Foreword

Welcome to the Issues and Options Consultation Document for the Northumberland Core Strategy.

This is the first stage in producing a planning framework for Northumberland, significantly contributing to delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy Vision to make Northumberland a place that is resilient for the future. Once adopted the Core Strategy will provide the planning basis for enabling everyone in Northumberland to live the kind of life they aspire to in a way that respects the inherent identity of the place and its residents.

Your views are important in ensuring that the County Council is identifying and focusing on the right choices for meeting future development needs which fully takes account of Northumberland’s special culture and environment now and in the future. It is important that such matters are informed by local opinions. We want to know your views on the issues that have been identified and whether we have missed any, how particular approaches will affect your local area and whether there are different approaches we have not thought about.

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

Councillor Tom Brechany
Executive Member for Planning, Housing and Regeneration
Foreword
1. Introduction

What is the Core Strategy?

1.1 Once adopted, the Northumberland Core Strategy will:

- Be the overarching spatial plan for the County, excluding the Northumberland National Park, guiding future development and land use planning decisions to 2030;
- Be the spatial interpretation of the Council’s Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which aims to ‘make Northumberland a place that is resilient for the future’;
- Aim to maximise benefit for the community, the environment and the local economy through sustainable development;
- Establish the general scale and distribution of development and the Council’s approach to the key issues facing the future planning of the County; and
- Be the strategic framework within the ‘Local Plan’ that makes up the statutory plan for Northumberland.

1.2 Further detailed policies and allocations will be included with a Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD) which will allocate sites for development. The Core Strategy will sit underneath the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its policies must be in conformity with the principles set out in the NPPF.

1.3 The Core Strategy will ultimately supersede:

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

How has this Issues and Options document been prepared?

1.4 This Issues and Options document has been informed by a comprehensive evidence base and through discussions with a number of key stakeholders. The main elements of the evidence base are available in the accompanying technical appendix.

1.5 Throughout the Issues and Options document questions are posed with potential options to choose from, with the opportunity to suggest further options if it is considered there are more appropriate alternative options. For some of the issues the Council considers that there are no realistic alternative options. Where this is the case, questions are asked on the potential criteria which could be included within future planning policies.
1.6 In accordance with the 'Duty to Co-operate' the Council is in discussions with adjoining authorities and relevant stakeholders. This will continue as the Core Strategy progresses to adoption. In addition, the Issues and Options document is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment and an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Engagement Opportunities

1.7 It is essential that the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy is informed through wide community engagement. The Issues and Options stage is the first stage of the preparation of the Core Strategy. Further opportunities to comment on the emerging Core Strategy will be available throughout 2012 and 2013 as the strategy progresses to adoption - see figure 1.1 below.

**Figure 1.1 Key stages of Core Strategy preparation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
<th>CURRENT STAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issues and Options Document</td>
<td>May - September 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Publication Document</td>
<td>Winter 2012/13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission Document</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Examination</td>
<td>Summer 2013</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspector’s Report</td>
<td>Autumn 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOPTION</td>
<td>Winter 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.8 In line with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement and overall aim to engage with as many residents, local groups and interested parties as possible, consultation on the Issues and Options document will take place between 23 May 2012 and 15 August 2012.

1.9 Information on events during this period and on how to respond to the questions and choices will be available on the Council’s website and via posters and leaflets. An engagement action plan is also available on the Council’s website [www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy).
1.10 The Council is encouraging people to register with its online consultation system, which makes responding to the questions easier. Further information is available at www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy

1.11 Responses by post or email will, however, also be accepted and should be directed to:

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

   Email: PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk

1.12 After considering the responses in the autumn, the Council will inform all respondents and those who have requested to be kept up to date on progress about the results of the consultation and the next steps.

1.13 For further information on how to take part in the consultation, please contact PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk or telephone 01670 623631 and ask for the Spatial Policy and Delivery Team.
2. A spatial portrait of Northumberland

2.1 Northumberland is England’s northernmost county, stretching from the Scottish Border in the north to Tyneside and County Durham in the south. Northumberland is flanked by Cumbria, the Cheviots and North Pennines to the west and by the North Sea to the east.

2.2 Home to around 312,000 people, within Northumberland nobody lives in a settlement of more than 40,000 residents. The County, the largest unitary authority by geographic coverage, is also the most sparsely populated in England with only 62 people per square kilometre; Northumberland remains mainly rural.

2.3 The south east represents the most densely populated part of the County accounting for approximately 46% of Northumberland’s population living in around 5% of its area. This area contains the three largest towns, Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington, which act as main employment and service centres for much of the area. While all of south east Northumberland has elements of an industrial legacy, from the 1960’s, Cramlington was planned as a new town, the purpose being to provide a focus for employment and housing growth.

2.4 Beyond south east Northumberland, the main settlements are strung along the Tyne valley corridor and north south along the lowland coastal strip, both of which are followed by main road and rail routes. Morpeth, Hexham, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have large rural hinterlands. Areas closer to Tyneside such as Ponteland and Prudhoe are influenced by the conurbations. The influence of neighbouring Tyneside is significant, and to a lesser extent that of the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and Carlisle. Specifically, Tyneside attracts the people of Northumberland as a source of work, education, cultural activity and retailing. Countryside between the towns and villages of south east Northumberland, the Tyne Valley and some adjacent areas have been kept open through the Green Belt designation. The remaining rural areas are interspersed with smaller towns, some with their own hinterlands, as well as numerous villages, small hamlets and isolated farmsteads.
2.5 There are designated areas that are internationally, nationally, regionally and locally recognised. Most notable are the Northumberland National Park, a separate local planning authority area, the Northumberland Coast and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and internationally recognised biodiversity and geo-diversity related designated areas mostly concentrated along the populated coast and in more remote upland areas. Away from these areas the connectivity of wildlife-rich areas and the ‘green infrastructure’ in general is relatively poor. Upland areas include some large scale commercial coniferous forestry notably Kielder Forest covering almost 650km². The populated former mining areas of south east Northumberland have pockets of wildlife in mining subsidence ponds and reclaimed mining land. These are very important assets for people in those localities.

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

2.7 Major historic landmarks such as Hadrian’s Wall, the Norman Castles and numerous country houses and their associated landscapes, together with fortified farmhouses, are still dominant features of Northumberland’s environment and culture.
3. Spatial vision and objectives

Towards a spatial vision for Northumberland

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

3.2 Embodied within the Core Strategy will be the ‘Big Partnership Issues’ identified by the Council in the Sustainable Community Strategy

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

Supported by "getting it right spatially - managing development".

3.3 The vision which is proposed to underpin the Core Strategy is:

By 2030, Northumberland’s communities will be strong and resilient and characterised by a diverse economy. The County’s significant resources will be utilised and the unique qualities of the natural, historic and built environment will be protected and enhanced.

**Question 1**

Is this vision the right one on which to base the Core Strategy?
3. Spatial vision and objectives

Objectives

3.4 To help achieve this vision, and having regard to the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities, and other plans and strategies, a number of objectives are suggested to provide a coherent approach to managing future development and ensuring the Council gets it right spatially.

- **Objective 1**: To place sustainable development and positive future growth at the heart of planning decisions in Northumberland;
- **Objective 2**: To meet Northumberland’s objectively assessed development needs including new homes, employment space, services and infrastructure;
- **Objective 3**: To maintain and create sustainable communities throughout Northumberland’s urban and rural areas to support health, social and cultural well-being for all;
- **Objective 4**: To rebalance and encourage a strong, competitive and diverse Northumberland economy;
- **Objective 5**: To make climate change work to Northumberland’s advantage adapting to, and mitigating change whilst also capitalising on economic opportunities;
- **Objective 6**: To protect and enhance Northumberland’s natural, historic and built environment;
- **Objective 7**: To manage the prudent use of Northumberland’s natural resources, including minerals, energy, land and water while reducing waste and minimising adverse impacts on communities and the environment;
- **Objective 8**: To ensure all development maximises the use of, and safeguards, Northumberland’s infrastructure securing necessary up-grades and also reducing the need to travel where appropriate.

**Question 2**

Are the objectives proposed the right ones to deliver the vision for Northumberland; if not, what should the objectives be?
4. Strategic development and spatial distribution options

Strategic development options

4.1 In order to deliver the spatial vision and objectives for Northumberland, a number of options have been considered in preparation of this Issues and Options document. The NPPF is clear that the Core Strategy must meet objectively assessed needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change and as such it is considered the scope for realistic alternative approaches is limited. The strategic development options for Northumberland are:

- **Option A: Continue the existing strategic approach** - The existing strategic approach for Northumberland reflects that which is set out within the Regional Spatial Strategy and various planning strategy documents which apply to Northumberland. This approach seeks to maintain balanced and stable population levels and allow for sustainable development which plans to meet the needs of its residents. However, it is considered this approach would not provide the flexibility required by the NPPF.

- **Option B: Planning for lower rates of development** - Recognising the current economic challenges as well as associated reduced development activity, an alternative option would be to plan for on-going economic uncertainty and reduced outputs across the plan period. It is considered that this approach would not meet the development needs of local communities and would not allow the County to respond positively to the Government’s agenda to facilitate wider opportunities for additional growth or the Council's priorities for the future of Northumberland.

- **Option C: Planning for targeted increases in development** - This option builds upon option A, seeking to achieve balanced and stable population levels and sustainable development to meet the needs of Northumberland's residents but incorporating an allowance for additional growth. This would provide the opportunity to broaden the range and improve the quality of housing, create opportunities for regeneration and support new enterprise and job creation targeted at key locations across Northumberland. This approach would also enable the Council to rapidly respond to positive changes in economic outlook and development needs and activity.

**Question 3**

The Council’s view is that option C represents the most appropriate strategic development option for Northumberland. Do you agree with this? If not, which option do you consider to be most appropriate, or are there other options to consider?
4. Strategic development and spatial distribution options

Spatial distribution options

4.2 The current development strategies across Northumberland seek to concentrate development in existing settlements and limit new development in the open countryside, making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and services and reducing the need to travel by private car.

4.3 This has generally been successful in directing new development to sustainable locations and supporting the regeneration of south east Northumberland and Northumberland’s market towns. It is, however, considered that the Core Strategy should take a more positive view of development that improves the sustainability of existing settlements and rural communities. The emerging Northumberland Core Strategy offers the opportunity to consider this approach and other alternatives to respond to changing Government policy, the economic climate and the needs and priorities of local communities. The options for the overall spatial distribution of development across Northumberland are:

- **Option A: The existing distribution** - Continue to focus the majority of new development in Northumberland’s key settlements with smaller scale development allowed elsewhere in order to support local services. Development in the open countryside would be restricted. It is considered that this approach would contribute to the vitality and viability of the market towns and urban areas and assist the regeneration of town centres. It would help to create a critical mass of development to ensure the delivery of new services, infrastructure and facilities. It would also assist in the reduction of private car usage directing development to areas already served by public transport.

- **Option B: Dispersed development** - This approach would allow for increased development opportunities across Northumberland but specifically in the settlements in rural areas with less development being delivered in the market towns and urban areas. Whilst this approach would deliver some benefits within the rural areas it is considered that it does not align with the wider principles of sustainable development.

- **Option C: The existing distribution plus targeted growth** - This option incorporates the principles of option A but builds in provision for additional targeted growth. This would focus the majority of new development in Northumberland’s key settlements with smaller scale development allowed elsewhere in order to support local services. Additional development and growth would be focused on key locations in Blyth, Cramlington, Ashington and Morpeth, with consideration given to Green Belt review around the settlements of Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe. It is considered that this approach would also allow for appropriate sustainable development in rural areas. This approach would have the same positive implications of option A, but would enable the Council to respond positively to the Government’s agenda for additional growth through broadening the range and improving the quality of housing, regenerating town centres and supporting rural areas, new enterprise and employment. This approach has formed the basis for the Council’s approach elsewhere in this document.
4. Strategic development and spatial distribution options

Question 4

The Council’s view is that option C represents the most appropriate spatial distribution option for Northumberland. Do you agree with this? If not, which option do you consider to be most appropriate or are there other options to consider?

Sustainable development

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

- Positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of Northumberland; and
- Meet objectively assessed needs, with flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

4.5 To ensure that all development is sustainable the Council proposes the introduction of an overarching policy. This will establish a series of key criteria against which all development proposals will be considered. Relevant criteria will be informed by responses to specific questions in this document, but consideration will be given to how a proposal:

- Contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy in the county’s towns and rural areas;
- Supports and improves access, health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, enhancing people’s quality of life;
- Contributes to the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland’s natural, historic and built environment;
- Makes the most effective use of Northumberland’s available resources (e.g. land, water, minerals, buildings, energy);
- Is resilient to economic, social and climatic change; and
- Is aligned with the objectives of the Core Strategy.

Question 5

Do you agree that the principles set out above should form the basis of such a policy? Are there other principles that should be included?
Northumberland’s Delivery Areas

4.6 Northumberland is large and diverse. Different areas have distinct characteristics, functions and needs. In some instances, a countywide approach will be appropriate but in others the response will need to be tailored to different parts of Northumberland. The definition of specific Delivery Areas will enable the Council to respond more effectively to these challenges and to better guide the delivery of development.

4.7 The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies three areas which broadly relate to the strategic transport network of Northumberland. These areas also generally reflect the three strategic housing market areas identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010).

4.8 The Core Strategy has used the same geographical areas to define three Delivery Areas; North Northumberland, South East Northumberland, and South and West Northumberland. These are illustrated at figure 4.1, although it should be noted that these areas do not reflect political boundaries.

Figure 4.1 Delivery Areas
Characteristics of each Delivery Area

**North Northumberland Delivery Area**

This Delivery Area has a population of approximately 58,700 and 27,000 households with the largest proportion of older aged residents within the county. The area stretches south from the border with Scotland incorporating both coastal and upland areas. It borders the northern half of the Northumberland National Park and includes the North Northumberland Heritage Coast and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It includes the A1/East Coast road and rail corridor.

The northern part of Northumberland is not as strongly influenced by the Tyne and Wear conurbation in terms of travel to work. The market towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick and Amble are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services within the area. In the case of Berwick-upon-Tweed its area of influence extends into the Scottish Borders.

Large parts of the Area are subject to high house prices although the area has the lowest average gross incomes within the county. Access to affordable housing, particularly within the rented sector, is an issue across the area but is particularly acute in the coastal villages where there are high levels of second home and holiday accommodation.

**South East Northumberland Delivery Area**

Located in the south east corner of Northumberland, parts of which lie within the Northumberland Green Belt, this Area is the most densely populated part of the county. The towns and villages are large although no settlement exceeds 40,000 residents. The population is approximately 143,000 with 63,000 households. There is an ageing population but this Delivery Area has the largest proportion of younger aged residents within the county. The A1 south and the A189/A19 corridors are important and there is a strong pull to Tyneside for jobs and learning.

The towns of Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services. The smaller settlements of Bedlington/Bedlington Station, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval perform a secondary service role for their residents and neighbouring villages.

The Area has underperformed economically affecting job opportunities and has significant areas of deprivation and poorer quality housing.

Through the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) there are significant opportunities for economic change. The presence of the National Renewable Energy Centre combined with the physical assets of the Blyth Estuary provide a strong basis to capitalise on economic opportunities from the renewable energy and low carbon sectors.
South and West Northumberland Delivery Area

This Delivery Area extends over the southern and western parts of Northumberland including the Tyne valley and the A1/East Coast road and rail corridors and includes land associated with Newcastle International Airport. The population is approximately 109,400 with 47,000 households. There is an ageing population.

It is a large geographical area, parts of which lie within the Northumberland Green Belt. It borders the southern part of the Northumberland National Park and includes parts of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site and part of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south.

Hexham, Prudhoe, Haltwhistle, Morpeth and Ponteland are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services. With a significant number of large and smaller villages particularly throughout the west of the area.

The Area has a strong travel to work relationship with the Tyneside Conurbation. There are relatively low levels of deprivation, high house prices and signs of severe affordability pressures.

Question 6

Are the three Delivery Areas the right ones for Northumberland, if not, what are the right ones?
5. Settlement role and function

5.1 Below the Delivery Areas the Council has undertaken an audit of services and facilities within Northumberland. This has considered the provision of education, health care, employment, retail, community facilities, sport and leisure facilities and transport linkages. The survey data is provided at Appendix 1.

5.2 To assist in guiding future development a series of development principles are proposed for each tier. These inform the general distribution of development which is to be balanced alongside other relevant factors, for example environmental capacity. These are set out in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Proposed settlement criteria and tier specific development principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Settlement Criteria</th>
<th>Development Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>Key hubs for education, healthcare, housing, employment and retail.</td>
<td>Main focus for future development and regeneration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive range of services and facilities and good transport links.</td>
<td>Location for planned housing and employment urban extensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development on previously developed land should be prioritised where viable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Wide range of services and facilities.</td>
<td>Development that maintains and strengthens the role of the settlement as a service centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key service centres to their resident communities and in some cases a wider network of villages and hamlets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Fewer services and facilities than tier 2 settlements but with a First School - an important service which benefits a wider community.</td>
<td>Small-scale development, change of use and conversions to meet defined needs and to maintain or enhance local services and facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4</td>
<td>Small settlements with significantly fewer services and facilities than tier 3 settlements and a less frequent public transport service.</td>
<td>Small-scale infill, change of use or conversions to meet defined needs and contribute to maintaining and enhancing the viability of services and facilities in that and adjoining settlements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 5</td>
<td>All places outside of those settlements listed in tiers 1-4 will be classified as falling within tier 5, which covers an extensive part of the county. This will include hamlets and other small groups of buildings in the countryside.</td>
<td>Priority is the re-use of existing buildings or conversions. Development permitted which demonstrates the need for such a location, for example outdoor recreation, leisure and tourism, equine uses or economic development (specific policies to be developed elsewhere in the Core Strategy or subsequent DPDs).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 7

Is the approach to identifying the settlement tiers the right one?

Question 8

Do you agree with the ‘development principles’ set out in table 5.1, if not what should the principles be?

5.3 The impact of grouping settlements within the three Delivery Areas is illustrated in tables 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 below.

