2	3	2	1	x	✓	x	✓	
	Sleekburn																					
Hadston	2	2	x	x	x	x	1	1	1	2	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	✓		
High Hauxley	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	

## Settlement services audit for the South East Northumberland Delivery Area (continued from previous pages)

Settlement	Nursery	First School	Primary School	Middle School	Secondary School	High School	Hospitals (including community hospitals)	Main health centres/GPs	Dentists	Pharmacists	Total available employment land (hectares)	Total developed employment land (hectares)	Gross retail floorspace (sq. metres) (excludes out-of-centre provision) OR presence of a general store	Post Offices (including Sub Post Offices)	Churches	Community Centres / Village and Church Halls	Libraries	Sport and Leisure Facilities	Bus Frequency = more than every 30 minutes	Bus Frequency = 30-60 minutes	Bus Frequency = less than every 60 minutes	Bus Frequency = Infrequent/Weekly	Railway Station	Broadband
Holywell	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	1	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
Linton	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	3.61	3.61	✓	1	1	1	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
Lynemouth	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	1	0.00	0.00	640	1	1	1	1	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
Nedderton	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	1	x	1	1	1	x	x	1	1	2	0.30	0.00	2720	2	3	3	1	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
New Hartley	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	1	2	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley	1	1	x	1	x	x	x	1	x	1	x	x	✓	1	2	2	1	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Seghill	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	1	3.47	0.58	✓	x	2	1	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
South Cambois	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Togston	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	3	3	1	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	✓
Ugham	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓
Widdrington Station/Stobswold	1	1	x	x	x	x	x	1	PT	x	0.00	0.00	340	1	1	1	1	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓
Widdrington Village	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	1	2	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
Woodhorn	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	1	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	✓



**If you would like this document in a different format, language or font size, please contact:**

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