Northumberland Core Strategy (Local Plan)

EXTRACTS RELEVANT TO WOOLER!

For the full text, go to the Northumberland Core Strategy website: Click on the Presubmission (or Major Modifications) red line, and then on the blue band for reading the document and comments!

The Presubmission documents are late 2015, and Major Modifications June 2016.

Most of this is from the Presubmission version. I have cut out a lot of descriptive statements, and policies not relevant to us. Note – where there are comments on the draft, I have left mention of this in the text – you can see the comments in the online version. Most are very general!

The actual POLICIES are indicated by shading.

RED comments are my conclusions for relevant sections after reading the Major Modifications.

Ph: 4 Oct 2016

Section 1: Introduction

What is the Northumberland Local Plan?

1.3 The Core Strategy is the first step in replacing the existing Local Plan with a new one. In Northumberland, the Local Plan is currently 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 reorganisation in 2009. These are increasingly becoming out of date.

1.4 The Council will make sure that more detailed plans are also prepared to accompany the Core Strategy. In some parts of the County, this will be through Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by Town and Parish Councils. Elsewhere, the forthcoming ‘Delivery Document’ will add detail to the Core Strategy. Taken together, these documents will eventually replace all of the previously adopted and Local Plan saved policies.

1.5 The Northumberland Core Strategy – this document:

- Sets out the strategic planning policies of the Council;
- Provides the planning principles to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland from 2011 to 2031;
- Sets out the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland’s needs to 2031; and
- Includes strategic allocations for housing and employment.

1.6 The Core Strategy will supersede:

- All strategic 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 Development Plan Document (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).

1.7 The Northumberland Delivery Document will include:

- Detailed land allocations and designations, as well as site-specific proposals for the necessary infrastructure, buildings and services to deliver the proposals in the Core Strategy;
• Detailed development management policies; and
• A policies map identifying land allocations and designations.

What is the relationship with Neighbourhood Plans?

1.8 A number of Town and Parish Councils across the County are preparing Neighbourhood Plans. Provided they conform generally to the Core Strategy’s strategic policies, pass independent examination and are agreed by the community following a referendum, these plans will become part of the Development Plan.

1.9 The scope of Neighbourhood Plans will be determined by the Town and Parish Councils in consultation with their communities. Sometimes, they will decide that their Neighbourhood Plans should cover a wide range of topic areas and land allocations; in other cases they will prefer to limit it to selective topics or sites. There are matters for which Neighbourhood Plans may not set policy or make proposals, such as mineral extraction.

1.10 The Council is supporting an increasing number of Neighbourhood Plans across Northumberland. As a result the future Delivery Document will only need to set detailed policies and allocate sites in areas not covered by up-to-date Neighbourhood Plans.

Section 2: North Northumberland Delivery Area (see Map Fig 2.1 – attached at end!!)

• (No comments made)

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

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

Population

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

Roles of main towns and service centres

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

2.66 Berwick-upon-Tweed is the northernmost market town in Northumberland, one of England’s outstanding historic towns and a key hub between the conurbations of Edinburgh and Tyneside. Its history and geography give the town a unique sense of place and it is a popular tourist destination.

2.67 Alnwick is another of Northumberland’s important historic market towns, providing services for a wide rural hinterland; the centre is dominated by the 11th century castle. The castle and its gardens are popular tourist attractions.

2.68 Belford and Seahouses provide a range of services to support the local communities and the tourism industry. Seahouses is a key hub for visitors to the North Northumberland coast and the Farne Islands.

2.69 Rothbury is the largest settlement in western Coquetdale with its services supporting its resident population and those people who live in the more remote villages, including those in the Northumberland
National Park. The village acts as a gateway to the Park for visitors and has important relationships with Alnwick and Morpeth.

2.70 Wooler has an important relationship with both Berwick and Alnwick and is a local hub for services for its satellite communities. It is also a gateway for visitors to the northern part of the National Park. It has a working mart and is also the location for an important cluster of agricultural engineering and construction companies.

Housing – development pressure and past delivery

2.71 Large parts of the North of the County are subject to high house prices; by contrast the area has the lowest average gross incomes across the County primarily because of a higher than average reliance on employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Access to affordable housing, particularly within the rented sector, is an issue across the area but is particularly acute in the Northumberland Coast AONB and its coastal villages, where there are especially high levels of second home and holiday accommodation. Development pressure in the AONB poses a threat to the conservation of its natural beauty but the sustainability of local communities by providing housing and employment opportunities is also considered to be integral to its protection and enhancement.

2.72 In terms of past housing delivery across the North of the County, the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed has under provided in recent years despite an abundance of housing sites with planning permission. Delivery elsewhere in the former Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough has exceeded past policy, particularly in the coastal zone. Delivery in Alnwick reflects the current planning policy but Rothbury has experienced higher levels of delivery.

Transport

- The A1/East Coast road and rail corridor connects the Area with the Tyneside conurbation and Edinburgh, with the A697 providing an additional link between these locations; much of the A1 remains as single carriageway, although, in late 2014, the Government announced proposals to dual part of this (as far north as Ellingham);
- The A698 provides a route south-west to Hawick, the A7 and, eventually, the M6 and routes west to Stranraer and Ireland;
- Berwick-upon-Tweed is well served by the East Coast Main Line, while the station at Alnmouth (for Alnwick) provides more limited but important access to the strategic rail network;
- There are limited bus services operating outside the A1 corridor, the Northumberland coastal route and the axes of the A697, A698.

Employment

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

Relationship with other areas

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

3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

Vision

- Add Comments
- View Comments (18)

3.1 The vision sets out what the Core Strategy intends to achieve, the vision informs all of the policies within the plan. It also reflects the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy (2011), Corporate Priorities set out within the Corporate Plan and the Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015) which seeks to deliver a prosperous Northumberland, founded on quality local jobs and connected communities.

Spatial vision

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

By 2031 the County’s communities will be healthier, more resilient, sustainable and competitive; the balance between young and older people living across Northumberland will be more even. Communities will have access to a decent home that they can afford. The Northumberland economy will be thriving and competitive, diversified by continuous investment in ICT, green industries and physical links with the Tyneside and Edinburgh conurbations. Its visitor economy in particular will have matured and grown, supported by continuous investment in the protection of its heritage and other environmental assets.

Strategic objectives

- Add Comments
- View Comments (11)

3.2 Strategic Objectives, shown in Figure 3.1, have been developed to deliver the vision for Northumberland. They clearly relate to the issues identified within the spatial portrait section. Given the importance of Northumberland’s environment, the overarching aim is to deliver sustainable economic growth whilst conserving and enhancing Northumberland’s distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment. The strategic objectives are all interlinked and not shown in priority order.

(Then there are lengthy details about the Outcomes expected for Each Objective!)

4. Delivering the Vision for Northumberland

See general introduction in online version. Then there are THREE general policies

Policy 1

- Add Comments
- View Comments (41)

Sustainable development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the Council will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and delivers across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors. Consideration will be given to how the plan or proposal, where appropriate:
a. Contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, including the protection and enhancement of the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;

b. Provides a type and mix of housing to meet objectively assessed needs, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;

c. Supports and improves pathways for all to health, social and cultural wellbeing and provides the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;

d. Impacts on and contributes to the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland’s natural, historic, water and built environment assets;

e. Impacts on ecosystems and how it can contribute to net gains for biodiversity and establishing a coherent and resilient ecological network;

f. Prevents or minimises waste and makes prudent and effective use of Northumberland's available finite and renewable resources, including water, minerals, soil, land and buildings, particularly through the re-use of brownfield sites;

g. Demonstrates high quality sustainable design that respects and enhances: the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments; and

h. Is resilient to economic, social, and environmental change by:

i. Focusing significant development in locations which are accessible by, or can be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods;

ii. Recognising the intrinsic rural nature of the County where there are different opportunities to achieve sustainable development;

iii. Promoting opportunities to reduce dependence on travel by private car;

iv. Promoting opportunities to maximise: renewable and low carbon energy capacity; decentralised energy supply systems (based upon renewable or low carbon energy); and carbon storage;

v. Locating development in areas which are least vulnerable to climatic impacts such as risk from all sources of flooding and rising sea levels; and

vi. Mitigating anticipated impacts, including those from climate change, on the natural environment, including landscape, biodiversity, ecosystems and water resources. If mitigation is not appropriate or suitable, then development should be sited elsewhere.

Policy 2

- Add Comments
- View Comments (36)

High quality sustainable design

Development will be supported where it demonstrates high quality, sustainable and inclusive design. Design must contribute positively to place-making and be developed in response to a robust analysis of the character of the site and the surrounding area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use.