Table 5.2 Proposed settlement tiers in the North Northumberland Delivery Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed (including Spittal, East Ord and Tweedmouth), Alnwick, Amble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses (including North Sunderland), Wooler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Acklington, Alnmouth/Lesbury/Hipsburn/Bilton, Branton, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Ellingham, Embleton, Felton, Ford, Holy Island, Longframlington, Longhoughton, Lowick, Netherton, Norham, Scremerston, Shilbottle, Swarlnd, Thropton, Togston, Warkworth, Whittingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4</td>
<td>Ancroft, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Bolton, Boulmer, Bowsden, Branxton, Chatton, Christon Bank, Craster, Crookham, Denwick, Doddington, Eglingham, Etal, Fenwick, Glanton, Hepple, High Hauxley, Horncliffe, Howick, Lucker, Milfield, Newton on the Moor, Powburn, Rennington, Rock, South Charlton, Wingates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 5</td>
<td>Everywhere outside of those settlements listed above in Tiers 1-4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 Proposed settlement tiers in the South East Northumberland Delivery Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1</td>
<td>Ashington, Bedlington (including Bedlington Station), Blyth (including Bebside), Cramlington (including East Cramlington)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Guide Post/Stakeford/West Sleekburn, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Seaton Delaval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3</td>
<td>Choppington/Scotland Gate, Holywell, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, Seghill, South Cambois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4</td>
<td>Bomarsund, Bothal, East Hartford, Nedderton, Woodhorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 5</td>
<td>Everywhere outside of those settlements listed above in Tiers 1-4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 5. Settlement role and function

### Table 5.4 Proposed settlement tiers in the South and West Northumberland Delivery Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland, Prudhoe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2</td>
<td>Allendale/ Catton, Bellingham, Corbridge, Ellington, Hadston/Red Row/Broomhill, Haydon Bridge, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Lynemouth, Pegswood, Widdrington Station/Stobswood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4</td>
<td>Allenheads, Birtley, Blanchland, Byness, Capheaton, Colwell, Cresswell, Falstone, Featherstone, Great Whittington, Halton Lea Gate, Hartburn, Hebron, Heppscott, Horsley, Ingoe, Kirkheaton, Kirkwhelpington, Knarsdale, Langley, Longhirst, Matfen, Middleton, Milbourne, Mitford, Netherwittington, Newton, Ryal, Simonburn, Slaggyford, Ulgham, Wall, West Thirston, Widdrington Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 5</td>
<td>Everywhere outside of those settlements listed above in Tiers 1-4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 9

Do you agree with the settlements included in each tier as set out in table 5.2, table 5.3 and table 5.4?
6. Delivering housing

6.1 The provision of housing is fundamental to the well-being of the communities and businesses of Northumberland. Nationally, the government's key housing objective is to increase significantly the delivery of new homes.

6.2 The Northumberland Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents will aim to deliver sufficient land that is suitable for development taking account of the needs of residents, businesses and communities including through the community right to build. It will seek to provide the necessary quantity, quality and choice of housing in the right places at the right time to support growth where consistent with the other land use planning principles. Key issues for the Core Strategy are:

- Delivery and supply of new homes;
- Distribution of new homes;
- Delivering affordable homes;
- Meeting the needs of older and vulnerable people;
- Meeting the needs of travellers; and
- Second and holiday homes

How many new homes should be provided?

6.3 The Core Strategy must plan for an appropriate number of new homes to be built in suitable locations throughout the plan period. Evidence available to inform the housing requirement for Northumberland currently includes the figures set out within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), population projections, past delivery rates and delivery forecasts. These are accompanied by the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The housing requirement will also be considered in the context of employment forecasts and a new Housing Needs Survey (2012); evidence from this will be available to inform the next version of the plan.
6. Delivering housing

6.4 The Council is proposing an approach whereby the scale of development in each Delivery Area will form the overall housing requirement for Northumberland. The three Delivery Areas have different characteristics and issues. The scale and rate of development in each Delivery Area may therefore need to vary to meet the specific housing requirements identified for each Area. This will be a minimum target met through a variety of sources, not just new build, giving the Council a flexible approach to respond to changing economic circumstances.

North Northumberland Delivery Area

6.5 The North Northumberland Delivery Area has approximately 19% of Northumberland’s population and 27,000 households, with the largest proportion of older aged residents within the county. Large parts of the area are subject to high house prices although the area has the lowest average gross incomes within Northumberland. There are low levels of owner occupation and a significant private rented sector with high vacancy rates. Access to affordable housing is an issue and there are high levels of second and holiday homes. Housing delivery has significantly exceeded the RSS requirements since 2004.

South East Northumberland Delivery Area

6.6 The South East Northumberland Delivery Area encompasses the most densely populated part of Northumberland accounting for 46% of the population and approximately 63,000 households. As elsewhere there is an ageing population but also a high percentage of people in younger age groups. There are high levels of social rented housing, low housing vacancy rates of 3%, comparatively low house prices but still some issues of affordability. There have been low levels of housing completions since 2004 compared to the RSS requirements with some large scale sites stalled within the planning process.

South and West Northumberland Delivery Area

6.7 The South and West Northumberland Delivery Area has 35% of Northumberland’s population and approximately 47,000 households. Population growth has been strong at 5.5% due to net in migration. There are high levels of owner occupied housing, low vacancy rates, high house prices, and signs of severe affordability pressures. The RSS housing requirements (2004-2011) have been exceeded.

Regional Spatial Strategy requirements

6.8 The Government’s intention to revoke RSS is well documented but at the current time it remains part of the development plan. The RSS currently plans for the addition of 15,000 dwellings in Northumberland over the period 2004-2021, with net completions projected to average around 885 units each year. In the first part of the RSS plan period Northumberland has met this delivery rate albeit performance has varied across the former district areas. The RSS however plans to reduce the annual delivery rate in most of Northumberland except the former Districts of Wansbeck and Blyth Valley where the housing requirement was forecast to, respectively, remain static and modestly increase.

2 CLG household projections (2008)
3 CLG household projections (2008)
4 CLG household projections (2008)
6.9 This scenario was based on an assumed Gross Value Added (GVA) growth rate of 2.5%. While the Northumberland housing market was buoyant over the earlier parts of the period 2004-2011, housing delivery has significantly reduced in recent years due to the economic downturn. Because the economic recovery remains fragile output against the RSS requirement to 2021 may be reduced in most areas of the County. Beyond 2021, the RSS did not set housing delivery targets, but indicated that an average over the whole period 2004-2021 could be used. This may be appropriate for the period 2021-2026, but beyond this date the figures are considered of less value.

6.10 The proposed revocation of the RSS presents an opportunity to review the way housing requirements are established to ensure they are appropriate for Northumberland in the future. The Council has already proposed increasing output against the RSS figures through the establishment of the South East Northumberland ‘Growth Point’. This proposed an additional 3,700 units, a 23% increase on the RSS requirement, to be delivered at Cramlington, Blyth, Cambois, Ashington, Morpeth and Ellington/Lynemouth.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

6.11 The Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assesses the demand and need for market and affordable housing, and identifies different challenges and opportunities across Northumberland. A Housing Needs Survey (2012) for the whole of Northumberland is being prepared and will update the SHMA. It will help inform future versions of the plan and establishment of the Northumberland's housing requirement.

Housing land supply and average delivery rates

6.12 The Council’s Five Year Housing Land Supply (2011)\(^5\) forecasts the delivery of sites with planning permission for 2012-17 and is monitored and produced on an annual basis. This is informed by consultation with developers and landowners and is considered accurate for this period. The Housing Land Supply indicates that Northumberland does not have enough deliverable housing land to meet the RSS requirements for the period 2012-17, with predicted shortfalls in the South and West, and South East Northumberland Delivery Areas, while the North demonstrates a surplus. The forecast shortfall in delivery is primarily associated with poor market conditions, not land supply as the capacity of sites with planning consent exceeds RSS targets.

6.13 Given current economic conditions the Council does not consider it appropriate to ‘roll forward’ estimates of delivery from this period to inform delivery during the later periods of the plan. As the housing market emerges from recession it is anticipated there will be latent demand which may generate an increased demand for new homes, and hence output, from 2016 onwards. The average delivery rates for 2004-2011 may, therefore, better reflect housing requirements in the short to medium term, as these would reflect both periods of recession and recovery.

\(^5\) Five Year Housing Land Supply 2012-2017 is being updated to 31 March 2012 and will inform future versions of the plan.
6. Delivering housing

Population and household projections

6.14 Northumberland’s population has grown in recent decades, currently 312,000; this growth is expected to continue, reaching 338,000 by 2033\(^6\). Growth is in the over 65 age groups with all age groups below this reducing. This has implications for meeting the needs of an ageing population. The County experiences net in migration with the majority from the North East, most significantly from the Newcastle area.

6.15 Household projections are also expected to increase from around 136,000 households to an estimated 161,000 by 2033\(^7\). The average household size (number of people per household) is falling and occupants of households are living longer as single person households. Projections suggest the average household size for Northumberland is likely to decline from 2.3 in 2001 to less than 2.1 by 2031.

6.16 The above projections are based on past trends and do not reflect the past years of the recession. They could therefore be optimistic. Furthermore they do not take into account any planned policy interventions which could increase or decrease forecast rates of household change and would need to be aligned with economic objectives and projections across Northumberland to 2030.

6.17 The Council has also had regard to the Office for National Statistics projections for population, institutional population, and the average household size and has calculated household figures that are slightly lower than those projected by the Department for Communities and Local Government. However, subject to localised adjustments, the Office for National Statistics projections are considered to be the only reasonable evidence base to plan housing requirements beyond 2026.

Summary

6.18 A number of different evidence sources could be used to calculate Northumberland’s future housing requirements. Given the different characteristics of each of the three Delivery Areas it may be appropriate for different approaches to be adopted across Northumberland for different periods of the plan. The figures indicated by some data sources in some Delivery Areas could be considered overly optimistic (e.g. RSS figures for South East Northumberland) given that they were developed when the economy was buoyant. Others may be pessimistic (e.g. five year housing land supply for South and West Northumberland). The range of figures for each Area indicates significant scope to establish requirements based on local market characteristics and policy objectives.

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\(^6\) 2008 based population projections (ONS, 2010)
\(^7\) 2008 based household projections (CLG, 2010)
### Table 6.1 Evidence for establishing the housing requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Housing requirement per year (8)</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South and West</th>
<th>South East</th>
<th>Northumberland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 to 2016</td>
<td>RSS requirement 2011-16</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projected household growth (9)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average completion rates 2004-11</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five year housing land supply 2011-16 (10)</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>675</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RSS requirement plus Growth Point</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 to 2021</td>
<td>RSS requirement 2011-16</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projected household growth (11)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average completion rates 2004-11</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RSS requirement 2011-16 plus Growth Point</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 to 2026</td>
<td>RSS requirement 2004-21</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>880</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projected household growth (12)</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>935</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RSS requirement average 2004-21 plus Growth Point</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026 to 2031</td>
<td>Projected household growth (13)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 10**

Is the evidence listed in table 6.1 for establishing the housing requirements appropriate, are there any other approaches which should be considered?

---

8 Data has been rounded to the nearest five units
9 2008 based Sub National Household Projections NCC calculation
10 Northumberland County Council, Five year Housing Land Supply 2012-17 actual plus forecast (2011)
11 2008 based Sub National Household Projections NCC calculation
12 2008 based Sub National Household Projections NCC calculation
13 2008 based Sub National Household Projections NCC calculation
6. Delivering housing

**Question 11**
Should the evidence used to establish the housing requirement vary across the Council’s three Delivery Areas over each time period?

6.19 The lower and higher figures from the evidence base in table 6.1 for each Delivery Area and in each plan period is set out in table 6.2 below. It is likely that a combination of these in response to the strategy options will establish the housing requirements for each Delivery Area.

**Table 6.2 Proposed ranges of housing delivery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
<th>2011 to 2016</th>
<th>2016 to 2021</th>
<th>2021 to 2026</th>
<th>2026 to 2031</th>
<th>2011 to 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>900 to 1425</td>
<td>800 to 1,425</td>
<td>875 to 1,225</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>3,615 to 5,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West</td>
<td>1,050 to 1,675</td>
<td>1,100 to 1,825</td>
<td>1,250 to 1,800</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>4,925 to 6,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>1,300 to 2,900</td>
<td>1,525 to 4,425</td>
<td>1,650 to 3,400</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>4,925 to 6,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>3,250 to 6,000</td>
<td>3,425 to 7,625</td>
<td>3,775 to 6,425</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td>14,440 to 24,090</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 12**
Should the number of new homes to be provided through the Core Strategy be set within the ranges specified above?

6.20 The NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements. An additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land will also be identified. In areas where there is a persistent under delivery of housing the additional buffer may increase to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply.

**Distribution of new homes**

6.21 Once the housing requirements have been established it is then necessary to distribute the housing within each of the three Delivery Areas. The Core Strategy will establish the distribution of the housing requirements to tier one and tier two settlements and the ‘rest’ of the Delivery Area. Specific or broad locations for the delivery of new homes, unless identified as ‘strategic sites’, are likely to be considered by Development Allocations or Area Action Plan documents.
6.22 If sufficient sites within settlements to meet the identified housing requirement cannot be identified, it may be necessary to redistribute the required level of development to other settlements. New homes in the open countryside will continue to be strictly controlled and only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

6.23 As with the overarching approach to the Core Strategy there are a number of options for the spatial distribution of new homes; these are:

- Align with the existing population distribution;
- Disperse development;
- Align with the distribution of existing and planned strategies.

6.24 Whilst population growth has taken place in North Northumberland since the 2001 Census the percentage distribution of population between the settlements throughout Northumberland has generally remained the same. Distributing future housing development to reflect the existing distribution of population would concentrate development in the tier one settlements but still provide for a significant amount of development in the rest of the area and in smaller settlements many of which do not have a range of services and facilities.

6.25 An alternative option is a dispersed approach to increase the delivery of new homes in the smaller settlements throughout the rest of the area at the expense of development in the tier one and tier two settlements. However this would not accord with the general principles of sustainable development and as such is not considered to be a viable option.

6.26 An alternative approach would be to focus the majority of new housing development in tier one settlements, with a smaller proportion in tier two settlements, and distribute the remainder to identified smaller settlements throughout the rest of the area. This option would better align with the emerging Core Strategy strategic direction, over-arching principles of sustainable development and the Growth Point priorities. Development in the open countryside would be largely restricted to the conversion of existing buildings.

**Question 13**

How should the Core Strategy distribute the development of new homes and should the approach vary between the Delivery Areas?

- Option A: To reflect the spatial distribution of the existing population
- Option B: Disperse development to smaller settlements
- Option C: To align with the existing and planned strategies

Is there an alternative option that has not been identified?

**Previously developed land**

6.27 The Council can consider whether there is a case for setting a local target for the reuse of previously developed land (PDL) providing that it is not of high environmental value. The definition of PDL is set out in the NPPF; this indicates that it excludes private...
residential gardens which can add to the character of neighbourhoods and enhance the quality of life, as well as other land uses. The RSS target for Northumberland was to develop 50% of all new housing on previously developed land. Over the period from 2007 to 2011 Northumberland achieved over 60%.

6.28 Northumberland is a predominantly rural county and the availability of PDL sites is less than in more urban areas. A lot of the better located and easy to develop PDL sites have been developed, and in the current economic climate the viability of developing the remaining PDL sites, at the same rate, is less likely. The Council will however seek to maximise the reuse of previously developed land.

**Question 14**

Should the Core Strategy set a locally appropriate target for the use of previously developed land, and if so what should the target be?

**Question 15**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy that restricts the development of residential gardens?

**Density**

6.29 The Core Strategy has the opportunity to set out an approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances. This should have regard to the level of housing demand and need and the availability of suitable land. An area's character should be reflected in the density of new development having regard to existing housing types, key environmental features, current and proposed services and the wider townscape and landscape context. In some areas it may be necessary to require higher densities for example on accessible well designed town centre redevelopment sites, and in other areas for example on the edges of rural settlements lower densities maybe more appropriate. The Council can consider the case for a policy to resist inappropriate development in residential gardens.

**Question 16**

Should the Core Strategy set a locally appropriate approach to housing density and if so, what should it be?
6. Delivering housing

Delivering affordable homes

6.30 Where the Core Strategy identifies a need for affordable housing it must set out policies to meet this need. National guidance 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.

6.31 In common with the rest of the country, Northumberland has experienced a significant increase in house prices since 2000; the average home in the county now costs around £125,600.\(^{14}\) Whilst this is lower than the national average house price of around £161,500, incomes in Northumberland are correspondingly lower than the national average; as such affordability remains a key issue and priority for the Council.

6.32 Across Northumberland the average house price to annual household income ratio is 5:1\(^{15}\) whereas an acceptable level of financial burden associated with home ownership is usually around 3.5 single income and 2.9 joint income. Indeed, the Northumberland Affordable Housing Viability Assessment (AHVA) indicates that within the North Northumberland and South and West Northumberland Delivery Areas affordability issues are worse than the national and regional position.

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14 Land Registry (December 2011)
15 Hometrack (December 2011)
6.33 The SHMA identifies that there are approximately 832 households per year with unmet housing needs for the next five years, equating to 261 households in the North, 194 households in the South and West and 387 households in the South East Northumberland Delivery Areas. Not all of this need will be met by building new affordable homes; some will be met from the existing stock.

6.34 In establishing an affordable housing requirement the AHVA indicates that the North and South and West Northumberland Delivery Areas are ‘mid to high value market areas’. In these locations it is considered that affordable housing can be provided at the overall requirement of 30% without grant support, subject to viability. By contrast, the majority of the South East Northumberland Delivery Area is a relatively low priced market area with some pockets of medium values around the areas of Cramlington and in the Seaton Valley. Development values here are therefore, unlikely to support 30% affordable housing provision without a grant, and even with it residential land values will still be fairly low.

6.35 In establishing an affordable housing target the Council is aware of the importance of ensuring delivery of housing. As such, any policy would take into account, amongst other matters, the economic viability of the site and other known demands related to the site.

Question 17

Should the Core Strategy include a countywide affordable housing target of 30% subject to assessments of individual sites economic viability including availability of grant support and other known demands related to the development of the site?

6.36 National Guidance requires local planning authorities to identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations reflecting local demand. The SHMA indicates that the potential mix between social rented and intermediate housing should vary across the Delivery Areas. Social rented housing is that typically owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency. Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more
than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

6.37 The SHMA indicates that in the North Northumberland Delivery Area 80% of households in need would require social rented housing, while 20% of households are estimated to be able to afford low cost home ownership. In the South and West Northumberland and South East Northumberland Delivery Areas it is estimated that 95% of households in need would require social rented housing, with the remaining 5% considered to be able to afford low cost home ownership. These requirements are set out in table 6.3. A Housing Needs Survey has recently been completed this will update the SHMA and inform the next stage of the Core Strategy.

Table 6.3 Recommended rates of social rented and intermediate housing in the three Delivery Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
<th>Affordable housing target</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social rented</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Northumberland</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Northumberland</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Northumberland</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 18

Should the Core Strategy include a policy requiring varying rates of social rented and intermediate housing across the three Delivery Areas as set out in table 6.3?

Site thresholds

6.38 To determine when affordable housing will be sought as part of a development, site thresholds relating to the number of dwellings or site areas have previously been used.

6.39 An alternative approach to setting thresholds would be for the Core Strategy to seek affordable housing, or a contribution thereto, from every residential planning application. This approach would ensure that sites which fall below a threshold, perhaps because they are developed at a lower density would still contribute to the delivery of affordable housing.

Question 19

Should the Core Strategy seek affordable housing provision, or a contribution thereto, on all residential developments or should a minimum site threshold be established and if so, at what level should this be set?
Off-site contributions

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

6.41 If off-site provision is considered acceptable the affordable housing provision should generally be provided in the same settlement as the application site or on a suitable alternative site which meets an identified housing need within the area. A financial contribution could be used to deliver affordable housing elsewhere through new build or conversion, or purchase and repair existing housing stock for use as affordable housing.

**Question 20**

Should the Core Strategy include a sequential policy to use off-site or financial contributions to provide affordable housing in the following priority order?

1. In the settlement where the contribution arises;
2. In the parish or ward where the contribution arises;
3. In the Delivery Area where the contribution arises; and
4. Where priorities are identified throughout the County.

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

6.43 The Council considers that affordable housing provided on a rural exception site should have permitted development rights removed requiring a planning application to be made for any extensions or alterations enabling the Council to ensure that properties remain affordable and continue to meet the needs of the community.
Question 21
Do you agree the Core Strategy should include provision for the allocation of rural exception sites?

Second and holiday homes

6.44 Many properties within Northumberland’s communities are being used as second or holiday homes with concentrations evident specifically along the coast and in accessible upland areas. North Northumberland has the highest amount of second and holiday homes as a percentage of total housing stock in the county, with the former borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed having the fifth highest level in England.(16)

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

6.46 Properties within the housing stock can generally move into and out of holiday use without planning consent. While the Core Strategy will not restrict the use of new market housing in settlements with a high proportion of second or holiday homes the provision of affordable housing could assist in meeting local housing requirements.

Question 22
Should the Core Strategy include a policy specifically to provide for affordable homes for local people in settlements which are identified as affected by a high proportion of second or holiday homes?

Meeting the needs of older and vulnerable people

6.47 Northumberland is projected to have an increasing proportion of older people within its communities. Over the past decade the number of residents over 65 years old has increased by over 25%, compared to a national increase of approximately 12%. By 2021 it is anticipated that almost half of the county’s population will be over 50 years old with as many as 11,000 being over the age of 85.(17)

16 National Housing Federation (2009)
17 Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy, 2011
6. Delivering housing

6.48 Whilst Northumberland has housing stock specifically designated as sheltered or older persons housing, the provision of additional retirement, sheltered housing and extra-care housing will need to be considered to meet the increasing demand for this type of accommodation. Older people have specific housing needs, in terms of design, type, and location. Flexible or adaptable housing types (lifetime housing) may meet the requirements of older people and people with disabilities, allowing them to remain in their homes for longer. New technologies such as ‘telecare’ can support this, but some vulnerable groups may require support or tailored housing solutions.

6.49 To enable older people and those with disabilities to access services and facilities, it is important that the location of housing to meets their requirements is considered. Centrally located sites in key settlements may provide better access to health, leisure, education and transport facilities.

Question 23

Should the Core Strategy include a criteria based policy to guide the provision of housing sites and the supply of accommodation which is particularly well suited to older people and people with disabilities?

Provision of Traveller sites

6.50 The Government has a duty to ‘facilitate the gypsy way of life’ for ethnic Gypsies and Travellers under the Human Rights Act. An increasing need for the provision of permanent pitches but also transit sites has been identified. Government guidance aims to increase significantly the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations, with local authorities being required to provide for a five year supply of pitches with at least broad locations identified for later years. The Council will monitor provision in line with national policy, recognising that in the absence of a five year supply local authorities are required to look favourably on applications for temporary planning permissions. The Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2008) identified the permanent pitch provision to 2018 shown in table 6.4.
Table 6.4 Requirements for Gypsy and Traveller permanent pitch provision to 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
<th>Number of permanent pitches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Northumberland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Northumberland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Northumberland</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.51 It also noted the need for a network of stopping off places throughout Northumberland. In addition, to permanent pitch provision the council is working towards the provision of eight transit pitches in south east Northumberland. The evidence does not extend beyond 2018 and further work will be required to inform future versions of the plan.

6.52 National planning policy\(^{18}\) includes criteria to guide the allocation of sites for gypsies and travellers where a need is identified, or as a basis for determining planning applications. The Northumberland Core Strategy is not required to reformulate these criteria.

Question 24

Do you agree the Core Strategy should include the targets set out in table 6.4 to provide additional pitches for gypsy and traveller sites?
7. Developing a resilient economy

7.1 Despite growth and diversification of Northumberland’s economy over the past 30 years it still faces a number of challenges, such as growing private sector employment and increasing wealth and business start-ups. The economy does however have core strengths and opportunities in key sectors such as tourism, high-tech manufacturing, and low carbon industry. To enable existing businesses to grow and attract new investment in Northumberland, the Core Strategy needs to address the following key issues:

- The supply of employment land;
- Future spatial distribution of land;
- Providing for the strategically important low carbon sector;
- Rural businesses;
- Tourism development.

The supply of employment land

7.2 It is important that Northumberland has an appropriate supply of land identified and available for economic development.

7.3 There is currently about 354 hectares allocated and available for general employment use (industrial/office parks and sites used by a single company) across the county.

7.4 To assess future land requirements the Northumberland Employment Land Review (2011) (ELR) looked at economic growth forecasts, past land take-up and recent employment land lost to other uses. This established a general employment land requirement for the period to 2030 of around 293 to 317 hectares based on a forecast growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) of 2% per annum across the plan period although it recognised that in the period to 2015 slightly lower levels of employment will be achieved. This means that there is presently a modest oversupply of land.

7.5 Additionally, developing low carbon and renewable industries is a priority for the Council, and evidence confirms strong potential that this land hungry employment sector could prosper within the county. This is not fully factored into land demand forecasts given that they are based on the current economy. It is therefore proposed that additional land is needed to provide for this.

Question 25

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should plan for the range of 293 to 317 hectares of general employment land; if not what alternative figure should be provided?

Question 26

Should the Council make specific strategic employment land provision for the low carbon and renewables sector?
Future spatial distribution of employment land

7.6 The Core Strategy must ensure the supply and type of land is appropriate to meet forecast needs and flexible enough to cater for changing economic circumstances. Existing supply is not necessarily in the places where demand for land is currently strong or new employment sectors wish to locate.

7.7 The Employment Land Review concluded the following about the land supply in each Delivery Area:

- South East Northumberland Delivery Area - Although a lot of the sites are considered to be high quality, some are not matched to demand and/or are judged to be undeliverable or unsustainably located. Others appear under used and would benefit from efforts to recycle land and premises. There is also a large amount of expansion land north of the River Blyth, which could lead to an over-supply of general employment land in the long term. This has the potential to provide for low carbon industries.
- North Delivery Northumberland Area - Generally supply is well matched to current levels of demand, with good quality land within settlements and many important rural employment sites. However, potentially some additional land could be required later in the plan period. There is also a possible oversupply around Berwick-upon-Tweed which could impact on the aim of redeveloping previously developed sites.
- South and West Northumberland Delivery Area - There is a split between the Tyne Valley and the east of the Delivery Area. The Tyne Valley has clear shortage of available land, especially around Hexham, Prudhoe and Ponteland. In the east of this Delivery Area much of the land is also seen as unlikely to attract private investment for employment use, or has complex deliverability issues, such as some sites around Morpeth.

7.8 Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for its allocated employment use the allocation will be reviewed. Where this results in de-allocation or alternative land use allocations the Council will allocate appropriate new sites to ensure a robust and feasible employment land supply is provided. The following changes are proposed:

Table 7.1 Suggested changes to the land portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Suggested de-allocations (hectares)</th>
<th>Potential new land requirement (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Northumberland</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West...</td>
<td>-74</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Northambe...</td>
<td>-45</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.9 To create the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone strategic employment area (see figure 7.2) it is proposed to de-allocate some land, and allocate some which is better located to provide for the low carbon sector. This will also involve re-designating about
7. Developing a resilient economy

175 hectares of expansion land north of the River Blyth (currently part of the ‘Cambois Zone of Economic Opportunity’ which is not included in the ‘current land supply shown in figure 7.1) as ‘available’ and create a new strategic employment area of about 188 hectares.

7.10 The West Hartford site in North Cramlington is now proposed to accommodate some ‘general employment’ use, but also, on a large portion, retain its previous role as a prestige inward investment site.

7.11 Where evidence suggests the possible need for new land, this will require further work to identify the best locations in line with the overall approach to strategic development and spatial distribution options. However it is clear that around Hexham, Prudhoe, and Ponteland this could necessitate a review of the Green Belt boundary. Figure 7.1 shows the possible future distribution of employment land, which is based on meeting objectively assessed needs with additional targeted growth around the low carbon sector in the South East Northumberland Delivery Area.

Question 27

Is the spatial distribution of land in figure 7.1 appropriate, if not how should employment land be distributed?
Figure 7.1 Possible future spatial distribution of available employment land

7. Developing a resilient economy
7. Developing a resilient economy

Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) strategic employment area for low carbon industries

7.12 Moving to a low carbon economy and becoming an exporter of green technology and energy is a strategic economic priority for the county.

7.13 BEREZ was established in 2010, a private/public sector partnership, including the Council, to support investment in the low carbon sector. It is based around six development sites north and south of the River Blyth part of which has recently been granted ‘Enterprise Zone’ status. This will significantly enhance prospects for future investment, capitalising on:

- The National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) is the centre of excellence for the development, testing, and commercialisation of renewable technologies;
- Existing deep water port facilities and marine engineering skills;
- Proximity to sites in the North Sea identified as potential sites for off-shore wind energy production by the Round 3 Programme; (19)
- The potential for a ‘clean coal’ power station north of the River Blyth.

7.14 This opportunity needs to be supported with an appropriate supply of land. It is therefore proposed to create a strategic employment area to integrate the BEREZ sites and add new land, including the land currently within the Cambois Zone of Economic Opportunity.

Question 28

Do you consider that the identified BEREZ area will best serve the strategic objective of developing the low carbon sector?

19 A programme undertaken by The Crown Estates to identify sites for offshore wind farms around the UK. The largest of the nine zones identified, Dogger Bank, is located off the North East coastline.
Figure 7.2 Proposed Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) strategic employment area
Rural businesses

7.15 The identified spatial strategy will result in planned employment development being focused on the tier 1 and tier 2 settlements. However, there needs to be a balanced spatial approach to economic growth, recognising the diversity of Northumberland’s urban and rural communities and economies to support a prosperous rural economy. A great deal of businesses and jobs operate from small settlements, the countryside and from home.

7.16 Traditional rural industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing) currently employ about 5,000 people (5.1% of the workforce) in over 2,000 businesses. It is forecast that this level of economic activity will remain steady or grow slightly to 2030. Farm diversification into activities such as specialist food and drink and services for tourism are important for continuing viability. Equine businesses, both recreational and breeding, add an estimated £23 million each year to Northumberland’s economy also.

7.17 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.

7.18 The Core Strategy needs to support the continued diversification of the rural economy through:

- **Re-use of existing buildings** - Primarily within or on the edge of existing small settlements, but acknowledging re-use of buildings in the open countryside could also be acceptable if there are no harmful impacts.
7. Developing a resilient economy

- **New build development** - Within and adjoining existing settlements well designed new build economic development, including live/work units, will be supported if existing premises are not available.
- **Farm diversification, equine businesses and other land based industries**

### Question 29

Do you agree with the Council’s proposed approach to rural businesses; are there other elements we need to consider?

#### Tourism development

**7.19** Tourism employment and revenue are expected to experience high growth over the plan period. Employment in ‘hotels, restaurants and recreation’ alone is forecast to expand by 32%, adding around 4,550 jobs by 2030. The industry is dispersed due to the location of the County’s attractions and trends in outdoor pursuits. As a result tourism development may be needed in locations away from higher tier settlements and transport hubs.

7.20 Tourism development can, however, bring various benefits through, for example, the renovation of historic properties or positive transformations of large tracts of countryside. It may also fund improvements to transport, as well as adding local jobs and increasing local spending. It is proposed that the overall approach should cover development within or next to a settlement and development in the open countryside.
7. Developing a resilient economy

7.21 Development within or next to a settlement: Tourism development, both attractions and accommodation, in permanent buildings should be encouraged, in the first instance, to be located within or adjacent to the county’s larger settlements or service centres. Re-use of existing buildings for new businesses and the upgrading and expansion of existing facilities should be prioritised, but it is recognised that this might not always be possible, or needed.

7.22 For tourist accommodation proposals on the edge of a settlement the Council could assess these based on the benefits that would be delivered, given the pressing need for more bed spaces, and the effect on viability and vitality of any effected settlement. The sequential approach would not be applied.

7.23 Development in the open countryside: Tourism development in the open countryside is the most difficult area in which to achieve a balance between positively encouraging growth of tourism and wider planning objectives. The following principles are therefore being proposed - encouraging growth of tourism and wider planning objectives. The following principles are therefore being proposed:

- **New build tourist accommodation in permanent buildings** – in the open countryside and smaller settlements will not generally be supported. However, some major tourist attractions will inevitably need complementary accommodation. Therefore it is proposed that accommodation in the open countryside linked to large scale tourism developments may be supported if the need is proven and not outweighed by any adverse impacts;

- **Building conversion for tourist accommodation** - Rural guest houses, hotels, cottages, inns, and hostels are also an essential part of Northumberland’s accommodation offer. Therefore acceptable conversion of buildings in the open countryside for visitor accommodation should be supported, especially if this brings redundant buildings back into economic use through sensitive reconstruction. The Core Strategy could also support extensions to such existing accommodation where the scale and design is appropriate to the setting and where it would ensure the future viability of the business;

- **Accommodation not in permanent buildings (i.e. camping, caravan and chalet parks)** – This type of accommodation can be damaging to the character of landscapes, and in rural areas the added light pollution can be intrusive. Small scale developments should be supported in areas of open countryside or next to small settlements provided they are not prominent in the landscape and have high quality landscaping. Sensitive landscapes and areas prone to flooding should be avoided;

- **Tourist facilities and attractions** – Such development should wherever possible be located in existing buildings. However, if facilities are required in relation to particular countryside attractions and reuse of buildings is not feasible then appropriate small scale development could be supported. Any large scale developments such as new visitor attractions would need to be assessed on the merits of each application in terms of economic development and possible harmful impacts.
Question 30

Should the Core Strategy include a criteria based policy for tourism development based on the principles specified?

Strategic tourism areas

7.24 It is proposed that the Core Strategy identifies a number of ‘strategic tourism areas’. The approach and the potential areas are:

- **Kielder Water and Forest Park**: The scale and character of the landscape offers unique opportunities for tourism development which may be of a scale unacceptable in other areas of open countryside elsewhere in the county. It has the potential to grow further based on water and forest recreational activities and as a focus for night sky interpretation. The Core Strategy could support this by supporting new build tourism development at a larger scale than other areas of the county;

- **Hadrian’s Wall Corridor**: The approach to Hadrian’s Wall is set out in the built and historic environment section. It is recognised that an area close to Haltwhistle has been proposed for a wall visitor centre and this hinterland development should be supported;

- **North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**: The national approach to AONBs gives great weight to preserving landscape and scenic beauty in planning decisions and major developments should not take place except in exceptional circumstances. The North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2009-14 states that the national policy approach is generally supported by businesses in the AONB. However economic opportunity from tourism is recognised in the plan, and so there is a need to establish new, and support existing, high quality tourism development, balanced with the wider AONB objectives. Opportunities will most likely be based on outdoor recreation, culture, heritage, wildlife, and geotourism;

- **Northumberland Coast**: The entire Northumberland Coast could be a strategic tourism area, given the diversity of landscapes and attractions, as well as the central role it plays in attracting visitors. The area includes the coast of south east Northumberland, although a boundary cannot be defined at this time, and is proposed
in view of its unique mixed coastal/industrial landscape and recent investment in visitor attractions which could drive future growth. Central to the proposed strategic area is the Northumberland Coast AONB and the Berwickshire and North Northumberland European Marine Site (EMS) as well as remaining parts of the Heritage Coast not covered by the above. Respective management plans support the development of visitor facilities that are in keeping with the quiet enjoyment of the countryside and marine environment. The plan also particularly supports sustainable special interest tourism\(^{(20)}\) and further provision of short-term visitor accommodation, prioritising the re-use of buildings. The Core Strategy would need to support the delivery of the statutory management plans, whilst ensuring that sufficient weight is placed on protecting and enhancing the special landscape, biodiversity, and the areas historic assets. Camping and caravan parks have the potential to be particularly harmful to these assets.

**Question 31**

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should identify the strategic tourism areas proposed and the approach outlined?
8. Town centres and retailing

8.1 The retail and leisure offer of Northumberland makes an important contribution to the county’s economy, representing a valuable source of employment.

8.2 The range and choice of goods and services, however, are predominantly focused towards meeting day-to-day retail and leisure needs being of a relatively modest scale. By contrast, Newcastle, as the regional centre, offers much greater choice and has become increasingly dominant. Whilst some success has been achieved in enhancing Northumberland’s town centres, for example the Sanderson Arcade in Morpeth, securing such investment is increasingly difficult to achieve within Northumberland.

8.3 The key issues for the Core Strategy to address are:

- The hierarchy of centres;
- The need for new shopping floorspace;
- How centres can retain their comparison shopping role as regional centres grow;
- Town centre boundaries;
- Large scale leisure provision;
- How local leisure uses can make centres vibrant;
- Office development in relation to town centres.

Hierarchy of centres

8.4 It is important to consider carefully the role and relationship of centres so that they are resilient to economic change and meet the needs of local people. The settlement role and function section has proposed twelve tier 1 settlements.

8.5 Evidence on the roles and scope for growth of the county’s centres has been gathered, much of it based on a Northumberland Town Centre and Retail Study which examined the health of centres and used household and business surveys to reach conclusions on a number of questions, including the scope for growth in shopping and leisure provision. There is a good network of centres in Northumberland but, as illustrated graphically below the retail floorspace is concentrated in seven of the twelve tier 1 settlements.
8. Town centres and retailing

Figure 8.1 Gross retail floorspaces in centres and main floorspace outside centres

8.6 As a result of the analysis, the Town Centre and Retail Study identified a centre hierarchy which is set out in table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1 Hierarchy of town/village centres proposed in the Town Centres and Retail Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Area</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South and West</th>
<th>South East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town centres</td>
<td>Alnwick Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>Morpeth Hexham</td>
<td>Ashington Blyth Cramlington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District centres</td>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>Haltwhistle Ponteland Prudhoe</td>
<td>Bedlington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local centres</td>
<td>Belford Rothbury Seahouses Wooler</td>
<td>Allendale Bellingham Corbridge Ellington Hadston Haydon Bridge Lynemouth Widdrington Station</td>
<td>Bedlington Station Guide Post Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Seaton Delaval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Shopping needs

8.7 Shopping is divided into 'convenience' goods, providing for day-to-day needs (for example food) and 'comparison' goods purchased less frequently (for example clothes, furniture, electrical goods and toys).

8.8 Most larger convenience shops are in the seven main town centres or other parts of those same towns, with some facilities in the five proposed district centres and only mini-market or village store type facilities below that. Three quarters of convenience spending of Northumberland residents stays within Northumberland, with the rest going to Tyneside, the Scottish borders or Cumbria.

8.9 By contrast, over half of spending on comparison goods goes to centres outside of Northumberland. Figure 8.2 illustrates this, showing that, for example, 68% of clothing and footwear expenditure leaves Northumberland. Forecasts show that the regional centres will continue to capture most available expenditure growth and are less likely than smaller high streets to be impacted by developments in internet shopping. Northumberland’s main towns do, however, meet certain comparison needs, with a strong presence of independent stores adding local distinctiveness.
8. Town centres and retailing

Figure 8.2 Comparison goods expenditure in Northumberland, elsewhere and online in 2009

8.10 Northumberland will need more than a 25% increase in comparison floorspace over the next 15 years just to keep its market share. Depending on how growth is distributed, there is genuine scope, for ‘claw-back’ of some of the spending currently going out of the county. (21)

Tier 1 centres – shopping needs

8.11 Table 8.2 provides a summary of identified shopping needs for the tier 1 settlements to 2026. Tables 8.3 and 8.4 then outline potential ranges by which convenience and comparison floorspace could grow if centres retain existing shares of local spending. It also gives the scope for clawing back leaking trade.