Proposals will be supported where development:

a. Responds to the character of the wider setting, creating a distinctive environment which takes advantage of opportunities to preserve, enhance or enrich existing land forms, nature and heritage assets, local built vernacular and street patterns;

b. Achieves a high standard of accessibility, permeability and legibility for all users with a clear and intuitive distinction between public and private space;

c. Creates a safe environment by reducing opportunity for crime;

d. Creates vibrant places which contribute positively to quality of life and wellbeing by inclusion of mixed use and tenure, high quality public spaces, landscaping and public art where appropriate;

e. Responds positively to context and local character with regard to: orientation, form, layout, height and scale, density, materials and architectural detailing;

f. Demonstrates adaptability and resilience to changing circumstances and demands of the user, the wider community and the environment;

g. Incorporates a high standard of materials with a view to providing durable, high quality buildings and places;

h. Protects the general amenity of both direct and indirect users; and

i. Demonstrates a commitment to sustainable design and strives to achieve high energy efficiency and low or zero carbon energy generation by:

i. Incorporating passive design measures to improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting. Therefore lessening the reliance on artificial alternatives through: siting, design, layout and
building orientation that maximises sunlight and daylight, passive ventilation and avoids overshadowing;

ii. Incorporating waste reduction and recycling measures during both the construction phase and in the design of the development, to ensure there is appropriate storage space and segregation facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable waste;

iii. Incorporating small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation into the design of new developments where appropriate and viable and where there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on landscape, ecology, heritage assets and amenity;

iv. Incorporating measures to reduce both the external and internal use of potable water, including the use of water recycling systems; and

v. Connecting to an existing or approved district energy scheme where available and viable and in the case of major development proposals consider opportunities to incorporate a district energy network.

Particular support in decision making will be afforded to proposals which incorporate exemplary or innovative design and sustainability standards.

Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear demonstration of how the proposal has responded to the above principles as an integral part of the design development process.

Policy 3

- Add Comments
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Spatial distribution

To deliver sustainable development and sustain the vitality of local communities across Northumberland the following strategic planning principles apply in both plan-making and assessing development proposals:

- a. The Main Towns of: Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe, as key hubs for housing, employment, education, healthcare, retail, transport and tourism, will be the main focus for development to underpin their social, economic, environmental and cultural regeneration;

- b. Additional large-scale development and growth will be focused on key locations in Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth to support the rejuvenation and revitalisation of communities, by identifying and supporting targeted levels of development;

- c. The regeneration of Ashington will be supported by utilising the wider town centre regeneration proposals as a catalyst for creating the conditions for social growth and resilience within the town. New housing development will be required to support the existing housing market by helping to extend choice to achieve a balanced housing market;

- d. Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval/New Hartley/Seghill/Holywell/Seaton Sluice and Wooler will continue to be supported as Service Centres with critical masses of services, accessible to their resident communities and those within other settlements clustered in their hinterlands. Development will be supported that maintains and strengthens this role;

- e. Recognising the need to take a positive view of development that improves the sustainability of smaller settlements and the communities within them, in other settlements development will be allowed which demonstrates that it:
  - i. Meets the identified and defined social, economic and/or cultural needs of the local community;
  - ii. Can be accommodated within or if necessary next to the settlement without adversely impacting on its character;
  - iii. Is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
  - iv. Maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those located outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;
  - v. Provides appropriate mitigation to minimise harm to the countryside; and
  - vi. Protects the countryside from widespread new development.

- f. Isolated development in the open countryside will only be supported where it:
  - i. Is directly related to the needs of primary activity in agriculture, forestry, other land based industries, rural businesses, or the sustainable diversification of such activities;
  - ii. Supports the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing business;
  - iii. Supports a newly forming business which requires a location in a rural setting;
  - iv. Supports or adds to the range of sustainable visitor attractions and facilities appropriate to the character of the area;
v. Would support existing sustainable clusters of services and community facilities including those outside the settlement in which the development is located;
vi. Reuses redundant or disused buildings and leads to an enhancement of the immediate setting; and/or
vii. Is a house, the architecture of which is innovative and of the highest standard, it significantly enhances its immediate setting, and is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

5. Delivering a Thriving and Competitive Economy

Section 5 (Economy): Major changes made to this section. For Glendale, proposed general support for live-work units could be useful. No major change to policies for town centres (including Wooler). There is support for more retail provision if there is population growth, to avoid ‘leakage’ to other centres. Some flexibility in applying the ‘sequential test’ in rural areas.

North Northumberland Delivery Area

5.46 The Market Towns in the North are key drivers for the industrial and office markets and accommodate the majority of allocated employment land. However the rural character and the size of businesses in these areas mean that many operate from smaller premises provided through farm diversification as well as home working.

5.47 Berwick-upon-Tweed has a relatively large supply of land in relation to indicators of market demand, and this is reflected in the de-allocation of land at Spittal, north of Tweedside Industrial Estate, and an area developed at Tweedmouth for retail. Available land is concentrated at Ramparts Business Park which will be protected for B-class uses, along with Tweedside Estate, accounting for its strong manufacturing base. Alnwick has had quite a healthy take-up in recent years, albeit mainly for leisure and retail development. The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan intends to allocate additional land for employment use and the Core Strategy supports the provision of at least an additional 10 hectares, the location of which will be confirmed by the Neighbourhood Plan. Areas of employment sites developed for retail use do not require policy protection and will be de-allocated.

5.48 In other settlements, remaining land at North Sunderland will continue to be protected for B-class uses recognising that it is the only allocated employment land along the North Northumberland Coast. Belford Industrial Estate will be modestly extended to take-in developed areas beyond the current allocation, but the site to the south of the settlement will be de-allocated owing to poor access to available land. Wooler Industrial Estate will be protected for B-class use, and allocated land to the north of Berwick Road will provide for a range of businesses uses. The current allocation at Rothbury will be protected for B-class use and an extension could be supported at this site and others by Policy 4 to provide for new businesses or company expansion plans.

Policy 4 (General Policy)

- Add Comments
- View Comments (48)

Employment land supply and distribution

To support the strategic plan for economic development across Northumberland, the Core Strategy will plan for the requirement of 381 hectares of land for economic development, of which:

a. 189 hectares is allocated as strategic employment land around the Blyth Estuary which will be prioritised for development in the low carbon and environmental goods, offshore engineering and energy generation sectors;

b. At least 13 hectares at West Hartford Business Park is allocated for a B1 or B2 single user, prestige inward investment development. The development should be a regionally or nationally significant employer, providing high quality employment opportunities;

c. 128 hectares is protected for B1, B2 and B8 development. Available land and premises at sites identified in Appendix A will be protected for B-class uses. Development of non B-class employment generating activity on these sites will only be permitted if the development:
Directly supports and is ancillary to the primary functioning of the site as a location for B1, B2, and B8 development;  
Will not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of existing or future B-class operators on the site;  
Ensures that B-class uses remain the majority activity on the site; or  
The proposed development would have significant community and economic benefits which over-ride the need to maintain the site or premises for possible future employment development.

d. 51 hectares is identified for mixed economic development. Available land and premises at sites identified in Appendix A will be used for B-class businesses and other land uses generating permanent employment, provided that:
  i. The proposed economic activity is compatible with existing businesses on the site and adjoining land uses;  
  ii. Where Town Centre uses are proposed they are appropriate in relation to other relevant policies in this plan.

e. The development of land on sites identified in Appendix A for non-employment generating uses, such as housing will only be supported where robust evidence shows that:
  i. Re-development of the land or building for an employment generating use is no longer financially and/or technically viable, and there is no demonstrable market demand that it will be developed for an employment generating use over the plan period;  
  ii. Sufficient land of a comparable quality is available and deliverable in the local market to provide for identified need;  
  iii. The development would not result in an unacceptable loss of active businesses and jobs;  
  iv. The development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing function of nearby existing businesses and/or the development of available employment land;  

In considering development under (e), greater support may be afforded if the loss of a small portion of employment land would facilitate the development of a greater part of the site for employment uses which would otherwise be undeliverable for employment generating uses.

f. 25 hectares of new employment land will be allocated for B-class uses to identify land shortages in the following locations:
  i. Hexham – 10 hectares;  
  ii. Prudhoe – 4 hectares;  
  iii. Ponteland – 1 hectares; and  
  iv. Alnwick – 10 hectares.

Home working

5.65 Allocated employment land and dedicated employment space developed in rural areas will accommodate most new jobs, but a great number of businesses currently operate from home, often in sectors which would traditionally operate from employment sites or in the urban core of Tyneside.