Table 8.2 Summary of the findings for the Tier 1 centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Summary of findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>Significant additions on both the convenience and comparison side will be needed to retain market share but physical capacity is restricted for large format stores in or near the centre, meaning that growth will need careful planning. The centre has a good level of independent shops but would benefit from improvements in quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

21 A shortage of reliable data on visitors’ spending meant that the Town Centre and Retail Study did not make specific allowance for its possible boosting effect on centres like Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Hexham and Morpeth. An allowance could nevertheless be built into future planning criteria.
### Centre | Summary of findings
--- | ---
**Berwick** | Recent supermarket development means that there is no identified need for additional convenience floorspace. More comparison space is needed over time, especially if not all proposals proceed. High-quality, well-sited additions close to the town centre would benefit residents and visitors.

**Ashington** | In spite of the new ASDA store, there will be significant scope for more shopping as the period progresses, so convenience and comparison market shares can be retained. Scope for clawback and a need for more quality and choice. The Ashington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document has identified central sites for additions to the town centre.

**Blyth** | Significant town centre additions will be needed both to retain and to draw back all types of trade. The proposed reconfiguration of the existing town centre supermarket will help, as would other possible opportunities that have been identified, such as a possible expansion of Keel Row.

**Cramlington** | Despite it’s mall and retail park, Cramlington retains a relatively low percentage of comparison spending, as it is close to Tyneside, and will need significant additions to retain and possibly claw back trade. Additional food shopping floorspace is less needed but would add to choice.

**Morpeth** | Sanderson Arcade has raised the retention of local expenditure and added quality. The additional supermarket under construction should avoid losses in convenience market share. Further developments in the plan period may also help meet identified needs but would need to be carefully planned and in a suitable location to avoid undermining recent gains.

**Hexham** | Retains more than half of local comparison expenditure, more than most places in Northumberland. Comparison additions will be needed to avoid leakage increasing over the plan period. The existing supermarkets are generally undertrading therefore there is little or no opportunity for further supermarket development.

**District Centres (Amble, Bedlington, Haltwhistle, Ponteland, Prudhoe)** | These centres have lower levels of supermarket floorspace which under-trades, except for Prudhoe. There are significant proposals to expand food shopping in Amble, Prudhoe and Bedlington but they would rely on re-attracting spending that flows out. On the comparison side, very little spending stays in these centres.

8.12 This translates into the following potential requirements for additional retail floorspace to 2026 based on varying assumptions on how the retail need could be met.
### Table 8.3 Simplified summary of scope for additional convenience floorspace in twelve Northumberland centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town / District Centre</th>
<th>Scope for growth based on existing market share (square metres)</th>
<th>Scope to increase market share (‘claw-back’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By 2014</td>
<td>By 2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>500 to 1,300</td>
<td>950 to 2,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>300 to 600</td>
<td>1,100 to 2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedlington</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>2,100 to 4,300</td>
<td>3,400 to 6,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>200 to 400</td>
<td>900 to 1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponteland</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>300 to 600</td>
<td>450 to 900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8.4 Simplified summary of scope for additional comparison floorspace in twelve Northumberland centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town / District Centre</th>
<th>Scope for growth based on existing market share (square metres)</th>
<th>Scope to increase market share (‘claw-back’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By 2014</td>
<td>By 2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>300 to 1,650</td>
<td>3,000 to 7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>50 to 150</td>
<td>350 to 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>0 to 950</td>
<td>3,000 to 7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedlington</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,300 to 9,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>900 to 2,400</td>
<td>6,600 to 17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>0 to 150</td>
<td>4,150 to 10,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>100 to 250</td>
<td>400 to 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>0 to 300</td>
<td>4,400 to 11,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ponteland</td>
<td>100 to 300</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe</td>
<td>100 to 200</td>
<td>500 to 1,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.13  The right hand column of tables 8.3 and 8.4 show how some tier 1 centres could improve market share by seeking to claw-back some spending from elsewhere:

- For convenience shopping there is scope for claw back in Alnwick, Prudhoe, Haltwhistle and Amble with some possibility elsewhere;

- On the comparison side the scope for claw-back is most marked in the three main south east Northumberland towns of Cramlington, Ashington and Blyth, and Ponteland and Prudhoe.

8.14  Based on this, and updated evidence, the Council could plan positively for needed expansions, identifying suitable town centre extension opportunities once growth requirements have been agreed. Since these will rely on some claw-back, this could affect trade in other centres within the county as well as beyond. National guidance sets out how Councils should assess such impacts. However, the Core Strategy will need to cover the local dimension – e.g. effects on already planned improvements in the same or another centre.

Question 32

Do you agree that the additional retail floorspace outlined in tables 8.3 and 8.4 provide an appropriate basis for planning future shopping provision?

Increasing comparison retail floorspace

8.15  For comparison shopping, with the ever-increasing dominance of regional centres, the Council will need to take a highly innovative approach to how expansion can be secured and spending retained. Table 8.5 sets out three possible strands.

Table 8.5 A strategy for attracting comparison spending to Northumberland's centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element 1: Significant additions to existing centres</td>
<td>Maximise opportunities to secure investment in new purpose-built shopping centres well linked with the existing primary shopping areas of town centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element 2: Bulky goods</td>
<td>Seek to accommodate bulky goods outlets of an appropriate scale, where this would achieve spending retention and/or claw-back, and there are suitable locations well related to town centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element 3: Supermarkets</td>
<td>Allow for any new supermarkets proposed, subject to National Planning Policy Framework tests, to accommodate a significant element of comparison floorspace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Town centres and retailing

Question 33
Is the Council’s strategy for securing additional comparison retail floorspace as specified at table 8.5 the right one?

Identifying town centres and primary shopping areas

8.16 The NPPF is clear that authorities need to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres. At present all town and district centres have variously defined boundaries.

8.17 In relation to the seven main town centres the Northumberland Town Centre and Retail Study has boundaries for town centres and primary shopping areas, as shown in Appendix 2. Comments are invited on these at this stage.

Question 34
Should the Core Strategy define boundaries for the seven main town centres and have we correctly identified the boundaries shown in Appendix 2?

8.18 In the five district centres of Bedlington, Prudhoe, Haltwhistle, Amble and Ponteland, there is less of a distinction between shopping areas and other uses. Therefore, it will be more appropriate to have a single town centre boundary. Current plans define boundaries, based on varying criteria and it will be important to review these in the Delivery Development Plan Document.

The leisure offer in town and district centres

8.19 Figure 8.3 shows clearly that people travel beyond the County boundary to participate in different leisure activities. Participation levels in certain activities are particularly low due to the lack of suitable facilities within Northumberland. The data is from 2009 and since then a ten pin bowling facility has opened in Hexham.
Larger-scale leisure facilities

8.20 Some leisure facilities like cinemas and ten pin bowling typically have a wider catchment than a single market town. At present, Northumberland caters for just 12% of its cinema going residents and participation levels are below national and regional averages.\(^{(22)}\) If shortfalls are to be addressed satisfactorily throughout the plan period, they should be met somewhere in south-east Northumberland, the most densely populated and accessible area of the county. All three of the town centres (Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington) are likely to have the physical capacity to accommodate such facilities, a site or sites to be identified through the Delivery Development Plan Document.

Question 35

Do you agree the Core Strategy should include a policy to encourage delivery of large scale leisure facilities in south east Northumberland?

\(^{(22)}\) The creation of a 9 screen complex at Cramlington, which received permission in late 2011, should help to compensate for this.
8. Town centres and retailing

Local leisure provision and non-retail uses in centres

8.21 Most of Northumberland’s town centres have indoor leisure centres and/or swimming pools reasonably near their shopping areas so there are no outstanding requirements. (23)

8.22 Other types of local leisure facilities such as restaurants and clubs are interspersed with shops, markets and other uses within town centres. This integration is vital to the success of Northumberland town centres in terms of both daytime activities and the evening economy. It is important also to recognise that these businesses and facilities cater for visitors as well as residents, a successful example of this being The Maltings in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Opportunities for improvement have been identified in Ashington and Cramlington specifically.

8.23 Non-retail uses on shopping streets add vibrancy to Northumberland’s centres. At present the seven main centres all have ‘frontage policies’ seeking to keep a high percentage of frontages in Use Class ‘A1’ retail use in key parts of town centres, rather than allowing potentially complementary uses such as cafés, restaurants, bars, takeaways, betting shops, offices etc. Some second tier centres also have these policies.

8.24 The government has accepted most recommendations in the recent ‘Portas Review’ (24) including addressing the restrictive aspects of the ‘Use Class’ system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street, in defining frontage and town centre policies an opportunity, therefore, exists for the Council to promote a diverse retail offer and introduction of complementary uses. This could be achieved through the introduction of a criteria based policy to changes of use within defined retail frontages.

Question 36

Do you agree the Core Strategy should support small scale visitor and leisure facilities in town centres and incorporate a criteria based approach to determine proposals for change of use from retail within defined shopping areas?

23 The Northumberland Sports Facilities Strategy 2010
24 See the ‘Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets 2011’ and ‘High Streets the Heart of our Communities: the Government's Response to the Mary Portas Review’ March 2012
Office accommodation in town centres

8.25 The NPPF defines offices as a main town centre use. As such, the sequential approach applies, albeit with increased flexibility on the definition of an edge of centre site, within 500m of a public transport interchange. Northumberland’s office market has been boosted by the success of purpose built office parks outside defined centres. These are considered to be appropriate where frequent public access is not a requirement. In addition, small scale rural office schemes, which are not subject to town centre tests, have also been successful at attracting investment and jobs and form an important element of delivering a prosperous rural economy.

8.26 All these factors suggest that, in a Northumberland context, while the Council will need to apply a ‘sequential approach’ that gives preference to town centres for office development wherever possible, there will be occasions when other locations can be chosen. Even where central sites are available, the high cost of developing offices means that it may only be viable to do so as part of a mixed use development, with offices being secondary to higher value land uses such as retail. As such mixed use schemes proposed for town centres should be encouraged to include some office accommodation.

Question 37

Beyond defined centres should the Core Strategy strictly apply the sequential test to office uses or be more flexible to secure investment in accessible locations?
9. Green Belt

9.1 Northumberland has an existing Green Belt adjoining that in North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead and County Durham, the purpose being to:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land;(26)

9.2 The Core Strategy will, therefore, need to consider the following key issues in relation to Northumberland’s Green Belt:

- Existing Green Belt boundaries;
- Establishing a Green Belt extension around Morpeth;
- Treatment of Green Belt settlements; and
- Previously developed land and major developed sites.
9. Green Belt

General extent and boundaries

9.3 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The general extent of the Green Belt together with an extension around Morpeth is already established. This is illustrated on figure 9.1 below.

Figure 9.1 Green Belt in Northumberland

9.4 National guidance confirms that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, the boundaries needing to have a permanence enduring beyond the plan period. Within Northumberland a strategic extension to the Green Belt at Morpeth, has been long proposed to:\(^{(27)}\)

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

9.5 For these reasons, through the Core Strategy, the Council proposes to define the Green Belt extension at Morpeth.

9.6 It is recognised that, elsewhere, a localised review of the Green Belt may be required to ensure the overall vision is achieved. The Council proposes that this be done as part of the Core Strategy process and would welcome early submission of any potential Green Belt boundary alterations recognising that in some instances this may be necessary to ensure development needs can be met. The Council also proposes, in accordance with the NPPF, to plan positively to enhance beneficial uses of the existing Green Belt and, once it is defined, the Green Belt extension.

Question 38
Do you agree with the Council’s general approach to Green Belt?

Defining Green Belt boundaries to Morpeth

9.7 The general extent of the proposed Green Belt extension around Morpeth has previously been defined as:

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

9.8 The plan in figure 9.2 illustrates potential outer Green Belt boundaries to the proposed extension around Morpeth.

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28 Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan 2002 to 2016, First Alteration, Policy S5
Figure 9.2 Proposed Green Belt extension outer boundary options around Morpeth

9. Green Belt
Question 39

Is the proposed approach to the outer Morpeth Green Belt boundary appropriate? Do you have a preference for Option 1 or Option 2?

9.9 In defining the inner Green Belt boundary around Morpeth the Council’s approach is to consider a balance between:

- Meeting development needs as a tier 1 settlement;
- Environmental, landscape and green infrastructure factors that attract people to visit, work and live in Morpeth, particularly the River Wansbeck corridor; and
- Ensuring permanence beyond the plan period.

9.10 Recent Government approval of funding for the Morpeth northern bypass is expected to unlock the potential of the St George’s Hospital Growth Point area, with potential capacity of 450 dwellings. Conditional approval for 250 dwellings adjacent to Northgate Hospital is similarly noted. Some of these factors are identified on the plan below.

Figure 9.3 Morpeth’s environmental, landscape and infrastructure factors
9.11 In defining a Green Belt boundary around Morpeth the Council’s general approach is to avoid the town merging:

- To the north east with Pegswood;
- To the south east with Hepscott; and
- To the south with Clifton.

9.12 We therefore propose the following principles for defining Morpeth’s Green Belt inner boundary:

- Western boundary tightly drawn to existing settlement edge between existing developments and Morpeth Common to maintain the Wansbeck green infrastructure corridor;
- Southern boundary to retain the rural character of the rising ground to the south and maintain separation from Clifton and Hepscott;
- Eastern boundary tightly drawn to the existing settlement edge to maintain the Wansbeck green infrastructure corridor and separation from Pegswood; and
- Northern boundary drawn with regard to the bypass route, Northgate Hospital, environmental designations around Howburn Wood and separation from Pegswood.

9.13 The precise inner Morpeth Green Belt boundary will be defined through the next version of the Core Strategy.

**Question 40**

Is the proposed approach to defining the inner Morpeth Green Belt boundary appropriate?

**Treatment of Green Belt settlements**

9.14 To ensure that settlements within the Northumberland Green Belt can accommodate appropriate development the following approach is proposed, which is in accordance with the proposed spatial approach:

- Tier 1 and 2 settlements are to be excluded from the Green Belt with an inset boundary to allow development or expansion appropriate to the role and function of the settlement;
9. Green Belt

- Tier 3 and 4 settlements are to be reviewed as the plan evolves and through the Delivery Development Plan Document and will either be inset or included in the Green Belt (washed over); and

- Tier 5 settlements are to be included in the Green Belt (washed over) to allow no new building other than for appropriate land use exemptions.

9.15 These principles would apply equally to any Green Belt extension around Morpeth. Where expansion may be required, for example in tier 1 and 2 settlements, inset boundaries will be defined to identify safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt to meet longer-term development needs.

**Question 41**

Do you agree with the proposed treatment of settlements within the existing and proposed Northumberland Green Belt? Please outline any exceptions if you consider an alternative approach would be appropriate.

**Previously developed land and major developed sites**

9.16 A number of major developed sites are identified in existing policies where limited infill development is considered appropriate but the Green Belt notation is carried across the site (they are washed over). The NPPF now considers infilling or the partial or complete development of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use, as appropriate development. That is provided the development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it. Therefore, the Council’s proposed approach is that the Core Strategy should not designate existing or potential major developed sites in the Green Belt but should continue to allow the Green Belt to wash over them and apply national policy.

**Question 42**

Should the Council rely on national planning policy in relation to previously developed sites in the Green Belt?
10. Mineral resources

10.1 Minerals are a defining aspect of Northumberland’s heritage, particularly coal mining. With significant identified mineral resources, Northumberland has the potential to make a contribution to national and local needs for minerals, notably aggregates (crushed rock, sand and gravel) and coal. The Core Strategy has an important role in guiding and managing future extraction and potential land use conflicts. Key issues for the Core Strategy are:

- Managing coal extraction;
- Meeting demand for aggregate extraction;
- Managing other extractive industries;
- Managing the effects of mineral working on communities and the environment;
- Safeguarding mineral resources; and
- Site restoration.

Managing coal extraction

10.2 Northumberland has a long history of coal extraction and continues to make a significant contribution to national coal supply. Demand for coal is likely to continue over the plan period and the coal resource in Northumberland has the potential to assist in meeting this demand, subject to confirming the environmental and social acceptability of proposals for extraction. The Core Strategy has a role in guiding where future extraction could be acceptable and how proposals should be determined given the potentially significant effects of surface coal mining.

10.3 The coal resource in Northumberland, which is found across extensive areas of the County, has been spilt into the following principal sub-areas as illustrated on Figure 10.1:

- South East Northumberland resource area;
- Tyne/Derwent watershed resource area; and
- The outlying resource areas at Midgeholme, Plenmeller and Stublick.

10.4 The principal resource areas\(^{(29)}\) represent the areas of coal where extraction is more economically viable due to the closely spaced nature of the resource. An additional subsidiary resource area is also identified (Lower Carboniferous areas) although extraction is unlikely to be commercially viable through the plan period.

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\(^{(29)}\) The principal and subsidiary coal resource areas are defined in ‘BGS/DETR (2000) Mineral Resource Information for Development Plans - Northumberland and Tyne and Wear: Resources and Constraints’
10. Mineral resources

Figure 10.1 Coal resource areas in Northumberland
10.5 The south east Northumberland resource area is the most significant ‘principal coal resource area’ in Northumberland. This resource area stretches from Amble in the north to the boundaries with Newcastle and North Tyneside in the south. This area has been the source of the majority of coal production from Northumberland over many years.

10.6 The Tyne/Derwent watershed area is in the south of Northumberland and forms the watershed between the respective rivers. This resource area forms part of the wider Northumberland coalfield. Although there has been no recent surface coal extraction in this area there is continued interest.

10.7 Finally, there are three outlying principal coal resource areas in the south-west of Northumberland:

- Stublick is located within the North Pennines AONB;
- Plenmeller was extensively worked in the 1990s meaning that remaining reserves are limited and new proposals are unlikely to come forward; and
- Midgeholme is located north of the North Pennines AONB but forms part of its setting. There are also significant nature conservation designations that are located to the south and east of the Midgeholme resource area.

10.8 The Council has previously identified areas of constraint where minerals working would not be acceptable. This approach has, however, been successfully challenged at appeal, through the Shotton decision. The Council, therefore, considers there are two potential approaches for managing coal extraction through the Core Strategy.

10.9 The first approach would be to consider proposals on an individual basis assessed against the principles set out in national planning policy but applied locally. This confirms that sites for coal extraction will not be permitted unless they are environmentally acceptable or, if not, provide local and community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts. The Council considers this approach is appropriate within the Stublick, Plenmeller, Midgeholme and subsidiary resource areas.
10. Mineral resources

10.10 The second approach would identify broad areas of search having regard to, amongst other aspects, the environmental considerations mapping work that has been carried out. In defining areas of search this would potentially increase pressure for coal extraction within those areas but could provide industry and community with more certainty over potentially acceptable locations to 2030. The Council considers this approach would only be appropriate within the south east Northumberland and Tyne/Derwent watershed resource areas.

Question 43

Should the Core Strategy rely on national policy on coal extraction for the determination of proposals and/or should broad areas of search be identified where future extraction may be appropriate?

Meeting demand for aggregates extraction

10.11 Aggregates are hard, granular materials used either on their own or with other materials for concrete, mortar, roadstone, asphalt, railway ballast, drainage courses and bulk fill. The principal aggregate minerals in Northumberland are igneous rock, Carboniferous limestone, and sand and gravel.