5.66 Home run businesses are a feature of the economies of the Main Towns and Service Centres but are particularly prevalent in rural Northumberland. 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 the County's economy. In addition to supporting businesses wanting to operate from part of an existing home, the Core Strategy also supports 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.

Policy 6

- Add Comments  
- View Comments (11)

Home run businesses

In plan making and assessing development proposals across the County, the Council will take a positive approach to supporting the creation of workspace for a home run business through the conversion of part of a dwelling, its out-buildings, or the development of appropriately scaled new buildings within the dwelling’s curtilage. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the amenity of residents in nearby properties.
Rural economy

5.70 Although Northumberland's town centres and planned business parks are the main economic drivers in the County a great many 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 from inappropriate development.

5.71 Supporting a diverse range of investment and job opportunities will grow and strengthen Northumberland's rural economy and make it more resilient to future change, one of the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy. The plan will support the establishment of new and the growth of existing office, industrial, and distribution based businesses, which in turn will help to deliver another strategic objective, by enabling the County's communities to remain sustainable.

The structure of Northumberland's rural economy

5.72 The traditional rural industries (agriculture, fishing and forestry) are still an important form of economic activity in rural Northumberland, with over 1,800 businesses and over 3,000 direct employees, which accounts for nearly 5% of the workforce\(^4\). However, it is projected that the number employed in these sectors is expected to slowly decline to 2031, although their value will steadily increase\(^4\).

5.73 Farm diversification into activities such as specialist food and drink and leisure activities, such as farm shops, are increasingly important for farms to remain viable. The adding of value to crops through onsite manufacturing is also a feature of some agricultural enterprises, providing jobs and helping to add value to produce within the rural economy. However, there is a limit to the scale of such an onsite operation before there may be adverse impacts on the landscape and the local community.

5.74 The equine industry also makes a significant contribution through breeding and recreation, adding in 2010, an estimated £23 million to Northumberland's economy. Local shows and fairs linked to these sectors have an important economic role, with wide reaching catchments for visitors.

5.75 Extraction industries and renewable energy operations are also important economic drivers in rural area, employing nearly 750 people. The identification of zinc resources straddling the County and neighbouring authorities presents an opportunity to expand employment levels and wealth generation from direct employment and in the local supply chain, both of which could bring demand for new employment premises Clearly the economic benefits of such development needs to be considered against the impact on the environment and local communities.

5.76 The forestry industry is also a key rural sector in Northumberland, having the largest timber resource in England and the County's largest private sector employer being a timber processor. The 'Roots to Prosperity' action plan\(^4\) seeks to attract £28 million of investment to the sector by 2024 to create 1,000 jobs across Northumberland and neighbouring counties. The County Council has also identified specific timber transport routes to facilitate safe and efficient movement of timber. These investments could create demand for development across the supply, production, processing and recreation elements of the industry, and the Core Strategy looks to support its sustainable growth.

5.77 The development of new residential and commercial buildings and the refurbishment of existing properties in rural Northumberland also help to support the construction industry. Over 5,500 residents in rural areas work in the sector. A positive approach to sustainable rural development will help to maintain or grow these levels of employment. 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. 10.1% of the rural North East workforce is now employed in knowledge based service jobs\(^4\). 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, as well as from dedicated commercial developments, and the Core Strategy supports the delivery of new high quality workspace in both contexts. Some rural estates play a key role in delivering commercial premises.

5.78 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\(^4\). Also, in the rural North East economy as a whole, the number of enterprises being established and run by younger people is low, mirroring demographic imbalance.

Supporting the growth of the rural economy

5.79 The Government's 'Rural Economy Growth Review' (2011) set out key policy and investment priorities to stimulate sustainable growth in the rural economy. Its key recommendations were:
Enabling rural business to grow and diversify – supported through funding programmes\(^{(45)}\), investment in broadband, and enabling flexible use of farm buildings;

- Support for rural tourism;
- Expansion of the food and drink sector;
- The delivery of ‘green growth’;
- Reducing regulations on farms.

5.80 The North East Rural Growth Network is a £15 million programme for 2012-2015 to help certain rural areas of the North East overcome barriers to growth. In particular it is seeking to address the lack of small and flexible premises for start-up and micro enterprises, through the creation of rural enterprise hubs to provide business and networking space. The programme has delivered 8 enterprise hubs in the County to date, creating 68 jobs and 51 new businesses, highlighting the economic benefits of high quality business space in rural areas. Further funding for the programme is confirmed in the short term and is likely to run to at least 2020, and the Core Strategy supports the development of new enterprise hubs.

5.81 Feedback from the Full Draft Plan showed widespread support for a positive approach to business development in rural areas. However, many felt the required sequential approach whereby new build development would only be supported where there were no opportunities to reuse buildings and previously developed land, was overly restrictive and not in conformity with national policy. Others felt that more emphasis needs to be placed on the role of renewable energy in the rural economy.

5.82 The 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 rural area. The rural employment policy will therefore apply to the development of new office, industrial and distribution workspace outside the Main Towns and Service Centres identified in Policy 3\(^{(46)}\). It is not considered necessary to allocate new specific employment sites in rural areas given: the high number of microbusinesses and home run enterprises. In addition specific allocations could create a lack of flexibility by directing businesses to develop on land which may be remote from their intended market. The use of existing employment sites that are not proposed for de-allocation will continue to be supported.

5.83 Recognising the core planning principles of the NPPF the policy approach to providing rural workspace is to encourage re-use of existing buildings and the appropriate redevelopment of previously developed sites. It is recognised that re-use of buildings or previously developed land might not always be possible or appropriate for a number of reasons, including lack of availability, viability issues, or the suitability of the building or site. Therefore new build employment development and the extension of existing businesses will also be supported, either as part of a farm diversification scheme or a stand-alone development, where the proposal is sustainable. The approach will achieve a balance between effectively using existing development and protecting Northumberland's rural landscapes and positively supporting sustainable economic growth and diversification.

5.84 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, as well as on site manufacturing, and in some cases sale, of farm produce. The policy approach supports diversification schemes and encourages the re-use of redundant farm buildings where possible, and seeks to ensure that new development is accessible and located as close as possible to existing buildings on the farm. However it is important that the main agricultural function of the farm is maintained to ensure farmland remains productive. To support this, new build development should avoid using best and most versatile agricultural land\(^{(47)}\), given its importance to the productivity of the agricultural sector, and the nature of the development should be complementary and compatible in scale with the continuing farm enterprise.

5.85 To support farm diversification national planning policy was amended in March 2015 to allow for the conversion of some agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings within the farms curtilage for a number of different business uses without the need for a planning application to be made. To be permitted development the proposal needs to adhere to a range of conditions. Policy 8 will apply where development proposals would not conform to the conditions as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 or subsequent updates.

Policy 8

- Add Comments
- View Comments (21)
To support the growth and diversification of the rural economy, in plan-making and assessing development proposals, new office, manufacturing and distribution workspace that support new economic activity and the expansion of existing businesses outside the Main Towns and Service Centres, will be supported where:

a. The development can be provided through the reuse of existing buildings, as well as appropriately scaled and designed new buildings. Building design should make a positive impact to the locality;
b. The development does not have an adverse impact on: the amenity of the local community; the local transport and utilities infrastructure, taking into account reasonable mitigation measures;
c. New buildings are located as close as is practicably possible to existing and accessible development;
d. Where available, new development utilises viable and suitable previously developed land within the local commercial market, which is within the developers ownership;
e. The development of workspace which represents the diversification of an active farm would ensure that the main agricultural function of the farm as a whole is retained and the use of the best and most versatile agricultural land is avoided. Particular support will be given to developments on farms which would add value to farm produce on-site; and
f. To ensure balance between the need to support rural economic development and the protection of the character, diversity and tranquillity of Northumberland's landscape and biodiversity, all development applicable to this policy must be appropriate in scale, character and design to its immediate and wider setting, and should adhere to the plan’s landscape, natural and built heritage, or biodiversity policies, and it should be sited so as to minimise any significant adverse visual impact.

Policy 9

- Add Comments
- View Comments (41)

Tourism and visitor development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the development of new visitor attractions and facilities, accommodation and the expansion of existing tourism businesses will be supported in sustainable locations in accordance with the following principles:

a. Priority will be given to locating tourism development in the Main Towns and Service Centres;
b. Where new hotel, guest house or bed and breakfast accommodation is proposed within the Main Towns and Service Centres priority will be given to proposals within the centre, then edge of centre, then those on the edge of towns and villages. Town centre uses supporting visitor accommodation on the edge of towns will not be subject to the sequential test;
c. In rural locations accommodation and attractions should be located as close as practicable to settlements and existing development. The re-use of buildings and development on previously developed land is encouraged before new build development. Accessible and appropriately scaled new build will be supported where it is appropriate in design and character and would improve and diversify the County’s tourist offer;
d. In the open countryside, new tourist attractions, facilities and permanent tourism accommodation will only be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that the proposed location is required to meet the needs of the business and it would improve and diversify the County’s tourist offer;
e. New or extensions to existing sites for camping, caravans, and chalets will be supported in accessible locations provided the development:
   i. Is adequately screened by existing topography or vegetation or new good quality landscaping compatible with the surrounding landscape;
   ii. The site layout and scale, and the appearance of the accommodation, would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the surrounding land and townscape, taking into account short and long range views.
f. Tourism development proposed as part of a farm diversification scheme should ensure that the agricultural function of the farm is retained;
g. Developments that enhance the environment or bring neglected or underused heritage assets back into appropriate economic use will be strongly supported;
h. Large-scale, new tourist development will be assessed on the potential economic gain weighed against any possible harmful impacts and other plan policies. Comprehensive master planning should accompany such proposals;
i. All tourism development should adhere to the policies on landscape, natural, historic and built heritage, transport, and the water environment and should be located and designed to minimise visual impact.
j. Development within or adjacent to the North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland International Dark Sky
Policy 10

- Add Comments
- View Comments (25)

Hierarchy of centres
The hierarchy of centres is defined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
<th>Main Commercial Centres</th>
<th>Smaller Commercial Centres</th>
<th>Larger Village Centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Northumberland</td>
<td>Hexham Morpeth</td>
<td>Ponteland Prudhoe</td>
<td>Corbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Northumberland</td>
<td>Alnwick Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>Belford Rothbury Seahouses Wooler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Northumberland</td>
<td>Ashington Blyth Cramlington</td>
<td>Amble Bedlington</td>
<td>Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Seaton Delaval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Northumberland</td>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td></td>
<td>Allendale Bellingham Haydon Bridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In plan making and assessing development proposals, growth within centres will be supported and encouraged at a scale which helps to maintain and reinforce their roles within the hierarchy and their relationships with regional centres, such as Newcastle, the Metrocentre, Edinburgh and Carlisle.

Policy 11

- Add Comments
- View Comments (18)

Role of centres
In plan making and assessing development proposals for retail, leisure or other service uses, the continuing role, vitality, viability and competitiveness of Northumberland’s Commercial Centres and Larger Village Centres, will be supported to maintain or increase both the proportion of local spending retained in the centres and the quality of the offer and visitor footfall.

This assessment will include the following:
a. Within Commercial Centres - identifying opportunities and supporting proposals for developments which are physically and functionally integrated with and add choice to the existing retail offer in the Primary Shopping Area and the leisure and other central service offer of the wider Commercial Centres;
b. Within Larger Village Centres - ensuring that new provision is predominantly aimed at meeting local residents' shopping, leisure or other central service requirements and of a scale appropriate to the centres' respective catchments and visitor levels;
c. Wherever possible and practicable, taking account of other policies, allowing proposals within defined centres which allow:
   i. Existing retail businesses to continue to operate within Primary Shopping Areas or Smaller Commercial Centres or Larger Village Centres; or
   ii. Other existing businesses, including those providing for the leisure requirements and other central service needs of residents and visitors, to continue to operate within all Commercial Centres or Larger Village Centres; and

d. In other village centres and local shopping parades, additional shops and other services will be supported where they serve the needs of the local area and are in scale with the existing facilities. The loss of essential shops and services will be resisted unless it can be robustly demonstrated that there is no longer a community need for the facility or an alternative has been provided;

Development should be in scale with the size and function of the centre, in keeping with local character and should not unacceptably impact on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure.

Residential use will be encouraged on upper floors on main shopping streets and elsewhere in defined centres, especially if this leads to the reoccupation of disused premises and provided it would not, individually or cumulatively, lead to an unacceptable reduction in vitality and viability or limit the operation of an existing established business or service.

Proposals beyond Primary Shopping Areas, Commercial Centres or other defined centre boundaries (as relevant) should be physically well linked with the existing centre, sequentially tested and assessed for their impact on any existing centre.

Policy 13

- Add Comments
- View Comments (13)

Office accommodation within Commercial and Larger Village Centres

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the supply of modern, well connected office accommodation will be delivered by:

a. Encouraging the location of purpose-built offices in defined Commercial Centres;
b. Seeking the inclusion of offices in new development and refurbishment schemes in defined Commercial and Larger Village Centres, where local demand can be demonstrated;
c. Locating office based business parks within 500 metres of a Commercial Centre or public transport interchange; and

d. Permitting changes of use to offices within defined Commercial and Larger Village Centres unless this would conflict with any local retail frontage policies.

Policy 14

- Add Comments
- View Comments (15)

Leisure facilities

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the provision of large scale leisure facilities and leisure facilities integrated with the retail offer of Northumberland's Main Town and Service Centres, will be supported, where it can be demonstrated that:

a. For large-scale facilities:
   i. They are located in Commercial Centres or would otherwise meet the tests set out in Policy 12;
ii. The proposed scale, mass and form of the development would be appropriate to their setting and capable of being integrated into the character of their surroundings;

iii. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses;

iv. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such impacts can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures; and

v. The development can be satisfactorily accommodated in accordance with other development plan policies.

b. For smaller scale facilities, associated with high streets, it will be sought to provide for residents and visitors, both at daytime and in the evenings, with a range of uses integrated with the retail offer of Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres. The Council will support proposals for non-retail uses on primary shopping frontages where it can be demonstrated that:

i. Long term vacancy of units within the frontage concerned is adversely affecting the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole and/or the proposed use would maintain or add to the vibrancy of the shopping frontage; and

ii. 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.
6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

Section 6 (Housing): No change in the projections. Wooler is allocated 14pa averaged over 20 years to 280 (This is a reduction from a target of 380 homes allocated in earlier versions, to which GGT objected as too much. We also objected about encouragement to largescale development sites).

Emphasis on ‘masterplanning’ for ‘strategic development sites’ (ie planning as a unit). No such sites identified in Glendale.

Stronger arguments against the proliferation of second homes. More stringent policies can be included in neighbourhood plans.

Self-build housing units can be on both serviced and unserviced land

Affordable housing: Reworking of definitions to reflect national policy. The policy of 15% affordable provision on sites applies to all developments over 10 units, except in AONBs, where it is over 5 units (previously over two units). A higher threshold than 15% can be included in neighbourhood plans, and can be argued for in other situations where there is a demonstrable need.

Housing policy and strategy framework

6.4 The Council is committed to securing the long-term future of towns and villages across the County, with the provision of new housing playing a key role. The Council's Corporate Plan identifies the increased supply of affordable housing in Northumberland as a strategic priority of the Council as well as ensuring that open market housing developments led by the private sector complement the strategic objectives of the Council.

6.5 Reflecting the Corporate Plan, the Housing Strategy for Northumberland (2013) sets out the Council's approach to housing for the period 2013-2018. It aims to meet the housing needs of Northumberland's residents with particular reference to the provision of affordable housing, whilst also ensuring that the County is a prosperous place for residents and businesses by supporting the provision of new housing. Having a sufficient supply of homes that are affordable for the local population is essential not only to meeting housing need but also in helping to sustain local communities and economies.

6.6 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 the Core Strategy's vision and objectives. The strategic objective "Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes" seeks to meet Northumberland's objectively assessed housing needs by extending choice across Northumberland's housing markets, including the provision of housing that people can afford.

The role of the Core Strategy in providing communities with a choice of decent, affordable housing

6.7 To deliver the vision and objectives, the Core Strategy sets out a series of strategic policies to ensure that the necessary scale and type of housing is distributed in the right locations over the plan period, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to change in social and economic circumstances. Interventions to improve the existing housing stock and bring empty homes back into use are addressed in other strategies including the Northumberland Private Sector Housing Strategy.

6.8 As has been explained in Chapter 4, given the projected change in the structure of the population of Northumberland, the strategy for housing must complement, and not constrain the economic growth aspirations for the County. Specifically the policies in the Core Strategy will:

- Seek to boost significantly the supply of housing to attract and retain working age families; this will increase the labour force and support diverse and resilient communities;
- Address the shortfall in affordable homes; and
Ensure a range of housing types and sizes are provided in order to meet the needs of different groups of the population, including those of the older population.