10.12 The key igneous rock resource is the Whin Sill, located around Belford and Alnwick and to the north of Hexham. The Carboniferous limestone resources are associated with the Whin Sill found in the south and west of the county to the north east of Hexham. Sand and gravel resources are found along the Tyne Valley and in the Coquet, Breamish, Glen and Till valleys.

10.13 The government sets national and regional guidelines to ensure a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals for the construction industry. The most recent guidelines cover the period from 2005 to 2020. The North East Aggregates Working Party advises that Northumberland should seek to make provision for 33.6 million tonnes of crushed rock and 13.1 million tonnes of sand and gravel over the 16 year period from 2005 to 2020. For the Core Strategy it is proposed that the requirements be annualised and rolled forward to 2030.

Crushed rock

10.14 The recommended crushed rock apportionment for Northumberland equates to a required average annual production of 2.1 million tonnes. There are sufficient reserves in Northumberland with planning permission to meet this requirement up to and beyond 2030. The Core Strategy, however, needs to be flexible to maintain capacity as there are a number of sites with planning permissions that are due to expire during the plan period and reserves within individual sites have the potential to be exhausted.

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30 National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision, 2005 to 2020
31 This equates to a requirement of 54.6 million tonnes of crushed rock and 21.3 million tonnes of sand and gravel to 2030
32 The permitted crushed rock reserves at 31 December 2010 were 79.1 million tonnes and this equates to a landbank for 37.7 years at a rate of production of 2.1 million tonnes per year. Information on the reserves of crushed rock with planning permission for extraction is taken from the Annual Aggregates Monitoring Report
10.15 It is therefore proposed that the Core Strategy incorporate a policy which allows extensions to existing quarries (both physical and extensions of time) and allows limited new quarries where these would maintain productive capacity and the balance between supply areas. In all instances proposals would be considered in relation to their environmental effects and implications for local communities.

**Question 44**

Do you agree the Core Strategy should plan for extensions to existing quarries, and new crushed rock quarries, where the environmental and community effects are acceptable?

**Sand and gravel**

10.16 The recommended sand and gravel apportionment for Northumberland equates to an average annual production of 818,750 tonnes. Current reserves provide just under 12 years of production. While this is above the minimum landbank indicator for sand and gravel, there will be a need to release further sand and gravel reserves in Northumberland later in the plan period.

10.17 Three approaches for considering the future locations of sand and gravel extraction for aggregate uses have been identified.

**Table 10.1 Options for future locations of sand and gravel extraction for aggregate uses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
<td>A criteria-based policy to assess proposals taking into account principles contained in national planning policy as well as factors of local significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2</td>
<td>Identify broad areas of search taking into account environmental and community considerations. This would mean avoiding those areas where there would be significant adverse impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3</td>
<td>Identify individual sites for future extraction to meet the identified shortfall in the latter part of the plan period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 The permitted sand and gravel reserves at 31 December 2010 were 9.5 million tonnes and this equates to a landbank for 11.6 years at a rate of production of 818,750 tonnes per year. Information on the reserves of sand and gravel with planning permission for extraction is taken from the Annual Aggregates Monitoring Report.
10. Mineral resources

10.18 As with minerals extraction the identification of areas of search, or even specific sites, would provide early certainty over future extraction plans. By contrast, a criteria based policy would enable operators and the Council to consider alternative proposals as opportunities are identified by the industry.

Question 45

Which of the approaches set out in table 10.1 should the core strategy take in order to plan for future sand and gravel supply for aggregate use?

Managing other extractive industries

10.19 Beyond coal and aggregates Northumberland also contains various other mineral resources. The implications of these, and options for the Core Strategy, set out below:

- **Clay** - Fireclays, brick shales and glacial clays are currently extracted in Northumberland. These are mainly used as a raw material in the manufacture of bricks, pipes and tiles. The recommended approach to planning for fireclay and brick shale provision is for supply to come from the extraction of these minerals concurrently with coal as extraction on their own is not economically viable. Additionally, there is currently one site, the Swarland Brickworks site at Thrunton\(^\text{(34)}\), with planning permission to extract glacial clays. The policy approach will be to safeguard the reserves at this site to ensure a continuity of supply to that brickworks.

- **Sandstone for building and roofing stone** - Sandstone is used as a natural building material and is important in maintaining and enhancing local built heritage and character. Demand for building stone arises in relation to specific buildings or restoration projects, making it difficult to predict demand and future land requirements over the plan period. The policy approach will be for existing quarries to continue to

\(^{34}\text{Not currently in production}\)
contribute to supply requirements and policy criteria identified to assess extensions to existing quarries and for new quarries where there is a case that the material cannot be supplied from existing quarries.

- **Peat** - National planning policy relating to peat extraction states that local development plans should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites. The Council will, therefore, resist proposals for peat extraction.

- **Oil and gas** - Oil and gas development can include conventional oil and gas and gas from coal seams and workings. Over the plan period it is not expected that proposals for oil and gas extraction will come forward as prospects for conventional oil and gas are considered to be poor and the conditions required for coalbed methane and underground coal gasification are unlikely to be met, principally due to the extensive previous working of the coal seams in Northumberland. The recommended approach to planning for oil and gas would be to consider proposals against a general minerals policy and national planning policy for oil and gas extraction.

- **Metalliferous and vein minerals** - The North Pennine Orefield extends into the south west part of Northumberland. Minerals found there include lead and zinc and the industrial minerals fluorspar, witherite and barite. Because of the overlap between where the resource is found and the North Pennines AONB and current extraction not being considered to be economically viable the proposed policy approach will be to consider proposals against national planning policy for minerals extraction and development in an AONB.

### Question 46

Should the Core Strategy provide general guidance on managing other extractive industries, including an overarching criteria based policy, together with safeguarding Swarland Brickworks and expressly not supporting peat extraction?

#### Managing the environmental effects of mineral extraction on local communities and environmental assets

**10.20** The identification of appropriate policy criteria against which planning applications can be considered is important to ensure proposals for minerals extraction are environmentally acceptable. Any Core Strategy policy would need to cover a range of factors including landscape, nature conservation, historic environment assets, agricultural land, local economy, transport, ground and surface water, the effects of noise, dust and vibration, cumulative impact from a succession of sites or from a number of sites in a locality and the effects on local communities.

**10.21** Additionally, a policy could specify minimum recommended separation distances between mineral extraction sites and residential premises and other sensitive properties to help protect local communities from the environmental effects of mineral working. The

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35 For example, schools, hospitals or residential care homes
identification of separation distances in local plan policies is not required by national planning policy. This policy approach would not allow mineral development within a recommended distance of sensitive properties unless there are local circumstances\(^{36}\) that mean working at a closer distance is acceptable. In the absence of recommended separation distances, policy criteria would be used to assess whether there is an appropriate stand-off to residential premises and other sensitive properties. Without separation distances, specific local issues, such as topography, method of working and the mitigation measures that can be applied, may be given more weight when proposals are assessed. Recommended separation distances could also push development to particular locations if development is seen as being constrained in some locations.

**Question 47**

In establishing a policy to assess the effects of minerals working on local communities and environmental assets should this include minimum separation distances?

**Safeguarding mineral resources**

10.22 National planning policy seeks to ensure known minerals resources are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral developments near the mineral resource. Local plans are required to define ‘Minerals Safeguarding Areas’ (MSAs) to identify that there are mineral resources that may be sterilised by development. MSAs carry no presumption that any areas within them will ultimately be acceptable for mineral extraction.

10.23 It is proposed to define MSAs for the following mineral resources:

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

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

\(^{36}\) For example, characteristics of working, duration of working, environmental effects likely to arise, the mitigation measures that can be applied, topography and the need to avoid the sterilisation of reserves.
10.25 The Core Strategy will need a policy to assess non-minerals development proposals within a MSA, to ensure that the presence of the mineral resource is adequately considered when assessing the acceptability of the proposal. It is important to balance the costs and benefits of safeguarding the mineral resource against those of the proposed non-mineral development.

10.26 The Core Strategy could include policy criteria that would consider:

- The value/importance of the mineral resource;
- The potential for the mineral to be extracted prior to the development taking place and the environmental implications thereof;
- Development types that will not propose a threat to mineral safeguarding;
- Temporary developments that will not impact on the potential for mineral extraction within a timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed;
- Whether the need for the proposed development outweighs the potential loss of the mineral resource; and
- The potential for an alternative location for and/or design of the development that would avoid the sterilisation of the mineral resource.

**Question 48**

Should the Core Strategy include a criteria based policy for considering development proposals within a Mineral Safeguarding Area that would be based on the factors set out above?

**Safeguarding mineral transport, processing and storage sites**

10.27 National guidance requires local development plans to safeguard sites and facilities that are important for the transportation, storage and processing of minerals.\(^{37}\)

10.28 In Northumberland key sites include the wharf and rail loading facility at Battleship Wharf at North Blyth, the railheads at the Butterwell Disposal Point site near Linton, and at the Steadsburn site near Widdrington. Rail links to minerals sites include those from the East Coast Main Line to Belford Quarry, the East Coast Main Line to the Steadsburn rail loading pad and the east coast main line to Ashington via the Butterwell Disposal Point and the Potland Burn rail loading pad. Northumberland also has a range of existing sites that are used for the manufacture of concrete and coated materials and for the handling, processing and storage of recycled and secondary aggregates. The majority of these sites are either within existing industrial areas or within active quarries.

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\(^{37}\) This includes railheads, rail links to quarries, wharves and associated storage, handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport of minerals by rail or water as well as sites for concrete batching, the manufacture of coated materials and the handling, processing and distribution of recycled and secondary aggregates.
10. Mineral resources

Question 49

Has the Council identified the appropriate facilities to be safeguarded for the transportation, storage and processing of minerals?

10.29 The Core Strategy should also incorporate a policy to assess proposals which could affect safeguarded sites including development in close proximity to them. Potential factors that could be considered are:

- The impact of the proposal on the capacity of the site for mineral processing, storage and/or transport;
- Whether the need for the proposed development outweighs the need to safeguard the site for mineral storage, processing and/or transport;
- Whether the site is no longer needed for mineral processing, storage and/or transport; and
- Whether alternative capacity for mineral storage, processing and transport facility can be provided and delivered at a different site.

Question 50

Is the proposed approach for considering development proposals affecting safeguarded mineral transport, processing and storage sites the right one?

Restoration and after-use of mineral sites

10.30 It is important that mineral extraction sites, which by their nature are temporary developments, are properly restored at the earliest opportunity and the after-use is appropriate to the site involved. National planning policy emphasises the importance of good quality restoration and aftercare and its potential contribution to enhancing the environment.

10.31 The following opportunities that can result from site restoration and afteruse have been identified:

- Creation or enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity, in particular delivery of the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan targets;
- Improvements to the landscape;
- Provision of recreational and sport facilities, and public open space;
- Creation of new woodland, including community woodlands;
10. Mineral resources

- Creation of new water environments;
- Improved public access, including new public footpaths and bridleways; and
- Agriculture and food production.

**Question 51**

Should the Core Strategy incorporate a series of principles and opportunities for reclamation of sites following minerals working; have we identified the right opportunities?
11. Managing waste

11.1 The Core Strategy needs to make appropriate provision for waste management, recycling and disposal facilities within Northumberland. The County already has a well-established and well distributed network of facilities, including the strategic facility at West Sleekburn. Whilst sustainable planning seeks to reduce waste generation key issues for the Core Strategy are:

- Managing waste;
- Determining the quantities of waste to be provided for;
- Planning for new or enhanced waste recycling and recovery capacity; and
- Planning for waste disposal.

Managing waste

11.2 Households and businesses in Northumberland all produce a range of wastes that require management. The Core Strategy has an important role in providing the sites for facilities to manage these appropriately. Current European and national policy seeks to reduce the amount of waste produced, and where it is produced increase the proportion that is re-used, recycled, composted and used to produce energy, with landfill being a last resort. This approach is in line with the concept of the waste hierarchy (see figure 11.1).

![Figure 11.1 The Waste Hierarchy](image-url)
The quantities of waste the Core Strategy needs to plan for

Municipal waste

11.3 Municipal waste includes waste from households and certain other wastes collected by the local authority. Table 11.1 provides a forecast of how much municipal waste is expected to be produced over the Core Strategy plan period and how this will be managed\(^{38}\). It is proposed to use this as the basis for determining the waste management capacity for municipal waste.

Table 11.1 Projected arisings and management of municipal waste from Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projected waste arising</th>
<th>Waste recycled(^{39})</th>
<th>Waste recovered(^{40})</th>
<th>Residual waste to landfill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>208,760</td>
<td>83,504</td>
<td>192,059</td>
<td>16,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>220,113</td>
<td>92,447</td>
<td>202,504</td>
<td>17,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024/25</td>
<td>232,081</td>
<td>99,795</td>
<td>213,515</td>
<td>18,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2029/30</td>
<td>244,698</td>
<td>110,114</td>
<td>225,122</td>
<td>19,576</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commercial and industrial waste

11.4 From a survey of businesses and their waste generation it was estimated that 213,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste was generated in Northumberland in 2009/10\(^{41}\). Table 11.2 provides projections of how much commercial and industrial waste is expected to be produced over the Core Strategy plan period.

Table 11.2 Projected arisings and management of commercial and industrial waste for Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projected arisings (tonnes)</th>
<th>Estimated reuse, recycling and recovery (tonnes)</th>
<th>Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>208,000</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>202,000</td>
<td>164,000</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024/25</td>
<td>197,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2029/30</td>
<td>193,000</td>
<td>157,000</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{38}\) The municipal waste projections from the Council’s municipal waste management contract represent the most robust information available on future municipal waste arisings. The proportion of waste landfilled is expected to fall further in future years as more waste will be managed at the facility on Teesside and this will increase the recovery rate to 92%.

\(^{40}\) Includes reuse, recycling and composting

\(^{41}\) Figure taken from North East England Commercial and Industrial Waste Survey 2009/10 (March 2011)
11. Managing waste

Other waste streams

11.5 There are a number of other waste streams in addition to municipal waste and commercial and industrial waste. Information on these waste streams is less than comprehensive and details of arisings are provided in table 11.3 it is proposed to use this as the basis of planning for provision for these wastes.

Table 11.3 Arisings of other waste streams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waste stream</th>
<th>Arisings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction and demolition wastes</td>
<td>Estimates are that Northumberland produced 818,500 tonnes of waste in 2005. However, a large proportion of this will be managed on site and will not enter licensed waste facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous wastes</td>
<td>The most up to date information for hazardous waste shows Northumberland generated 18,920 tonnes of hazardous waste in 2009. These arisings represent less than 2% of the hazardous waste arisings in North East England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural wastes</td>
<td>The Environment Agency estimated that Northumberland generated 970,000 of agricultural wastes in 2003, the vast majority this (99%) was animal matter and plant/vegetable waste and this is managed on the farm where it is generated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low level radioactive wastes</td>
<td>Nuclear sites, of which none exists in Northumberland, generate 98% of all UK arisings of low level radioactive waste with the remaining 2% generated by non-nuclear users such as hospitals, educational establishments and industrial sites. While there is no Northumberland-specific information, it is considered that the quantities will be small, especially when compared with other areas of the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewage and water treatment sludges</td>
<td>No information is available on the quantities of wastes that are generated in Northumberland. It is, however, known that the majority of these wastes are recycled through existing management arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying waste</td>
<td>No information is available on the quantities of mining and quarrying waste generated in Northumberland, although they tend to be inert and are managed on site as part of the site restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste ash from Lynemouth Power Station</td>
<td>Over 200,000 tonnes of ash is produced each year. This ash can be recycled and any ash that cannot be used is sent for storage at the adjacent ash lagoons site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.6 Drawing upon the earlier established estimates of waste generation to 2030 the Core Strategy needs to make appropriate provision for recycling, recovery and disposal.
Planning for new or enhanced waste recycling and recovery capacity

Management of municipal waste

11.7 Northumberland has a well-established and well-distributed network of facilities to manage the county’s municipal waste. These facilities are sufficient to manage municipal waste up to 2035\(^{42}\) and, as such, no new facilities are proposed.

11.8 However, it has been identified that there is an opportunity to reduce municipal waste movement by road by using rail to transport it to the Haverton Hill Energy from Waste facility on Teesside. Whilst Northumberland has a number of rail freight facilities this may require the provision of an additional facility near to the West Sleekburn facility to enable this to happen. The safeguarding of existing and potential rail freight facilities is covered in more detail in the transportation section.

Management of non-municipal wastes

11.9 Northumberland has a well-established and widely distributed network of facilities for managing commercial and industrial wastes and construction and demolition wastes with a total annual waste management capacity of over 1 million tonnes. Comparing projected arisings with the capacity there are no significant gaps in waste management capacity in Northumberland. It is, therefore, not considered necessary to identify new ‘strategic’ facilities in the Core Strategy. In terms of the waste streams identified in table 11.4, it is considered that there will be no significant new capacity requirements as a result of the existing arrangements for their management, the quantities generated and/or the need for licensed facilities to manage them.

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42 These facilities have been put in place through a long-term municipal waste management contract for Northumberland covering a 28-year period up to 2035. The contract includes the provision and operation of a range of waste management facilities that are required to manage Northumberland’s municipal waste in the period to 2035.
Table 11.4 Summary of current waste management capacity in Northumberland as at 31 December 2011 (43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility type</th>
<th>Capacity (tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composting facilities</td>
<td>136,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Waste Recovery Centres</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling, sorting and transfer facilities</td>
<td>927,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,123,870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.10 Despite this overall capacity, it is recognised that there is a lack of capacity to manage residual commercial and industrial waste in Northumberland and that over the plan period there will be opportunities to improve recycling and recovery. This will be driven by policy and legislative changes, potential business opportunities and the emergence of alternative waste management technologies. Proposals are expected to come forward over the plan period and a policy approach is needed to guide these. This will need to consider:

- The spatial distribution of the facilities;
- The types of location that would be suitable for waste facilities; and
- The criteria for considering the acceptability of individual proposals.

11.11 Where new waste management facilities are sited should reflect where the waste arises – generally the main centres of population, commercial and industrial centres and areas where new development is taking place. The main focus for new waste management facilities should, therefore, be the Tier 1 settlements and South East Northumberland. The West Sleekburn area in South East Northumberland is already recognised as a strategically important location for waste management due to the concentration of existing facilities there.

11.12 The development of waste facilities within smaller settlements, and in the more rural areas of Northumberland, may be acceptable where the proposed facility is of an appropriate scale. Examples could include small-scale community facilities, on-farm anaerobic digestion and composting facilities and construction and demolition recycling at operational quarries.

Question 52

Is the proposed spatial distribution of new waste management facilities appropriate?

43 The capacity figures in this table include capacity for municipal waste. The facilities that manage Northumberland’s municipal waste also handle other waste streams
11. Managing waste

Types of location

11.13 Based on national policy and local considerations, the preferred types of location for new or enhanced waste management facilities that the Core Strategy should identify are:

- The on-site management of waste where it arises;
- The extension of existing facilities/co-location with existing facilities;
- Designated industrial estates where the proposed development is suitable for that industrial estate in terms of its proposed design and operation; and
- Open countryside but restricted to facilities requiring open locations or where the facilities are associated with farms and are of an appropriate scale to the location.

Question 53

Are the principles for locating waste management facilities appropriate?