**Housing requirement**

6.12 In order to define the objectively assessed need for housing in Northumberland over the plan period, the Council has considered how the population of Northumberland will change and grow. In accordance with national guidance a range of different economic, population and dwelling scenarios have been tested\(^\text{[59]}\). Chapter 4 explains that in order to increase the level of working age population within Northumberland to support the delivery of the Economic Strategy\(^\text{[60]}\), the Core Strategy must significantly boost the housing supply, to extend choice in the housing market, including the provision of affordable housing. The objectively assessed housing need is for the provision of 24,320 new dwellings (an average of 1,216 dwellings per annum) over the plan period.

6.13 The Countywide figure has been distributed between the Delivery Areas, this has been informed by:

- The population, and the number of households and dwellings in each area;
- The need to support the delivery of the economic objectives as identified in the Council’s Economic Strategy;
- The level of past delivery of housing and market demand;
- Areas of preference as identified by the 2012 Countywide Housing Need Survey;
- The capacity of each Delivery Area to accommodate development in accordance with sustainable development principles; and
- Minimising the need for Green Belt deletion whilst ensuring the delivery of sustainable development.

[Allocations by settlement are then made; See extract from Table 6.2]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No Dwellings 2011-2031</th>
<th>Average p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belford</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rothbury</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler*</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*We have been told that the figures for Wooler are based on recent past trends. Ph*)

**Policy 15**

- Add Comments
- View Comments (117)

**Housing provision – scale and distribution**

To ensure that housing development helps to support the plan to positively grow and diversify the Northumberland economy and meet housing need, the Core Strategy will:

a. Provide for the delivery of at least 24,320 additional net dwellings over the plan period (1,216 per annum), distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
<th>Average Annual Net Dwelling Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South East Northumberland</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. In accordance with Policy 3, the majority of housing development will be focused in Northumberland’s Main Towns and Service Centres. Table 6.2 provides a realistic but indicative scale and distribution of housing across each Delivery Area. The Northumberland Delivery Document and Neighbourhood Plans will allocate land in accordance with this distribution.

Progress of the delivery of the scale and distribution of housing will be monitored annually through the plan, monitor, manage approach to plan delivery. Where delivery fails to come forward in accordance with the Northumberland housing trajectory timescales, the mechanism for delivery of alternative suitable sites will trigger a review of the Core Strategy.

Delivering the scale and distribution

6.20 In order to deliver the required new homes the Core Strategy:

- Identifies strategic delivery sites to provide a significant role in supporting housing delivery;
- Remove land from the Green Belt
- Provide the strategic policy context to support the delivery of housing across Northumberland;
- Ensure a deliverable and developable supply of land for housing in the right locations that respects and enhances existing settlements and wider built and natural environments;
- Ensure new housing is attractive to the market and addresses local housing needs and demands;
- Support Northumberland as a high quality, attractive place to live and work; and
- Positively plan for the infrastructure that can support existing communities and population growth.

Policy 18

- **Add Comments**
- **View Comments (49)**

Planning for housing

In plan-making and assessing housing development proposals, the Council will:

a. Make efficient and effective use of land, by encouraging the re-use of previously developed land where ever possible.

b. Achieve a density that is appropriate for the area. The precise density will be determined having regard to:
   i. The site’s immediate environment;
   ii. On-site constraints; and
   iii. The type of development proposed;

c. Ensure there is an appropriate mix of permanently occupied housing types, sizes and tenures including the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs to create and maintain balanced and sustainable communities. The precise mix will be informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local housing needs studies, taking into account the character and density of the local area, site characteristics, and market conditions.

d. Support the provision of Starter Homes exception sites which are:
   i. Offered at a minimum discount of 20% below open market value; and
   ii. Offered to first time buyers under the age of 40 at the time of purchase; and
   iii. Located on under-used or unviable industrial and commercial land which is not allocated for employment B-class uses. If the site is an allocated employment site, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the site is underused or unviable for employment development.
e. Support the inclusion of market housing within a Starter Homes exception sites where:
   i. The majority of the development is for Starter Homes; and
   ii. It has been demonstrated that the market housing is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the Starter Home housing scheme.

f. Support the provision of plots to enable self-build or custom build.

Delivering affordable homes

6.56 Supporting the delivery of affordable homes is a priority for the Council. The Core Strategy has an important role to set out policies to allow the need for affordable housing to be met through the Development Management process. NPPF 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.

Policy 19

- **Add Comments**
- **View Comments (77)**

**Delivering affordable housing**

The overall plan target is for 30% of new homes across Northumberland to be affordable. Given that part of this need will be met by committed development with planning consent, 15% of homes on new permissions will be expected to be affordable. In order to achieve this target, subject to viability considerations, all open market residential development proposals of two or more units will be expected to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing where there is an identified need.

A contribution in excess of the 15% target will be expected:

a. If the overall 30% plan target is not being met and / or the level of committed development is reduced; and / or
b. Where there is an identified local need which justifies a higher contribution and viability permits.

The affordable housing contribution required for a development will be determined taking into account:

c. The extent of the housing need, and the appropriate tenure mix and type required, as evidenced by an up to date housing needs study; and local market conditions; and
d. In low density developments the affordable housing contribution will be identified as a percentage of dwellings or site area, whichever is the greater.

Where the specific circumstances of a scheme mean a developer considers that an affordable housing requirement would make the scheme unviable and/or the affordable housing is not required, the developer will need to robustly demonstrate this by providing a viability assessment. This assessment will need to be verified by the Council in accordance with its Viability Assessment Charter and/or evidence to demonstrate that affordable housing is not required.

In order to create mixed and balanced communities, there will be a presumption that affordable housing will be provided on-site. If off-site provision or a financial contribution can be robustly justified, the following sequential policy approach will be applied:

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 an adjoining Parish or Ward;
iii. Provision to be made elsewhere in 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.
Policy 20

- Add Comments
- View Comments (14)

**Rural exception sites**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the development of rural exception sites will be permitted if the proposal provides affordable housing *in perpetuity* and provided that:

- 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 or others who have a family or employment connection with the community in which the development takes place;
- c. The development is within, adjacent or well related to an existing settlement;
- d. The development is well related to local services and facilities including those outside the settlement in which the development is proposed to be located; and
- e. The development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the community in which the development takes and does not significantly adversely impact on the natural and built environment.

Such developments will have their permitted development rights removed to ensure the properties remain affordable.

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

- f. The majority of the development is for affordable housing;
- g. The provision of the market housing element will be for occupation as a principal residence only; and
- h. It has been demonstrated that it is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the overall affordable housing scheme and insufficient or no public subsidy is available.

Policy 21

- Add Comments
- View Comments (9)

**Housing for older people and vulnerable groups**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the Council will support the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of older people and vulnerable groups, in appropriate sustainable locations.

All residential development schemes should assist older people and vulnerable groups to live securely and independently within their communities.

In plan making, consideration should be given to the opportunity to create ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’ and centres which incorporate the delivery of integrated tiered support.

In assessing development proposals the Council will:

- a. Require developers, through the design and access statement, to demonstrate how proposals meet the space and accessibility needs of older and vulnerable people;
- b. Support the provision of bungalows and other types of general needs housing which is adaptable to the changing accessibility needs of older people and vulnerable groups;
- c. Support the provision of extra-care housing as part of a housing mix to create and maintain balanced and sustainable communities; and
- d. Consider accessibility to existing local services and facilities, including local health, leisure, and education and transport facilities.
8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

### Principles for the environment

8.5 Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's natural, historic and cultural assets will deliver a number of the Core Strategy's objectives, particularly protecting and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments. Northumberland's unique environment underpins many of the other objectives of the Core Strategy. It is particularly important in providing the setting for all development arising out of the implementation and delivery of the Core Strategy policies.