Acceptability criteria

11.14 The Core Strategy should have policy criteria on the siting, design and operation of new or enhanced waste management facilities, ensuring that their environmental effects are acceptable. This should include:

- The scaling and mass of the proposed development;
- The extent to which the operations are enclosed within a building
- Conflict with neighbouring land-uses, including intended future uses where applicable;
- The suitability of the road network and site access to cope with the proposed traffic movements;
- The potential effect of noise, dust and odours on nearby sensitive receptors; and
- The potential effect on the local environment.
Question 54

Do you agree with the proposed policy criteria for assessing planning applications for waste management facilities?

Waste disposal

11.15 Despite being the last option for managing waste, waste disposal will remain necessary to manage waste that it is not possible to recycle and waste left over from recycling/recovery operations. Landfill sites are split into three categories: non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill and inert landfill.

11.16 Non-hazardous landfill sites accept a range of wastes – the majority are non-inert and biodegradable. Northumberland has two such sites: Ellington Road and Seghill. These have a combined remaining capacity that would be sufficient to manage waste from Northumberland until the latter part of the plan period\(^\text{44}\), although the Seghill site is almost full and will close in 2012. This is reliant on sites in Gateshead making a significant contribution to managing residual waste from the Northumberland and Tyneside areas in the short to medium term with the Ellington Road site then making a significant contribution to this sub-regional issue from 2017 onwards. The Core Strategy will need to provide a policy framework for how the additional non-hazardous landfill capacity needed in the medium to long-term will be provided. Three potential approaches have been identified:

1. Examine opportunities for further disposal capacity at the existing sites;
2. Set out locational guidance and policy criteria; and
3. Identify areas of search for new waste disposal capacity.

11.17 One option would be to consider whether existing sites can be extended and further capacity accommodated. However, this may not be feasible or practicable, the Core Strategy may, therefore, need to set out generic policy criteria and locational guidance for such facilities and determine proposals on their respective merits. Alternatively the Core Strategy could provide early certainty on potentially suitable locations through the identification of general areas of search.

Question 55

How should the Core Strategy plan for the location of additional non-hazardous landfill capacity?

\(^{44}\) The Ellington Road and Seghill sites had a combined capacity of 1.53 million cubic metres at the start of 2010. Based on the average annual inputs to the Ellington Road and Seghill landfill sites of 214,957 tonnes between 2008 and 2011, it is estimated this capacity will be sufficient to last for at least seven years. It has been assumed that one tonne of waste will require one cubic metre of void space.
11.18 Northumberland has no regionally and nationally significant hazardous landfill sites. Northumberland produces only small quantities of hazardous waste and significant capacity remains at sites in Tees Valley (over 6 million cubic metres at the end of 2010). It is therefore considered that the Core Strategy should not make specific provision for hazardous waste landfill.

**Question 56**

Is the Council right that to 2030 the Core Strategy does not need to plan for a hazardous landfill sites within Northumberland?

11.19 The approach to inert landfill, which typically manage construction and demolition wastes such as soils, rubble, bricks and concrete, is to rely on opportunities to use materials in land reclamation schemes and the restoration of mineral extraction sites. At the current time the Council does not believe there is a requirement for a new specific inert landfill site.

**Question 57**

Is the Council right that to 2030 the Core Strategy does not need to plan for specific inert landfill sites?
12. Commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy

12.1 Within Northumberland the potential to contribute to commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy generation is well documented. This aligns with the national priority to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

12.2 Of particular note are Northumberland’s high levels of theoretical capacity to accommodate on shore wind farms and to a lesser extent biomass and hydro-power as forms of renewable energy. Similarly, the potential for clean coal at the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone, as low carbon energy generation, is also noted together with new technologies such as carbon capture and storage and coal gasification.

12.3 National guidance requires policies to be designed to plan positively for renewable and low carbon energy development. The Core Strategy and subsequent planning decisions, however, need to balance the theoretical capacity with the local effects of development on the community and environment. Of particular note are the effects onshore wind energy generation can have on valued, high quality landscapes and habitats which are an important asset of the County, notably as a tourism resource. Within Northumberland the key issues are identified as:

- Whether renewable energy targets should be established;
- Assessing renewable and low carbon energy schemes; and
- Where to deliver renewable and low carbon energy.
Renewable energy targets

12.4 National policy does not require renewable energy targets to be set locally. The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) (2009) sets out how the UK intends to derive 15% of all energy used from renewable resources by 2020. This requires that 30% of electricity demand will be supplied from renewable resources, 10% higher than that anticipated in the earlier RSS. The Renewable Energy Review (RER) (2011) further illustrates how by 2030 30% of energy and 40% of electricity could be derived from renewable resources.

12.5 Evidence shows that Northumberland’s principal contribution to renewable energy generation will be in the form of electricity, largely derived from wind. Northumberland’s significant resources are reflected in RSS targets, with 50% of the region’s operational capacity target for 2010 being allocated to the county. The capacity of energy schemes in Northumberland with planning consent (289.5 MW) exceeds the RSS operational target for 2010 of 212MW. The amount of installed capacity from commercial scale schemes, however, remains relatively low at about 24.5MW, partly due to factors beyond the reach of the local authority such as market conditions, subsidy levels and radar effect.

12.6 The RES indicates that 12% of heat demand will need to be generated from renewable sources by 2020, while the RER illustrates a scenario by which 35% can be generated nationally by 2030. District heating systems and large scale combined heat and power (CHP) plants are the main mechanisms for increasing the contribution of heat from renewable sources. Efficient schemes rely on heat being co-located with concentrated residential demand or commercial uses. As such, outwith the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, given the largely dispersed population, achieving economically viable schemes in Northumberland is likely to be challenging.

12.7 Given the rapidly changing legislative and policy framework relating to renewable energy the Council considers that a flexible approach to renewable energy should be adopted. This must reflect the Government’s positive aspiration for combating climate change and national targets for renewable energy generation. These will, however, require balance between theoretical capacity with an appraisal of local environmental and community effects, deliverability and aviation issues where relevant.

12.8 The NPPF confirms that when determining planning applications local planning authorities should not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy.

12.9 It is not, therefore, proposed to set Northumberland specific targets but to seek to meet national aspirations in respect of climate change and renewable energy generation taking into account Northumberland’s specific circumstances.

Question 58

Do you agree or disagree with the Council’s approach to contributing to the delivery of renewable energy?
12. Commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy

Assessing renewable and low carbon energy schemes

12.10 The NPPF states that applications for renewable and low-carbon energy developments should be approved if the impacts are, or can be made acceptable, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. There is also no requirement for the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy to be demonstrated.

12.11 In order to ensure that only appropriate renewable energy schemes are implemented it is proposed that the Core Strategy will include a criteria based policy as follows:

Box 1

Criteria for assessing renewable and low carbon energy schemes

a. The anticipated effects resulting from development, construction and operation such as air quality, atmospheric emissions, noise, odour, water pollution and the disposal of waste;

b. The acceptability of the location and the scale of the proposal and its visual impact in relation to the character and sensitivity of the surrounding landscape;

c. The effect on the landscape character including national and internationally designated heritage sites or landscape areas, including the impact of proposals close to their boundaries (including Northumberland National Park, Northumberland Coast AONB and North Pennines AONB);

d. The effect on nature conservation sites and features, biodiversity and geodiversity and potential effects on settings, habitats, species and the water supply and hydrology;

e. The effect on cultural heritage and archaeological features, including Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, designated Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, historic settlements and undesignated features where these are considered as having local importance;

f. Effects on the openness of the Northumberland Green Belt;

g. Accessibility by road and public transport;

h. Effect on agriculture and other land based industries;

i. Visual impact of new grid connection lines;

j. Cumulative impact of the development in relation to other similar developments; and

k. Proximity to the renewable fuel source such as wood-fuel biomass processing plants within or close to major woodlands and forests.
12. Commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy

Question 59

Is the proposed criteria approach for assessing renewable and low carbon energy developments in Northumberland, set out in box 1, the right one; if not what are the alternative criteria?

12.12 Given the significance of the wind resource, and localised environmental concerns, it is proposed that additional criteria are used to assess wind applications as follows:

Box 2

**Additional criteria for assessing commercial scale wind farm developments**

a. Proposals will only be supported when located outside the most sensitive landscapes i.e. the Northumberland Coast and North Pennines AONB and surroundings, areas at the fringe of Northumberland National Park; the Tyne gap, river valleys, prominent ridges such as the Kyloe Hills and densely populated parts of South East Northumberland;

b. potential electromagnetic interference with aircraft activity; and

c. a significantly increased risk of ‘shadow flicker’ or ‘driver distraction’.

Question 60

Should the Core Strategy include further criteria to assess commercial scale wind energy development; are the criteria in box 2 the right ones?

12.13 The Wind Turbines (Minimum Distances from Residential Premises) Bill is currently progressing through Parliament. If enacted it will require necessary minimum distances between wind turbines and residential premises to be applied, based on the height of turbines. National guidance does not, however, currently require mandatory separation distances to be set.

12.14 To address concerns relating to noise and visual amenity an option would be for the Core Strategy to guide the distance of turbines from homes and other sensitive developments. Recommended distances, rather than mandatory minimum distances, would allow local circumstances such as topography to be considered, which affect the impact of turbines.
12.15 The use of separation distances in policy could make it more difficult to refuse schemes that comply with the standards yet still have potential significant impacts. Without separation distances, specific local issues may be given more weight when applications are assessed rather than a reliance on potentially arbitrary distances when applied locally. Additionally, if development is constrained by separation distances in areas close to settlements, it may place increased pressure on remote landscapes where turbines could be more visually intrusive and have a more significant effect on the character of Northumberland’s landscape.

Question 61

In the absence of new national guidance should the Core Strategy include minimum or recommended separation distances between commercial scale wind developments and residential properties and other sensitive developments?

Where to deliver renewable and low carbon energy

12.16 Government guidance encourages the mapping of opportunity areas for renewable and low carbon development. Within Northumberland this is specifically relevant for commercial wind energy generation where the scale of potential resource is significant but requires balancing with the effects on communities and the environment.

12.17 A locational approach to renewable energy development has previously been used in Northumberland based upon the broad areas of least constraint for wind energy development (‘W’ areas) and a Strategic Renewables Resource Area at Kielder identified in the RSS. The Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone is also identified as a potential location for renewable and low carbon energy cluster.

12.18 Figure 12.1 shows all commercial scale wind energy developments by the status of applications, together with their correlation with the RSS ‘W’ areas.
12. Commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy

Figure 12.1 Wind farm applications in Northumberland, as at April 2012
The Core Strategy could identify broad opportunity areas of search by aligning areas of resource with those which are least sensitive to development. Such an approach may assist in guiding future development to particular locations but the NPPF makes it clear that such an approach would potentially not remove the need to consider the potential for onshore wind energy developments in other parts of the county. The RSS ‘W’ areas attracted significant wind farm interest, but did not prevent suitable applications being submitted or consents being granted outside of these areas. National guidance requires a criterion to be defined for identifying suitable areas, which will enable proposals outside of these areas to be assessed against the same criteria.

**Question 62**

Should the Core Strategy:

(a) rely purely on a criteria based approach for determining planning applications for the renewable energy and low carbon sector; or

(b) identify broad areas of opportunity or specific locations for the renewable energy and low carbon sector to support a criteria based approach?
13. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies

13.1 Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies is mainly concerned with improving energy efficiency and lowering carbon output from new and existing buildings. It could involve the use of small-scale renewable or low carbon energy generation to help provide for the energy needs of the development.

13.2 Nationally, guidance is clear that local planning authorities should:

- Actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and
- When setting local requirements for a building’s sustainability do so in a way consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.

13.3 Key Issues for Northumberland are, therefore, identified as:

- Defining an energy hierarchy;
- Establishing an approach to existing buildings; and
- Establishing an approach to new buildings.

Defining an Energy Hierarchy

13.4 Building Regulations set the minimum energy efficiency and carbon standards for all new and refurbished buildings. It will be the main driver of improvements in sustainable construction. Buildings are required to be 25% more efficient than the target rate established in 2006. Further targets seek to increase this to 44% in 2013, require zero carbon homes from 2016, and zero carbon buildings in non-residential development from 2019, with certain public buildings expected to achieve this sooner.

13.5 An energy hierarchy approach can help to achieve low carbon development. It prioritises energy reduction and then energy efficiency. Evidence suggests that there are two options:

1. Generating heat and electricity on-site from renewable sources as set out in the ‘Sustainability Guidance for North East Buildings’ (2011);

2. Improving the efficiency of energy, supply through community heat and power networks; the ‘Lean, Clean, Green’ approach. However, it is recognised that this may not be possible in much of Northumberland due to the dispersed nature of development.
13. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies

Figure 13.1 The 'Sustainability Guidance for North East Buildings' energy hierarchy

1. Energy Reduction
2. Energy Efficiency
3. Renewable Energy
4. Low Carbon Energy
5. Conventional Energy

Figure 13.2 The 'Lean Clean Green' Energy Hierarchy

13.6 It is not proposed to set specific targets for a hierarchy given the Government's requirement that any standards are consistent with national policy. Accordingly, the Council will rely on national policy.

Question 63

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should include an energy hierarchy which provides for decentralised energy, where practicable, then renewable and low carbon technologies?
13. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies

13.7 The energy efficiency of buildings can be improved through the use of ‘passive design’ measures, which can be applied at little or no extra cost to individual buildings or whole developments. By using the sun, the wind and landscape features to reduce temperature extremes, and providing ventilation and lighting, the reliance on artificial alternatives and running costs can be lowered.

**Question 64**

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should include a policy to seek inclusion of passive design in developments?

**Approach to existing buildings**

13.8 At least 80% of the UK’s buildings in 2050 have already been built, so improving the energy efficiency of existing domestic and commercial buildings is vital to lowering future energy use and CO₂ emissions. This can be achieved through relatively affordable efficiency improvements. The evidence suggests three policy approaches:

- **The Uttlesford approach** - this requires practical and affordable energy efficiency improvements to be made to existing properties when planning permission is implemented for extensions, annexes, or loft or garage conversions. Recommendations for appropriate work are made after a Council funded professional assessment. The cost of improvements is limited to a maximum of 10% of the cost of the extension/conversion, however most measures in Uttlesford have cost much less than this. Householders are paid back through lower running costs and a similar policy could work in Northumberland;

- **A Carbon Offset Fund** - a number of authorities use this approach which requires all developments to pay a specified and justifiable fee to offset its predicted carbon output. The fund is used to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings or community energy projects;

- **Building regulations and financial subsidy schemes** - efficiency improvements to existing buildings are addressed through the Building Regulations and financial subsidy schemes (for example the Government’s ‘Green Deal’).
13. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies

Question 65

What approach should the Core Strategy have to improve the energy efficiency of Northumberland’s existing building stock?

- Option 1: Require householders to undertake efficiency improvements to their existing dwelling when applying for planning permission to alter or extend it
- Option 2: Establish a carbon offset fund
- Option 3: Rely on Building Regulations and financial subsidy schemes

Approach to new buildings

13.9 There are planned demanding changes to the Building Regulations which will seek to reduce energy use and carbon output in new buildings. In due course these may deliver small scale renewables in order to meet the energy reduction requirements. However, rather than rely on these regulations the Core Strategy could take a more proactive approach.

13.10 The Merton approach has been widely used in other core strategies with two variations:

- **Variation A:** Setting a percentage target for a development’s energy demand to be met through renewable energy. A target of 10-20% is typical. This can increase the input of small scale renewables to an areas requirement to contribute to national generation targets. However, due to high costs of on-site renewables it can be unviable or sometimes only be achieved at the expense of other aspects of a development, or
13. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies

can lead to small scale renewables being installed where their effectiveness is low. It also does not consider energy efficiency measures and Building Regulations which may be more effective at reducing CO$_2$ emissions.

- **Variation B:** Sets percentage targets to reduce predicted carbon output from the development. This is a flexible approach recognising that on-site renewables may not always be the most efficient and cost effective approach, and so developments could be more viable as it gives more control over costs. However, this approach may reduce the amount of small scale renewables installed and such targets could be exceeded by planned changes to the building regulations.

13.11 An alternative approach would be to set targets in relation to national building standards and guidance, alongside building regulations. The two most appropriate sets of voluntary standards used at present are$^{(46)}$: ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’ (CFSH) for domestic buildings, and the ‘Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method’ (BREEAM) for non-domestic buildings. Both are credit based assessment systems, with each credit weighted for its contribution to an overall score. There are a number of advantages to this approach:

- standards provide a clear, shared framework to assess development proposals against;
- proposed developments can more easily be independently assessed;
- it brings together the wider aspects of sustainable construction (i.e. water and waste management, cycle storage, sound insulation etc.) with the agenda of carbon reduction and changing how energy is supplied; and
- it is supported by national planning guidance.

**Question 66**

Which approach to sustainable construction and micro-renewables in new development should the Core Strategy include?

- Option 1: A ‘Merton’ style policy based on either a percentage renewable generation or carbon reduction target
- Option 2: A target based policy aligned with national building standards and guidance

13.12 If option 2 of the above question is chosen, there are three ways in which targets based on national building standards can be achieved.
13. Sustainable construction and small-scale renewable technologies

Option 2a – Use whole CFSH and BREEAM ratings

13.13 The CFSH and the BREEAM rates the environmental impact of a wide range of design aspects, not just energy efficiency and carbon emissions, with each aspect awarded credits. To achieve the highest ratings, low or zero carbon emissions are required which can add substantially to building costs. Targets which cover all aspects of the code, could be applied across the County, and could be introduced in line with planned changes to part L of the Building Regulations or introduced in advance.

13.14 While CFSH levels are comparable to planned changes to the Building Regulations in terms of energy efficiency/carbon output, BREEAM standards are not. The BREEAM ‘very good’ rating is achievable in most of Northumberland, but there is a relatively low added cost in reaching an ‘excellent’ rating. Setting this as a target could be a good way to work toward zero carbon by 2019.

Table 13.1 Potential implementation of a 'whole code' approach for Northumberland

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code 3</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Code 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13.15 The whole code does not recognise variable costs of achieving certain codes/ratings for different sizes, mixes and locations of development; however site size thresholds could be introduced. Most housing schemes in Northumberland are small scale, five homes may, therefore, be an appropriate threshold. For industrial and commercial developments a 1000 square metres threshold is used elsewhere, but most development in the county falls below this. A Northumberland threshold of 500 square metres would capture a greater proportion of such development.

Option 2b – Vary targets by location, size or development type

13.16 The viability of achieving targets can vary by the location of the development within Northumberland or within a settlement, the characteristics of the scheme, and its scale. Targets could be varied based on these factors. They could be set across the plan period, or incrementally increased like option 2a.

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47 The emissions element of Code 3 is already mandatory. With the removal of unregulated emissions from the zero carbon home definition Code Level 5 is now the zero carbon equivalent – 70% carbon compliance and 30% allowable solutions.

48 In the year to October 2011 78% of industrial and commercial applications were 500 to 1000 square metres.
13.17 For CFSH, these cost variations are relatively small compared with those between code levels. Even so, there are particular types and scales of development for which achieving a particular code level can be considerably more cost effective (i.e. greater scale or density, or near heat sources).

13.18 The cost differences for BREEAM are more complex given the range of buildings and activities it covers and how credits are awarded. The main varying factor is, however, location (i.e. inaccessibility of rural businesses or intrusive renewable technology in historic environments).

13.19 It is considered that the simplest way of setting targets, while allowing for the variations in the feasibility of introducing them, would be to base these on scale because better economies of scale can help lower other development costs.

Option 2c – Adapt BREEAM and CFSH targets to local sustainability issues

13.20 A more locally focused approach could be to set different targets for certain CFSH and BREEAM credits according to local sustainability issues. Sometimes the additional building cost of achieving certain credits within a code/rating level could be better directed to more effective sustainability improvements. Equally there may be justification to pursue higher targets for certain aspects of the buildings sustainability.

13.21 The target for particular credits within the codes/ratings could be varied locally to address particular concerns (for example water conservation around Berwick-upon-Tweed), or set across the county to focus on collective concerns for Northumberland (for example energy conservation).

13.22 Further work is required to identify local issues that could influence targets and the impact of these on the viability of development.

Question 67
Which sub-approach is most suitable?

- Option 2a: Setting whole BREEAM and CFSH ratings for all development in Northumberland above a certain scale as set out in table 13.1, with a site threshold of five dwellings for residential developments and 500 square metres for industrial and commercial development. Is this timeframe and thresholds appropriate.

- Option 2b: Target whole CFSH and BREEAM levels, but vary them according to the impact on the viability of certain sites

- Option 2c: Make targets for certain requirements of the CFSH and BREEAM assessments more or less demanding in relation to the local sustainability agenda

49 This excludes agricultural buildings built under permitted development rights as defined in Town and Country General Permitted Development Order 1995
14. Transportation

14.1 Transport policies have an important role in facilitating sustainable development but also contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Within Northumberland accessibility and public transport provision varies considerably with more frequent services to the south east and west along the Tyne Valley. This reflects the concentration of population and the County’s infrastructure, for example the A1, A19 and A69 together with the East Coast Main Line and Tyne Valley railway.

14.2 The key issues regarding transportation in Northumberland are:

- Accessibility and public transport;
- Safeguarding existing and future potential rail infrastructure;
- Walking and cycling facilities and infrastructure;
- Safeguarding rail freight facilities for future use;
- Improving the road network;
- Ports and harbours; and
- Airports.

Accessibility and public transport

14.3 Good access to key services and facilities is vital to the quality of life for Northumberland’s residents and economic development. It cannot be assumed, nor should it be planned, that people will be able to access these services using a car.
The Core Strategy should include a requirement for development to ensure good access by a range of modes of transport, other than the private car, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport with consideration given to disabled access as part of the design of the transport system, the public realm and buildings. Public transport does not, however, always facilitate journeys in the county and there is increasing reliance in some areas, on the private car.

Development should contribute to maintenance, improvement or, when necessary, provision of additional infrastructure to ensure that it is integrated with existing networks.

Rail does not make a major contribution to the movement of people around Northumberland. Currently, only limited services on the East Coast Main Line stop within Northumberland and, as a result, there is a strong reliance on bus services. Rail services along the Tyne Valley line provide links between Newcastle, Carlisle and beyond.

Generally, bus services in the Tyne Valley and south east Northumberland are better than those in the rest of the county, due to their proximity to the Tyne and Wear conurbation. Here, there is a need to ensure that current service provision is, at the very least, maintained. Elsewhere in Northumberland, services are sparser and rely more on public subsidy.

There is a need to improve connectivity in Northumberland to enable economic growth through access to work, commerce, education and services. The majority of such trips are made by car and there is a need to encourage more trips to be made by public transport. Improvements to public transport networks will need to be sought in association with development. Improvements to the road network could also improve public transport journey times and reliability through the reduction of congestion on parts of the network.

The Council’s Local Transport Plan (LTP) includes information and actions on blockages in the transport network, which will help identify where development contributions would help public transport movement. Improvements and upgrades to existing facilities such as bus and train stations and other facilities relating to public transport have been facilitated by the LTP and this approach needs to continue.

On the above basis, the Core Strategy should cover the following matters:

- Maintenance and improvement of bus/rail interchange facilities;
- Provision of facilities by developers ensuring that appropriate measures are put in place with regard to new development;
- Provision of adequate walking and cycle facilities associated with interchanges such as prioritised pedestrian access and secure cycle parking to facilitate onward journeys by public transport;
- Improved provision for wheelchair users, such as level access where possible and safe access to other railway station platforms where barrow crossings are currently in use;
- Provision of new facilities arising from operators or where the scale of development would give rise to new facilities.
14. Transportation

**Question 68**

We think there are no other options for this issue, do you agree with this suggested approach?

**Walking and cycling facilities**

14.11 Walking and cycling have many benefits in terms of health and well-being as well as reducing vehicle trips and carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion. As a result, there is a need to protect and enhance networks for walking and cycling in Northumberland.

**Question 69**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy to promote and enhance facilities and infrastructure relating to walking, cycling and other forms of non-motorised transport?

**Parking**

14.12 The National Planning Policy Framework allows local planning authorities to set local parking standards for residential and non-residential development.

**Question 70**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy setting out local parking standards?
Safeguarding existing and future potential rail infrastructure

14.13 At present, the main towns of Ashington, Bedlington and Blyth do not have direct passenger rail services linking to Tyne and Wear by rail. In the past the Council has examined and proposed the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the line. In the longer term it remains an aspiration of the Council to develop the case for the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line. The Core Strategy should seek to safeguard the route of the line as well as potential station facilities which have been identified in existing development plan documents.

14.14 There are also other rail freight lines which are linked to the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line such as that between Morpeth and Bedlington Station and links to the East Coast Main Line. There is, therefore, also a need to safeguard these routes.

**Question 71**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy which would seek to safeguard the route of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, associated freight branches and necessary infrastructure?

**Question 72**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy which would seek to identify and safeguard the route and alignment of disused railway lines where re-use is likely within the plan period?
Safeguarding and introducing new rail freight facilities for future use

14.16 Communication links within and beyond Northumberland are essential to the economic prosperity of Northumberland given the strong travel to work relationship with Tyne and Wear.

14.17 The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line now serves only freight transport. Given the line’s current and future importance for freight use, as well as its potential future use for passenger transport, it is important that the route of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, as well as the line between Morpeth and Bedlington Station, are protected in order to ensure their continued and future use.

14.18 There is a need to safeguard existing rail freight interchanges in Northumberland to maximise opportunities for rail to be used for the movement of goods and waste. As noted in the managing waste chapter, there may be potential for an additional rail facility near West Sleekburn for the transport of waste.

14.19 There are a number of different facilities relating to rail freight within Northumberland. Some are privately owned and/or operated, and there is a need to ensure that, while the Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium smelter is to close in 2012, the following freight interchanges are identified and safeguarded for future use:

- Railway Yards, Morpeth;
- Battleship Wharf, Port of Blyth;
- Tweedmouth Rail Sidings and Former Goods Yard;
- Rio Tinto Alcan Facilities:
  - Aluminium Smelting Plant;
  - Lynemouth Power Station; and
  - Alumina handling facilities, Port of Blyth.

Question 73

Should the Core Strategy include a policy seeking to protect existing rail freight facilities in Northumberland?
14. Transportation

Improving the road network

14.20 The road network plays an important economic role in facilitating the movement of people and freight. It is important that the road network within Northumberland is fit for purpose. Table 14.1 below identifies Northumberland’s core road network and the highways authorities responsible for these roads. For the purposes of the Core Strategy, these will be collectively referred to as ‘Strategic Highway Routes’.

Table 14.1 ‘Strategic Highway Routes’ in Northumberland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Road Network (Trunk Roads)(^{(1)})</th>
<th>National Primary Routes(^{(2)})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1(T)</td>
<td>A68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A19 (T)</td>
<td>A189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A69(T)</td>
<td>A696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1068 (part)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Managed by the Highways Agency
2. Managed by Northumberland County Council

14.21 Development in addition to the infrastructure improvements may require new road facilities on-site as well as links to the existing road network. Where possible, this should not have an adverse impact on the environment and/or communities. The scale of the
development may therefore result in impacts on the road network which will require mitigation. There will be a need to consider a ‘Ringmaster’ approach where multiple developments impact at the same transport corridors.

**Question 74**

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should include a policy which requires the effects of development on the road network to be taken into account and mitigated through development management decisions?

**14.22** The Council supports the full dualling of the A1, although it should be made clear that no schemes have currently been identified within the national programme. The Council would support improvements in locations where there is a need to address road safety issues, where improvements would contribute to the local and wider economy, and where the road is not designed to current standards.

**14.23** Additionally, parts of Northumberland currently experience problems relating to congestion. These problems are most prevalent at the following junctions:

- A1 / A19 Seaton Burn junction;
- A1068 Fisher Lane / A19 junction;
- A19 / A189 Moor Farm roundabout;
- Telford Bridge, Morpeth;
- Cowpen Road, Blyth.

**The A1 and associated links**

**14.24** In the past, the Council has sought to improve road access between the A1 and south-east Northumberland to help strengthen the local economy and relieve congestion in Morpeth. As a result, new road links were proposed between the A1 and Ashington. The Pegswood Bypass has already been completed, and it is anticipated that works regarding the Morpeth Northern Bypass will commence onsite in spring 2014.

**The A19 and associated junctions within Northumberland**

**14.25** The Seaton Burn and Moor Farm junctions have been identified as having capacity issues and suffer congestion as a result. Development within South East Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle will have a detrimental effect on the flow of traffic. Therefore, in order to mitigate the effects of development on these junctions, contributions will be required from developers as part of development proposals.
14. Transportation

Access to Blyth

14.26 Blyth is not well-connected with the rest of Northumberland and the roads serving the town suffer from congestion. Constraints regarding accessibility and the capacity of the road network will need to be addressed in order to facilitate the growth expected in the area, with particular reference to the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone.

14.27 The Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) has identified that a major new link from Blyth towards the A189 may be required in the longer term. The LTP Implementation Plan refers to the need to investigate the development of a major scheme business case for the Blyth Central Link Road, which would provide a new link between Rotary Way and a new junction with the A190. The Core Strategy will need to recognise this potential improvement project and the work required in developing the case and possible design and implementation over the plan period.

Ponteland bypass

14.28 The LTP Implementation Plan also identifies that further work is required on the proposal for a bypass at Ponteland. This potential scheme has been longstanding and has, in the past, been included in national road improvement programmes when this section of the A696 was a trunk road. An improvement line is included in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan and it is considered that the Core Strategy should continue to seek to protect this.

Question 75

Should the Core Strategy facilitate improvements to Northumberland’s core strategic network, as identified in paragraphs 14.21 to 14.27 through:

a. Seeking to support and safeguard the line of improvements;

b. Identifying the need for further examination and investigation of particular projects; and

c. Seeking contributions towards such improvements from developers, where there is a need for the impacts of development on the existing road infrastructure to be mitigated.

Ports and harbours

14.29 Although both ports and airports are subject to separate national policy statement the Core Strategy should take account of their role within the county. There are 11 ports, harbours and beach launches in Northumberland as detailed in table 14.2 below.
### 14. Transportation

#### Table 14.2 Northumberland ports, harbours and beach launches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ports</th>
<th>Harbours</th>
<th>Fishing industry beach launches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berwick-upon-Tweed</td>
<td>Amble</td>
<td>Boulmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>Beadnell</td>
<td>Newbiggin-by-the-Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Craster</td>
<td>Newton-by-the-Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holy Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seaton Sluice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**14.30** The Port of Blyth is the main functioning port in Northumberland, alongside with Berwick-upon-Tweed and it is capable of handling larger freight vessels. It is expected that both ports will play a key role in increasing exports. The Core Strategy will support appropriate expansion of facilities to allow growth in sustainable freight movement. However, any expansion should be sensitive to the environment and communities and the requirements of the fishing industry.

**14.31** The other facilities are important to fishing, therefore it is proposed that the Core Strategy will encourage the development of harbour facilities to maintain and sustainably grow the fishing industry. Appropriate leisure and tourism developments should also be supported provided that they do not adversely impact on the functioning of the fishing industry. Development for either role must be sensitive to the environment and communities.

**Question 76**

Should the Core Strategy support continued freight movements and fishing activity at the County’s eleven ports, harbours and beach launches? We think there are no other options for this issue.

**Airports**

**14.32** Newcastle International airport is an economic driver for investment and jobs in Northumberland, and the international gateway for business and tourist passengers, as well as freight. Part of the northern side of the operational area is within Northumberland.
14.33 It is proposed to support the sustainable development of the airport in line with its current masterplan (2006-2016), by maintaining a supply of expansion land to accommodate possible growth both for actual passenger or freight airport facilities, and activities supplementary to the airports operation. The planning approach to any subsequent masterplan will need to be assessed upon its production.

Question 77

Should the Core Strategy continue to plan for the Newcastle International Airport Masterplan? We think there are no other options for this issue
15. Information and communication technologies

15.1 Telecommunications infrastructure includes a range of equipment including radio base stations, masts, antennas, poles and overhead wires. Within Northumberland information and communication technologies play an important role in connecting communities, particularly in the more rural areas of the county. The rapid growth in mobile communications in the UK has necessitated upgrades in technology with operators having to continually expand their networks to accommodate services and improve quality.

15.2 The key issues regarding information and communication technologies in Northumberland are:

- Planning for broadband infrastructure;
- Planning for mobile telecommunications infrastructure.

Planning for broadband infrastructure

15.3 Better connectivity can help rural businesses to grow and remain competitive, facilitate learning and skills development at home, and allow access to community and other services online. This approach would involve deploying the innovative use of information and communication technologies (ICT), including improved access to high-speed broadband at a competitive cost.

15.4 With regard to the improvement of broadband infrastructure, there is an increasing need for additional street cabinets to be installed in order to facilitate the provision of super-fast broadband. Such cabinets need to be sited close to existing cabinets.

15.5 In relation to the installation of fibre optic networks, there is scope for utilities to share infrastructure, in order to minimise disruption in terms of maintenance, as well as reducing installation costs.

15.6 It is proposed that the Core Strategy should include a policy which would seek to encourage the sharing of infrastructure between utilities, including roadway ducting where practicable. In existing buildings and rural areas, this will involve the retrofitting of ICT infrastructure, as well as designing it into new build developments.

15.7 The Council is currently preparing its Local Broadband Plan which will inform future versions of the Core Strategy.

15.8 It is proposed that the Core Strategy should include a general policy in relation to the provision of broadband services and the installation of broadband infrastructure, seeking to encourage:

- the use of pure fibre optic networks for new build development;
- the design and layout of development which provides the opportunity to retrofit such infrastructure in the future;
15. Information and communication technologies

- sharing of infrastructure between utilities in order to minimise disruption in terms of maintenance, as well as reducing installation costs and increasing the viability of service provision; and

- appropriate siting and design of infrastructure.

**Question 78**

Do you agree with the proposed approach to information and communication technologies, if not what are the alternatives?

**Planning for mobile communications infrastructure**

15.9 It is recognised that mobile phone coverage in parts of Northumberland is poor, with some areas having no coverage at all. It is suggested that the Core Strategy should support the improvement of mobile phone network coverage in Northumberland, particularly through the multiple use of existing masts and/or base stations. Where new masts and/or base stations are proposed, the Council should support these, provided that they will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and/or communities which would outweigh the benefits of development.

**Question 79**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy to support the improvement of mobile telecommunications infrastructure having regard to the impact on the environment and communities?

15.10 National policy requires new telecommunications development to first seek to use existing masts, buildings and other structures, unless the need for a new site has been justified.

**Question 80**

We think there are no other options for this issue; do you agree with this suggested approach?
16. Community facilities

16.1 The provision of key services that people need to access during their lives is crucial to the health and wellbeing of communities. The dispersed settlement pattern characteristic of much of Northumberland, together with an ageing population, means that the provision of accessible services is a particular challenge in the County.

16.2 The council works closely with providers. The core strategy has a role to ensure that new community services and facilities are located where as many people as possible can access them without having to rely on private cars, although it is recognised that this may be more difficult in rural areas. New development of a certain scale may also necessitate the enhancement or provision of additional facilities and mechanisms to secure this are mentioned in the delivery section. The key issue for the core strategy is the location and delivery of health, education, emergency services and community facilities.

Health

16.3 At present, the programme of health and social care development in Northumberland beyond 2015 is not known. Primary care trusts and strategic health authorities are due to be phased out by 2013 with GP consortia being introduced. Additionally, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust are investing over £200million in the provision of a new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington together with new hospitals in Berwick and Haltwhistle.

Education

16.4 Government policy\(^{50}\) is clear that there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state funded schools, which includes creation, expansion or alteration and has the power to require school sites to be available for academies and free schools.

\(^{50}\) Policy statement - planning for schools development (2011)
16. Community facilities

16.5 There are sixteen school partnerships in Northumberland. Some partnerships have reorganised to a two-tier system of education under the Putting the Learner First\(^{(51)}\) programme. Although the Council is no longer able to commit to a large-scale programme of capital investment in schools at this time, over the plan period there may be the need to make changes to school facilities and the Council continues to explore other options that could attract funding for schools in Northumberland.\(^{(52)}\)

16.6 The future plans of Northumberland College’s campuses for higher education are uncertain.

Emergency services

16.7 Two new, purpose built, community fire stations have recently been completed at Pegswood and West Hartford. In addition, a regional programme\(^{(53)}\) includes plans to develop new community fire stations at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Seahouses, Prudhoe, Hexham and Haltwhistle. However, while outline planning approval for these has been obtained, some of the necessary Government funding was withdrawn in late 2010, and the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service is exploring other funding options.

Local community facilities

16.8 As well as health, education and emergency services, the public bodies i.e. the Council and partner organisations provide many local community services and facilities that are widely regarded as essential to the quality of life of Northumberland’s residents.

16.9 The council is considering changes to the way services such as libraries and customer contact centres, are delivered including integration of services onto single sites, with a view to improving overall access to council services for the people of Northumberland.

16.10 Proposals for key hub facilities, particularly in the tier 1 and tier 2 settlements, may be forthcoming over the plan period. An example is the proposed £20 million investment in a new leisure and community facility in Ashington.

Question 81

Should the core strategy include a policy to support and guide new, and improvements to existing, community facilities including health, education and the emergency services?

Question 82

Are there any specific sites which need to be allocated or safeguarded for community facilities?

\(^{(51)}\) Putting the Learner First: A Strategic Plan for the Provision of Education in Northumberland (2005)

\(^{(52)}\) For example the formation of trust schools and federations and the Priority Schools Building Programme

\(^{(53)}\) Phase 2 of the North East Fire & Rescue Authorities Collaboration Project (NEFRA) PFI
17. Green infrastructure

17.1 'Green infrastructure' is the network of natural and managed green spaces within urban and rural Northumberland. From the nationally designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the Heritage Coast and Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, amongst many others, Green Infrastructure is vital to the environmental quality of Northumberland. The provision of well-planned green networks can enhance and improve Northumberland as a place to live, work, visit and invest. It can link new and existing communities with the landscape and countryside creating a sense of place, as well as contributing towards sustainable planning goals and help address climate change.

17.2 Key issues for the Core Strategy to address are identified as:

- Defining green infrastructure;
- Northumberland’s landscape;
- Nature conservation; and
- Recreation, sport and open space provision.

Defining Green Infrastructure

17.3 A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Northumberland maps important green infrastructure (GI) assets – both natural and man-made. These are listed in table 17.1 and some of these assets are identified as part of the 'Strategic Green Infrastructure Network', as shown in figure 17.1.