**Policy 28**

- **Add Comments**
- **View Comments (19)**

#### Principles for the environment

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the character and significance of Northumberland’s distinctive and valued natural, historic, built and water environments, landscape, heritage assets, townscapes and, where appropriate, their settings, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

| a. | Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation sites and their settings. Greatest weight will be given to international and national designations, followed by sites of regional and local importance; |
| b. | In applying part (a) above, recognising that assets with a lower designation or non-designated, are irreplaceable, may be nationally important and/or have qualitative attributes that warrant giving these the appropriate protection in-situ; |
| c. | Applying an ecosystem approach that demonstrates an understanding of the significance and sensitivity of the natural resource. Such an approach should result in a neutral or net benefit for those ecosystems; |
| d. | Seeking, as far as possible, to coordinate environmental measures in a way that, cumulatively, could help pro-actively to minimise the causes of climate change, while also adapting to it and mitigating its causes; |
| e. | Minimising adverse impacts on biodiversity, securing net biodiversity gains wherever possible; |
| f. | Promoting a shared understanding of the significance of natural and historic assets and their settings, seeking to avoid adverse impacts of proposals, and identifying opportunities to mitigate harm or enhance them; |
| g. | Promoting high quality design in building and landscapes, where scale, mass and form, and external finishes respect the character of the surrounding landscape or townscape and promotes and enhances local distinctiveness; |
| h. | Avoiding unacceptable pollution impacts relating to the ground, soil, water, air, light or noise, taking account of previous uses, construction activity and proposed uses; |
| i. | Preventing harm to geological conservation interests and, where appropriate, providing opportunities for public access to those features; |
| j. | Recognising that soil is a vulnerable natural resource and protecting it through sustainable use, the encouragement of appropriate new landscape features to protect it from erosion, and, where agricultural land is required for development, prioritising poorer over higher quality land; |
| k. | Always taking account of, and seeking to reduce issues of land instability or possible contaminated land; |
| l. | Limiting the impact of urbanising effects on open countryside landscapes or natural habitats or the settings of historic / cultural assets, including efforts to retain current levels of tranquillity and dark skies and, where possible, improve on these; |

In the context of the ecosystem approach, and recognising the health, social and economic benefits derived from the enjoyment of Northumberland’s rich natural, historic and built environment, the Council will work with relevant lead authorities, land and property owners, local communities and groups, developers, adjoining local planning authorities and Local Nature Partnerships to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m.</th>
<th>Identifying opportunities for appropriate environmental enhancements, including:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Habitat improvement, restoration and creation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Landscape enhancement in accordance with valued characteristics; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Restoring, enhancing and bringing into viable use heritage assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Gathering, recording and updating evidence to advance understanding of the significance of Northumberland’s natural and historic environment and heritage assets; and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying opportunities to make information on assets widely accessible and promote the enjoyment of the physical and cultural components of these assets.

(See also Policy 29 on Biodiversity etc)

Policy 30

- Add Comments
- View Comments (19)

Landscape

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the following landscape considerations will apply:

a. Plans and proposals should maintain and where appropriate enhance important elements of landscape character, as defined in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant studies, guidance or management plans;

b. Consideration of the impact on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

c. There should be no net adverse impact on the level of dark skies and where appropriate improvements sought, particularly within the International Dark Sky Park and areas from where its light levels may be affected;

d. In assessing development proposals in relation to landscape character, consideration will be given to:
   i. The guiding principles and other relevant guidelines set out in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment;
   ii. The possibility of wider impacts on the landscape, townscape or seascape or of other significant impacts on the environmental resource, through the proportionate use of landscape and visual impact assessment;
   iii. The setting and surroundings of the County’s historic towns and villages, ensuring that new development on the edge of settlements does not negatively impact on the landscape character of the settlement edge and, where possible that it has a net positive impact;
   iv. The setting of recognised heritage assets including the defined buffer zone of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, within which development will not be permitted if it would compromise the outstanding universal value, including aspects of scale, complexity, group value of features, communal values and the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site itself;
   v. The Historic Landscape Characterisation;
   vi. The potential impact that small scale development can have on the landscape in sensitive rural settings; and
   vii. Any net negative cumulative impacts of development on landscape character, taking into account other existing or approved developments that have already been assessed as having a negative impact.

e. Where it is considered that landscape character may be adversely affected, or aspects of this character that warrant protection would be degraded as a result of a proposed development, then the development will only be permitted if:
   i. It can be clearly demonstrated how the harmful effects will be satisfactorily mitigated or, as a last resort, satisfactorily compensated; and
   ii. Where it can be clearly demonstrated that there are significant national or, outside designated landscapes, regional or local planning reasons for allowing the development, these considerations outweigh the landscape considerations.

Policy 33

- Add Comments
- View Comments (13)

Historic environment and heritage assets
In plan-making and assessing development proposals, there will be a requirement to ensure the conservation, and enhancement of the quality, integrity and setting of Northumberland’s historic environment and heritage assets by ensuring that:

a. Decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and of the impact of any proposal upon that significance;

b. Proposals that would result in harm to or loss of the significance of heritage assets will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances where: the harm is outweighed by public benefit which cannot be met in any other way and is appropriately mitigated against. Where mitigation requires excavation or survey, the results should be made publicly accessible through appropriate archiving and publication. The ability to record evidence of the past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted;

c. The historical context will be a key consideration, making use of the Historic Landscape Characterisation study, the Historic Environment Record and other relevant records to inform decision-making;

d. New development in historic settlements and conservation areas should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness through appropriate design and the use of appropriate materials;

e. When considering proposals that may impact on the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, in addition to (a), factors that contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value will be taken into account, in line with the World Heritage Site Management Plan. This will include seeking to protect and where appropriate, enhance:

i. Evidence of the scale and complexity of the Wall and its associated frontier features;

ii. The group value of features, including features beyond the World Heritage Site;

iii. The landscape value and setting; and

iv. Communal values including educational and recreational.

f. Recognition is given to the contribution that historic places and sites can make to the visitor economy;

g. Where conservation or enhancement of the heritage assets may be required but there are limited resources available, priority will be given to assets that are considered characteristic of Northumberland, important within the context of its history, cultural development or landscape and/or unique to the area and Heritage at Risk;

h. The Council will direct available resources towards:

i. Preparing, updating and acting on Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans;

ii. Designating additional Conservation Areas;

iii. Where there is a case, promoting Article 4 Directions to protect Conservation Areas from harm from Permitted Development;

iv. Preparing or supporting master plans or design briefs for significant places or sites, where major change is proposed in relation to heritage assets; and

v. Promoting and supporting bids for external funding designed to conserve and enhance the historic fabric of towns and villages.

Policy 35

- Add Comments
- View Comments (4)

Water quality

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

a. Giving favourable consideration to any development and/or landscape measures that maintain, or may result in enhanced water quality, including bathing water;

b. Ensuring that any development where impact on a water environment is a possibility, will bring about an improvement to that environment;

c. Avoiding development if it would have an adverse impact on water quality in surface water bodies or it could affect the chemical balance of groundwater including any wider impacts;

d. Avoiding any reduction in the ‘high status’ of certain surface water bodies in the County, giving very close scrutiny to any development that may affect them; and

e. Assessing the effects of development on designated Bathing Waters.

[Note: there were concerns in 2015 about water quality and run off in North Northumberland]
Policy 36

[NOTE: Section 8: re Water Resource Zones: Less concern now about the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ, as Northumbrian Water has made and plans to make improvements. A ‘blue-green’ approach introduced to better manage water catchment areas to reduce flood risk.]

Water supply and sewerage

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the satisfactory provision of adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure will be maintained or secured, having regard to the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, as follows:

a. Minimising the need for new infrastructure by directing development:
   i. In terms of the supply of water:
      • To areas where an adequate supply can be guaranteed;
      • Within the Berwick and Fowberry Water Resource Zones, ensuring the adequate protection of existing abstraction sources; and
      • Obtaining an assurance from the water provider that a supply is available to support the development before the proposal is agreed;
   ii. In terms of the sewerage network and treatment works, primarily to areas where the necessary capacity already exists, and only then to areas where the required capacity is planned, having regard to:
      • The infrastructure providers' Water Resource Management and Strategic Business Plans; and
      • The findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study.

b. Ensuring that, where new water related infrastructure is needed to serve development:
   i. That the provision of the infrastructure and the development are aligned, including any appropriate phasing;
   ii. That the infrastructure provision does not have a harmful impact on existing ecosystems, sites of international, European, national or local importance for biodiversity, the natural or built environment, archaeology, or the amenity of local residents.

c. Ensuring that new or improved water and sewage treatment facilities, including fluvial and 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; and

d. Retaining an appropriate buffer between development and sewage treatment works, sufficient to allow for operational needs, including any planned expansion of the works, and in order to avoid any odour or noise issues for sensitive neighbouring uses.

Non-mains drainage systems, such as package treatment plants and septic tanks should only be employed in non-sewered areas. Where they are required, careful consideration of their siting and design will be required to ensure that there is no adverse impact upon ground water, water quality or existing ecosystems.

Policy 37

Flooding

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the potential for both on and off-site flood risk from all potential sources will be measured, taking into account the policy approach contained within: the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plan; the Northumberland Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study; and the findings of Drainage Area Studies.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:
a. Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;

b. Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;

c. Assessing the impact of the development proposal on existing sewerage infrastructure and flood risk management infrastructure, including whether there is a need to reinforce such infrastructure or provide new infrastructure;

d. Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;

e. Pursuing the full separation of foul and surface water flows as follows:
   i. A requirement that all development provides such separation; and
   ii. Where combined sewers remain, the Council will work with statutory sewerage providers to progress the separation of surface water from foul;

f. Ensuring that development proposals separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, with Sustainable Drainage Systems being the preferred approach:
   i. Surface water should be managed at source wherever possible, ensuring that there is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. Surface water should be disposed of in accordance with the following hierarchy for surface water run-off:
      - To a soak away system, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible due to poor infiltration with the underlying ground conditions;
      - To a watercourse, unless there is no alternative or suitable receiving watercourse available;
      - To a surface water sewer;
      - Disposal to combined sewers should be the last resort once all other methods have been explored;
   ii. Where greenfield sites are to be developed, the surface water run-off rates should not exceed, and where possible, should reduce the existing run-off rates;
   iii. Where previously developed sites are to be developed, the peak surface run-off rate from the development to any drain, sewer or surface water body for any given rainfall event should be as close as reasonably practicable to the greenfield runoff rate for the same event, so long as this does not exceed the previous rate of discharge on the site for that same event. If it is demonstrated that this cannot be achieved, then surface run-off rates should be reduced by a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate;
   iv. Solutions within the wider catchment area should be considered, especially if these would provide ecosystem services and/or if local solutions could be harmful to biodiversity, landscape or built heritage;

In relation to flood alleviation schemes:

g. The early implementation of approved schemes will be supported through development decisions;

h. Any proposal for additional schemes should demonstrate that they represent the most sustainable solution and that their social, economic and environmental benefits outweigh any adverse environmental impacts caused by new structure(s), including increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Any works relating to the above, which impact on natural water systems, should consider the wider ecological implications, applying the ecosystem approach, and link into green infrastructure initiatives wherever practicable.

Policy 38

- Add Comments
- View Comments (6)

Sustainable Drainage Systems

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, water sensitive urban design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into development, in order to separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, in accordance with national standards and any future local guidance.

SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:
a. That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or
b. That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport.

Where appropriate, efforts should be made to link SuDS or other water sensitive urban design schemes into wider initiatives to enhance the green infrastructure, improve water quality, benefit wildlife and/or contribute to the provision of an ecosystem service.

Arrangements must be put in place for the management and maintenance of SuDS over the whole period during which it is needed, with such arrangements taking account of the cumulative effectiveness of SuDS in the area concerned.

9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

Section 9: More emphasis generally on promoting opportunities for cycling and walking

Policy 41

- Add Comments
- View Comments (23)

Promoting sustainable connections

The Council will work collaboratively to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport; and
- Support a local transport system and ICT network that are resilient and responsive to changing needs.

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the Council will:

a. Promote a spatial distribution of development, which enhances the accessibility of development, reduces the need to travel, and facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport;
b. Promote good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of development; and inclusive access;
c. Promote sustainable transport choices, including supporting networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
d. Support the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;
e. Support the roll out of modern digital communications; and
f. Require development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by transport assessments/transport statements, and travel plans, and where appropriate delivery/servicing plans.

[Note: the A697 is a national primary route, managed by NCC]

Policy 43

- Add Comments
- View Comments (20)

The effects of development on the road network
In plan-making and assessing development proposals, all developments affecting the road network will be required to:

a. Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing road network;
b. Include appropriate measures to mitigate its adverse impacts on the road network including its contribution to cumulative impacts;
c. Minimise conflict between different types of road user, including measures for traffic management;
d. Facilitate the safe use of the road network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists;
e. Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies;
f. Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality.

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

Policy 47

- Add Comments
- View Comments (1)

Planning for mobile telecommunications

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, infrastructure delivering mobile communications services will be supported, provided that the following criteria are met:

a. The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures and access routes are located and designed to minimise their impact on the accessibility and 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 to minimise their impact on the external appearance of the host building;
c. Where a new mast is proposed, the applicant should demonstrate that the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, sites, masts or other structures has been explored and found not to be feasible; and
d. The development should avoid adverse impacts on areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas, all heritage assets and their settings.

Policy 48

- Add Comments
- View Comments (6)

Planning for broadband infrastructure

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, 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; and
b. The sharing of infrastructure, for example ducts and poles, between utilities in order to minimise disruption, reduce installation costs and increase the viability of service provision.

The development should avoid adverse impacts on areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historic interest and their settings. Proposals for new broadband infrastructure should identify how any adverse impacts on the environment and communities can be mitigated.

10: Community Well-being
Policy 49

- Add Comments
- View Comments (16)

Community services and facilities

In plan making and assessing development proposals, community services and facilities that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community should be retained and wherever possible improvements facilitated to the quality, accessibility and levels of provision by:

a. Strongly resisting the loss of community services and facilities, unless an appropriate alternative is provided or there is demonstrable evidence that there is no longer a community need for the facility and suitable alternative uses have been considered;

b. Supporting the development of new community services and facilities where deficiencies in provision would be addressed and provided that unacceptable adverse effects on the environment and the local community can be avoided or mitigated;

c. Supporting the shared use of facilities, including the wider use of educational facilities; and

d. Ensuring that, where community facilities are listed as an asset of community value, this will be regarded as a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

Taking into account viability, new development will be required to provide or contribute to community facilities as part of the development or, if appropriate, off-site where no facilities exist or where existing facilities are deficient.

Policy 50

- Add Comments
- View Comments (9)

Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

In plan making and assessing development proposals, the provision of sports facilities, recreational open space for outdoor sport, children’s play, and less formal recreational activity will be sought, as necessary for the development. The need and demand for the provision will be assessed in accordance with the relevant evidence, applying locally defined standards where necessary.

Consideration will be given to how development proposals:

a. Enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments by protecting and enhancing existing recreational facilities and services and/or providing new ones;

b. Guard against the unnecessary loss of 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;

c. Ensure that new and established recreational facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and they are retained for the benefit of the community; and

d. Encourage and facilitate the increased use of facilities, including the shared use of playing space in educational establishments.

Consideration will also be given to the following:

e. Where the development is large enough, that provision is on-site unless this is demonstrated by the applicant to be impracticable;

f. That any off-site provision is on an agreed site or, if none has yet been identified, has a level of accessibility considered reasonable for the facility being provided;

g. That the future use and maintenance arrangements have been secured, taking full account of the views of Town and Parish Councils or others who may be responsible for the facilities, once in place; and

h. Where it is argued that the provision would compromise the viability of the development, that this can be satisfactorily demonstrated.
Development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use will not be permitted unless:

i. They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or
ii. An excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated.

Policy 51 (re Green Infrastructure – see Figure 10.1)

- Add Comments
- View Comments (15)

Green infrastructure

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the contribution of strategic and local green infrastructure to the health and well-being of Northumberland's communities and visitors, as well as its economy, will be recognised, promoted and enhanced.

Development proposals should seek to protect and, where appropriate, improve and extend Northumberland’s green infrastructure. When determining planning applications, consideration will be given to how development proposals:

a. Protect and enhance strategic and/or local green infrastructure assets, provide high quality links between existing assets including links with green infrastructure networks in adjacent authority areas and/or provide additional uses for multi-functionality;
b. Secure improved access to green infrastructure, including rights of way, the network of cycle routes and high quality provision for the widest possible range of ages, abilities and interests where this would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on biodiversity and environmental and heritage assets;
c. Improve the potential green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism without unacceptable adverse effects on 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. Integrate green infrastructure and sustainable drainage;
f. Consider the management and maintenance of new and existing green infrastructure throughout and beyond the plan period; and
g. Provide opportunities for communities to protect local environments that are important to them, for example through Local Green Space or Local Nature reserve designations.

11. Managing Natural Resources

[This includes detailed policies on mineral extraction; the extraction of aggregates, etc, extraction of oil and natural gas, and on waste recycling. Not likely to affect Wooler parish itself]

Section 11: Policies on renewable energy and low carbon energy modified to align with national policy. Can include policies on these issues in a neighbourhood plan

Policy 65

- Add Comments
- View Comments (15)

Renewable and low carbon energy development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for the development of renewable energy and low carbon energy development is to support and encourage proposals in appropriate locations in order to contribute to energy generation and a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases. Support will be given to...
renewable and low carbon energy developments where there is clear evidence that proposals are community-led and supported.

Through the development management process, applications will be supported where it has been demonstrated that the environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any adverse effects, individually or cumulatively, on local communities and the environment. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to the following:

a. Landscape character and sensitivity and the sensitivity of visual receptors;
b. The special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
c. Internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation and geological sites and features, and protected habitats and species;
d. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and other internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets;
e. Air, and ground and surface water quality;
f. Hydrology, water supply and any associated flood risk;
g. Highways and traffic flow, transport networks, Public Rights of Way and non-motorised users, including the effects upon well-used recreational routes such as the National Trails, long distance routes and the national cycle network;
h. Amenity due to noise, odour, dust, vibration or visual impact;
i. The openness of the Green Belt and whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify otherwise inappropriate development;
j. The impact of any new grid connection lines and any ancillary infrastructure and buildings associated with the development;
k. That appropriate provision has been provided for decommissioning and removal of temporary operations once they have ceased;
l. The predicted output of the proposal; and
m. The economic benefits of the proposal.

All proposals need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of landscape and visual impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

Policy 66

- Add Comments
- View Comments (17)

Onshore wind energy

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the development of single wind turbines or groupings of turbines will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the social, environmental and economic benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any adverse impacts, both individually and cumulatively.

Through the development management process, applications will be supported where it has been demonstrated that:

a. There is sufficient separation from the proposed wind turbines to protect residential amenity as a result of noise, shadow flicker and visual intrusion. To protect visual amenity, there will be a presumption against development within a distance of six times the turbine blade tip height of residential properties unless it can be demonstrated that the presence of turbines would not have an unacceptable impact upon living conditions;
b. The proposals have addressed any potential adverse effects on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems;
c. Potential interference to television and/or radio reception and information and telecommunications systems will be avoided and/or mitigated;
d. The proposed site access arrangements and access routes will be suitable for the construction phase, including the delivery of turbine components and construction materials, the operational phase, and the decommissioning of the proposed wind farm;
e. The proposed wind turbines are located appropriate distances from highways, and railway lines to provide a safe topple distance. A minimum topple distance of the turbine height plus 10% is recommended as a starting point;
f. Provision has been made for the satisfactory decommissioning of the turbines and associated infrastructure once the operations have ceased and the site can be restored to a quality of at least its original condition;
g. The proposal will not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the landscape and the landscape has capacity to accommodate the proposed development;
h. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on long and medium range views to and from sensitive landscapes, such as the Cheviot Hills, Northumberland Sandstone Hills, Northumberland Coast AONB, North Pennines AONB, the Northumberland National Park and the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, and lines of sight between iconic landscape and heritage sites and features, particularly where one or more feature is within the Northumberland Coast AONB, the North Pennines AONB or the adjoining Northumberland National Park;
i. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on sensitive or well used viewpoints; and
j. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on important recognised outlooks and views from or to heritage assets where these are predominantly unaffected by harmful visual intrusion.

Within the Northumberland Coast AONB and the North Pennines AONB there will be a presumption against proposals involving more than one turbine or proposals involving turbines with a hub height of over 25 metres.

All proposals need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

Policy 67

- Add Comments
- View Comments (11)

Solar photovoltaic farms

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the development of solar photovoltaic farms will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposals is an effective use of land and that the social, environmental and economic benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any adverse impacts, both individually and cumulatively.

Through the development management process, applicants will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that:

a. Where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether:
i. The proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and
ii. The proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/ or encourages biodiversity improvements around solar arrays;
b. The proposal, including the impact of security measures such as lights and fencing, will not result in harm to the character of the landscape and the landscape has capacity to accommodate the proposal;
c. The extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;
d. The proposal includes measures to screen the site to mitigate any landscape and visual impacts;
e. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on long and medium range views to and from sensitive landscapes, such as the Cheviot Hills, the Northumberland Sandstone Hills, Northumberland Coast AONB, North Pennines AONB, the Northumberland National Park and the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, and lines of sight between iconic landscape and heritage sites and features, particularly where one or more feature is within the Northumberland Coast AONB, the North Pennines AONB or the adjoining Northumberland National Park;
f. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on sensitive or well used viewpoints;
g. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on important recognised outlooks and views to and from heritage assets where these are predominantly unaffected by harmful visual intrusion;
h. The proposed site access arrangements and access routes are suitable for both the construction, the operational phase and the decommissioning of the proposal;
i. The proposals have addressed any potential adverse effects on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems; and
j. Provision has been made for the decommissioning of the solar farm once the operations have ceased and the site can be restored to a quality of at least its original condition.
All proposals will need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

12. Implementation

Policy 68

- Add Comments
- View Comments (22)

Implementation

Northumberland County Council will work proactively to bring about the delivery of the Core Strategy. It will seek to:

a. Align its own plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities to deliver the Core Strategy;
b. Collaborate to influence the plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities of other public bodies, infrastructure providers and other organisations to seek alignment with the Core Strategy;
c. Develop and consolidate a positive planning policy framework, which provides detailed policies and proposals in support of the Core Strategy;
d. Support communities, via Town and Parish Councils, who wish to develop and implement Neighbourhood Plans or other planning tools, which are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Northumberland Local Plan and help shape the development of a local area in a positive way;
e. Make use of its powers including where necessary land acquisition and compulsory purchase powers, to bring about development in line with the Core Strategy;
f. Influence and use public and private funding opportunities to maximum effect to deliver the Core Strategy; and
g. Monitor the achievement of the Core Strategy throughout its existence, implementing appropriate measures to address any policies or proposals that are underperforming or become obsolete.

Policy 69

- Add Comments
- View Comments (15)

Planning for infrastructure

The delivery of infrastructure in a timely manner to support development, including necessary upgrading and repair, to facilitate implementation of the Core Strategy will be co-ordinated by the Council in partnership with infrastructure providers and regulators, grant funding agencies, the development industry and other delivery agencies.

Where there are known infrastructure capacity constraints and these are identified as critical in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) the Council will work with partners the find solutions to remove those constraints to ensure that development is delivered to meet the objectives and policies in the Core Strategy.

The timing and prioritisation of delivery of infrastructure will have regard to priority needs established through the IDP with the intention of securing timely delivery of new development to meet the objectives and policies set out in the Core Strategy. Developer contributions received through planning obligations and, if adopted, the Community Infrastructure Levy, will be applied having regard to those priorities established in the IDP and having regard to the availability of alternative sources of funding to deliver that infrastructure.
Policy 70

- Add Comments
- View Comments (12)

**Planning conditions and obligations**

Where planning obligations are necessary to make development acceptable, including through mitigation of unacceptable impacts, provision shall normally be secured through planning conditions. Where provision or improvement cannot be secured through conditions it will be secured as necessary by planning obligations in accordance with the Council’s Protocol on S106 Planning Obligations.

Planning obligations will only be used where their effects are:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

Maintenance of infrastructure/facilities secured through development obligations will be ensured for a reasonable period following first use or occupation of the development. Where possible maintenance will be secured by planning condition; in other circumstances planning obligations will be used, particularly where this involves the payment of commuted sums.

Where necessary, the timing of provision of infrastructure will be linked directly to the phasing of development, taking account of viability. This will be secured either through planning conditions, or where this is not appropriate, by planning obligation, to ensure that the planned and necessary infrastructure is available to serve the development when it is first required.
Figure 2.1 Delivery areas
Figure 3.1 Strategic Objectives

**Climate Change**
Addressing climate change - to ensure the delivery of the most sustainable development, whilst acknowledging and anticipating the likely impact of climate change on Northumberland and to mitigate and adapt to its effects.

**Homes**
Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes - to meet Northumberland’s objectively assessed housing needs by extending choice across Northumberland’s housing markets, including the provision of affordable housing.

**Community**
Community well-being - to support sustainable communities across Northumberland; to support health, social and cultural well-being for all including responding to the needs and opportunities created by an ageing population.

**Connections**
Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery - to ensure all development makes the best use of, and safeguards Northumberland’s infrastructure, securing necessary up-grades and new infrastructure where required.

**Jobs**
Delivering a thriving and competitive economy - to grow and diversify the Northumberland economy by making it an attractive and competitive place to start, grow and invest in a broad range of businesses. This will increase the number and quality of jobs available to raise levels of employment of Northumberland residents, and attract and retain working age people.

**Environment**
Conserving and enhancing Northumberland’s distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments - to ensure that these assets continue to be experienced and valued by residents of and visitors to the County and protected from inappropriate development.

**Resources**
Managing natural resources - 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.
Figure 10.1 Strategic Green Infrastructure Sites and Corridors