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54 Green Infrastructure is defined as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
## Table 17.1 Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets in Northumberland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Sub-regional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationally designated sites - NNRs, SACs, Ramsars, SPAs, Northumberland National Parks, North Pennines AONB, Northumberland Coast AONB, Northumberland Heritage Coast, Ancient Woodlands and Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site</td>
<td>Significant or extensive public parks and gardens, including the following country parks; Druridge Bay, Plessey Woods, Tyne Riverside, Bolam Lake, Bedlington, Tyne Green, QEII and the Wansbeck Riverside Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major river corridors - Tyne</td>
<td>Local Nature Reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastline and beaches - Northumberland Coastal Zone</td>
<td>Main river corridors and watercourses - Aln, Allen, Blyth, Coquet, Wansbeck, Tweed, Till and Breamish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kielder Forest - Kielder Water and Border Mires</td>
<td>Strategic recreational routes, public rights of way, cycle ways e.g. St Cuthbert’s Way, St Oswald’s Way, Kielder Lakeside Way, South Tyne Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major recreational and amenity sites</td>
<td>Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (SNCIs as was)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long distance footpaths - Pennine Way National Trail, Hadrian’s Wall National Trail, Northumberland Coast Path</td>
<td>Northumberland Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Cycle Network and SUSTRANS routes - North Sea Cycle Route, Coast and Castles Cycle Route (National Route 1), Reivers Cycle Route (Regional Route 10) and the Pennine Cycleway (National Route 68)</td>
<td>Significant archaeological and historic sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major roads and railways (including minerals and disused railway lines/wagonways) - East Coast Main Line railway, Tyne Valley Railway Line, A1, A69, A696, A697 and A1068</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Parks and Gardens - Cragside, Titchmarsh Park, Hesleyside, The Hexham Parks, Wallington Hall, Alnwick Castle, Chillingham, Kirkharle Hall, Howick Hall, Belford Hall, Blagdon, Lindisfame Castle, Seaton Delaval, Capheaton Hall, Belsay, Nunwick, St Andrew’s Cemetery and St Mary’s Hospital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Battlefields - Battle of Flodden Field, Battle of Halidon Hill, Battle of Homildon Hill and Battle of Otterburn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Green infrastructure

Figure 17.1 Strategic Green Infrastructure Sites and Corridors (adapted from Northumberland County Council: A Green Infrastructure Strategy, October 2011)
17.4 Clearly, the National Park, at the heart of Northumberland, is a key GI asset alongside the more extensively designated areas to the west, north and coast of Northumberland. Even though the statutory process for the National Park is not covered by the Core Strategy, integrated GI planning is essential linking to other GI assets within the county and general development management decisions. The more urban south east of Northumberland also has significant local green assets, including the coast itself, although these lack overall connectivity.

17.5 The Core Strategy will set out the policy approach to GI planning in Northumberland. Principles should include:

- The protection and enhancement of GI assets and linkages between them;
- Support for the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional GI network;
- Identifying the strategic green infrastructure network;
- GI developments to include climate change mitigation and/or adaptation measures;
- Preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats;
- Support for the improvement of access to GI including rights of way and cycle routes;
- Maximising the potential of GI to support sustainable tourism; and
- Ensuring that new development contributes to the GI network to maintain its integrity through relevant protection, enhancement, replacement, and creation, and long term maintenance, as necessary and appropriate.

17.6 In relation to the above principles subsequent planning decisions will need to strike a balance between the environmental quality, accessibility and use of GI assets, particularly in relation to proposals for more active recreational pursuits.

Question 83

Is the Core Strategy policy approach to green infrastructure the right one; should other principles be incorporated?

Landscape

17.7 The main landscape assets include the unique coastline, the upland moors and bogs, but much of the county is also rural with woodlands and country estates interspersed with farmland. There are large man-made forests and wooded valleys. Villages have a distinctive architecture using local sandstone. The more populous south east of the county also offers a unique landscape with its mining history and subsequent restoration.
17. Green infrastructure

Nationally designated landscapes

17.8 The most important landscapes within Northumberland are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to conserve their natural beauty:

- The Northumberland Coast AONB covers 64 kilometres of coastline from Berwick-upon-Tweed to the River Coquet and is characterised by beaches, rolling dunes, high rocky cliffs and isolated islands. It contains numerous national and international nature conservation designations, clustered settlements, imposing castles and has extensive sea and inland views.

- The North Pennines AONB is located to the south of the County and extends beyond the boundary of Northumberland into County Durham and Cumbria. It is a unique moorland landscape shaped by early settlers with a history of mining for lead and other minerals. The sense of wilderness is an important factor and the geology is recognised at European level.

- The Northumberland National Park, while entirely within Northumberland, is a separated planning authority. It contains the Cheviot Hills, the Simonside Hills, the upper Coquet valley, the valleys of the rivers North Tyne and Rede and the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site. There are key connections between the National Park and the rest of Northumberland in terms of landscape and overlapping ecosystems and the council has a statutory responsibility to not allow development that would impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

17.9 The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside in AONBs and the Northumberland National Park should be given great weight in planning decisions and that the conservation of wildlife and the cultural heritage are also important considerations.

17.10 As AONBs are strongly valued landscapes, guidance has been drawn up for them. Both have detailed building design guides and comprehensive management plans and the North Pennines also has a Geodiversity Action Plan. The Core Strategy could provide a bridge between national policy and these locally produced documents giving them weight in the planning decision making process. Additionally, the AONBs are key to Northumberland being ranked first out of 87 authorities in terms of tranquillity. The Core Strategy should recognise tranquillity as a distinctive characteristic of Northumberland’s AONBs and other remote countryside areas; urbanising effects within these areas should be avoided where practicable.

Question 84

Should the Core Strategy include a specific policy for the two AONBs to support, but not repeat, national policies and provide a planning framework for detailed supplementary guidance and management plans?
Local landscape character

17.11 The general protection of landscapes is now based on a landscape character approach, where the characteristics of all landscapes are recorded and protections and enhancements sought accordingly. Accordingly, Northumberland’s landscape outside the Northumberland National Park is now sub-divided into 9 National Character Areas, 44 local Landscape Character Types and 108 local Landscape Character Areas. The intention of the character approach is to remove the need to define locally protected landscapes outside of national designations such as the AONBs without exceptional reasons. However, people attach high value to the County’s landscape, and a structured evaluation of the 108 character areas has been undertaken. This assigns high value to various clusters of landscape character areas:

- the Northumberland National Park periphery;
- the coastline north and south of the Northumberland Coast AONB currently Heritage Coast; and
- the valleys of the Coquet and Tweed linking the coast and the Northumberland National Park.

17.12 On the basis of current evidence the case for local landscape designations is not conclusive given the ‘exceptional reasons’ test. An alternative approach, therefore, is to recognise the importance of these landscape clusters through general policies on enhancing green infrastructure.

Question 85

Should the Core Strategy recognise the importance of specific landscape clusters (summarised in paragraph 17.11) through policy criteria on enhancing green infrastructure?

Principles for the landscape

17.13 The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment sets out ‘high level principles’ to be applied when considering proposals that may affect the Northumberland landscape. These include principles to:

- Understand and take into account the whole landscape;
- Value the landscape’s diversity;
- Recognise the landscape focus of many local visitor attractions;
- Preserve the intact and unspoilt landscapes that the County possesses;

55 See the ‘Northumberland Key Land Uses Impact Study’
17. Green infrastructure

- Understand the contribution of very local, intrinsic characteristics to the wider Northumberland landscape; and

- Enhance landscape distinctiveness while meeting social and economic requirements.

17.14 Each of the 44 Landscape Character Types has one of three guiding principles (figure 17.2) resulting in a variety of approaches across the county, namely:

- **Protect** - where conservation of landscape character is required in the face of pressures for change.

- **Manage** - where some changes can be absorbed but changes arising from social, economic and environmental processes need to be managed.

- **Plan** - where important landscape character has been eroded and strong action is needed to enhance or restore this.
Figure 17.2 Landscape Character Types and Guiding Principles as recommended in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment
17. Green infrastructure

17.15 The numbers are the different landscape character types and the letters represent the individual character areas.\(^{(56)}\)

17.16 The assessment has further detailed guidelines for each landscape character type which explain what sort of development, or land use, could be most or least easily absorbed by the landscape and what enhancements and safeguards could be implemented. The document summarises key principles for development as:

- Landscapes can be enhanced through development;
- Views to, through and within the Northumberland landscape must be central to policies on where development is located; and
- In rural settings even small scale features such as route signing should be considered in terms of their landscape impacts.

17.17 There are also principles on how land management and measures to tackle climate change can be planned to benefit local landscape character. The Core Strategy could incorporate a policy approach outlining the guiding principles in figure 17.2. This could, however, unnecessarily stifle development where there is a blanket guiding principle to “protect” the landscape or, conversely, not sufficiently protect the landscape if the approach is to “plan”. An alternative approach would be to rely on criteria within a general development principles policy and have regard to the landscape character study in determining future planning applications. This would increase flexibility for future decisions of the Council.

**Question 86**

Should the Core Strategy plan for protection of the landscape through implementing the “guiding principles” on the landscape character type in paragraph 17.14 or through criteria that allow more flexibility on the weight given to the various principles set out?

**Nature conservation**

17.18 Northumberland has a rich natural environment ranging from internationally important designated areas through to undesignated local habitats. It is essential that planning is integrated so as to maintain the county’s biodiversity and geodiversity. Table 17.2 and figure 17.3 show the designated Natural Heritage of Northumberland, with the national and international designations are illustrated on figure 17.3.

56 The full list of the Landscape Character Areas and descriptions relating to them can be found in the evidence base document entitled ‘Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment: Part A: Landscape Classification’
Table 17.2 Summary of Northumberland’s natural heritage assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Local</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 European Special Protection Areas (SPAs) – bird-related</td>
<td>114 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</td>
<td>221 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGSs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Special Areas of Conservation, (SACs) – habitats of European importance</td>
<td>9 SSSIs are also National Nature Reserves (NNRs)</td>
<td>27 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 European Marine Site (EMS) extending north from Alnmouth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ancient Woodlands – small but significant areas continually wooded since at least 1600AD – not a formal designation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4 wetland sites designated under the (international) Ramsar Convention | | }
17. Green infrastructure

Figure 17.3 Natural heritage of Northumberland
17.19 The Core Strategy will not need to add to national policy that already gives protection to the internationally recognised assets. It will, however, need to include protective and enhancing policies for SSSIs in accordance with Government guidance and explain when development could take place subject to mitigation measures.

17.20 Within Northumberland some 11 species have been identified which benefit from European protection, and there are also nationally protected species. Additionally, there are national lists of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, some of which – 24 habitats and 22 species – are the subject of Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs). The Core Strategy should set out how planning will assist the implementation of the BAPs.

**Incorporating an 'ecosystem approach'**

17.21 The natural environment has to be treated in an integrated way. Therefore an ‘ecosystem approach’ is advocated, nationally and internationally, as the best way to manage complex, dynamic, natural systems. This means that decisions on how land is used and developed become part of the overall management of natural systems across wide areas – beyond protected sites and species. The approach treats human activity as part of ecosystems as the example in figure 17.4 shows.

**Figure 17.4 Understanding how spatial planning, and not just pure land management decisions, can be crucial to an ecosystem approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ecosystem Approach</th>
<th>Category example</th>
<th>Specific example</th>
<th>Where planning comes in....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RETAINING the ecosystem ASSET</td>
<td>Retaining an area of land forming a habitat</td>
<td>Retaining / restoring a wild flower meadow</td>
<td>Locate development to retain the meadow and/or enter a Planning Obligation with a developer to retain / enhance / replace the meadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVIDING the ecosystem SERVICE</td>
<td>...so helping to maintain the population of a species</td>
<td>...so helping the bee population</td>
<td>...so retaining the natural asset and achieving the ecosystem service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACHIEVING the ecosystem BENEFIT as well as a community benefit</td>
<td>...so assisting to maintain the food supply chain while having a net positive effect on the natural environment</td>
<td>...so improving a crop that is used by humans through increased pollination through natural means</td>
<td>...so achieving the development and the ecosystem benefit, while having a net positive effect on the natural environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England – under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
17. Green infrastructure

17.22 Current projects in Northumberland\(^{58}\) already contribute towards the approach through ecosystem services such as diffusing pollution, flood management and carbon sequestration, as well as sustaining wildlife populations. Actions at particular locations can bring ecosystem benefits in places that are significantly removed. The right hand column of figure 17.4 shows how the locational strategy for development will be an important component of the ecosystem approach.

17.23 Analysis of local information, especially the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan, suggests that a locally distinctive and effective approach that complements the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and other legislation is possible within Northumberland. Linked with the ecosystems approach criteria could include:

- **Climate change and ecosystems:** The likely effect of certain types of development on climate change insofar as this could affect the local ecosystem and the ways in which the development might be adapted to lessen this impact;

- **Network creation versus fragmentation:** The effects of various types of significant built development or infrastructure provision on the ecosystem through the creation or removal of gaps in those features that allow migration, dispersal or genetic exchange – such as various linear features like hedgerows or “stepping stones” such as ponds and woodlands;

- **Wider Disturbances versus tranquillity:** The broad variety of different types of wider disturbance to wildlife habitats that may be demonstrated to result from development including preserving tranquillity;

- **Achieving local biodiversity targets:** Reference to the objectives and targets of various existing ecosystem based management plans, such as those for the European Marine Site and river basins, as well as the BAPs; and

- **Helping to interpret the ecology:** How the development might actually help the promotion and interpretation of the unique ecology.

**Question 87**

Should the Core Strategy incorporate an “ecosystem approach” to nature conservation incorporating the specified criteria; if not, what alternative should the Council plan for?

**Protecting and enhancing Northumberland’s biodiversity and geodiversity**

17.24 While the ecosystem approach could underlie all planning decisions, there is still a need to specifically protect and, where appropriate, enhance the county’s biodiversity and geodiversity. For this, the Core Strategy could incorporate the approach as shown at table 17.3.

\(^{58}\) For example the “Peatscapes” Project in the North Pennines, the River Till Restoration Project and “Living Landscapes” projects in a number of locations.
Table 17.3 Proposed approach for protecting and enhancing Northumberland’s biodiversity and geodiversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiered approach</td>
<td>Takes account of the different levels of importance of sites, habitats and species and their degree of statutory protection. Lower order designations and wider biodiversity and geodiversity will require criteria-based policies to ensure necessary protection and enhancement opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated approach</td>
<td>Seeks to complement existing established approaches to protecting and enhancing natural features, habitats and species, e.g. through the AONB and Biodiversity Partnerships and by adjacent authority areas, especially the National Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data enhancement</td>
<td>Uses local information in the Biodiversity Action Plan and elsewhere, seeking to enhance this and use it in a consistent way to inform policy decisions. Locally, where major development is planned or significant change is likely, it will be vital to build up enhanced data on the environmental capacity of habitats, well in advance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk minimisation</td>
<td>Applies criteria to reduce the risk of development for the habitats of species of principal importance, where these may not be fully known. For example buffers applied to watercourses, water bodies and native woodland, to reduce the impacts that arise from development such as increased disturbance to and degradation of adjoining land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitigating unavoidable impacts</td>
<td>Applies measures on or off-site to deal with the wider effects of development that can be predicted in advance, such as displacement of an undesignated habitat or disturbance due to increased human activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include habitat features</td>
<td>Provides, where appropriate, for the inclusion of features in development to provide habitats or benefits for local biodiversity, for example where buildings and their surroundings, including public open spaces, act as habitats – for bats, garden birds, amphibians, a wide range of invertebrates and small mammals – across large parts of Northumberland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated programmes</td>
<td>Coordinated programmes across areas where it is known that development pressures, cumulatively, would adversely affect biodiversity and geodiversity. Such measures, while being closely linked with the impacts of development pressures could also be designed to contribute towards regional biodiversity targets and/or the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Improvement Areas</td>
<td>A new form of designation aimed at enhancing the ecological network over wide areas, through increasing the size and/or number of wildlife sites within these areas and/or improving buffers, management and connectivity. These are being piloted elsewhere in the country but there may be an opportunity to roll them out in Northumberland during the plan period, as part of the wider Green Infrastructure strategy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 88

Is the suggested approach to protecting and enhancing Northumberland’s biodiversity and geodiversity the right one?

59 The 2011 White Paper on the natural environment has introduced an Ecosystems Knowledge Network and new national indicators which should assist.
Recreational, sport and open space provision

17.25 Good quality open space\textsuperscript{(60)}, sport and recreational facilities have many benefits for urban and rural environments, as well as promoting social inclusion and community cohesion and health and well-being.

17.26 The 'Northumberland Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Assessment' shows an imbalance in provision across Northumberland. There are over 4,000 hectares of accessible open space in over a thousand separate facilities. This equates to 13.4 hectares per 1,000 population. Provision in South East Northumberland approximates to the Northumberland average, North Northumberland is above the average and South and West Northumberland is significantly below average. In terms of particular types of open space provision, South and West Northumberland has deficiencies in parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green space and amenity green space whilst South East Northumberland is deficient in outdoor sports and facilities for young people and children. Quality also varies between types of facility and across Northumberland. In light of identified deficiencies and variations, the Northumberland Assessment has recommended local standards for open space provision as set out in table 17.4.

Table 17.4 Proposed open space standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and gardens</td>
<td>To achieve a minimum standard of 57% and to deliver all parks and gardens to good quality standard (61%)</td>
<td>Good quality parks and gardens within 1,000 metres or 12 minutes travel time of all households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At or above current level of 2.14 hectares per 1,000 population</td>
<td>To achieve and maintain Green Flag status in 3 parks across the County (one in each neighbourhood area)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Country Parks to achieve Country Park Accreditation and a quality rating of 76% (excellent)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and semi-natural greenspace</td>
<td>To achieve a minimum standard of 48% (current countywide open space average) and to deliver all Local Nature Reserves to a minimum quality rating of 61% (good)</td>
<td>Within 1,200 metres or 15 minutes travel of where people live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At or above current level of 7.55 hectares per 1,000 population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{60} The NPPF defines open space as including all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity
### 17. Green infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amenity greenspace</strong></td>
<td>To achieve a minimum standard of 48%. This includes ensuring facilities and infrastructure are ‘fit for purpose’</td>
<td>Within 600 metres or 8 minutes travel time of where people live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor sports facilities</strong></td>
<td>To achieve a minimum standard of 61% (good quality).</td>
<td>Within 1,200 metres or 15 minutes travel time of where people live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provision for children and young people</strong></td>
<td>To achieve a minimum standard of 61% and to ensure all fixed play design considers the play value of the provision as the key driver</td>
<td>Fixed play provision within 800 metres or 10 minutes travel time of where people live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allotments</strong></td>
<td>To achieve a minimum standard of 61%. This includes ensuring facilities and infrastructure are ‘fit for purpose’</td>
<td>Fixed play provision within 800 metres or 10 minutes travel time of where people live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cemeteries and churchyards</strong></td>
<td>All Council managed and maintained sites to achieve a quality score of 76% or above.</td>
<td>No accessibility standard set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**17.27** The Core Strategy will need to set out an approach to achieving good provision of high quality, accessible open space. This will need to consider whether the proposed open space standards should be included. Whilst a general policy will assist in securing appropriate provision of open space the inclusion of specific figures will establish measurable targets against which proposals can be considered.

**Question 89**

Should the Core Strategy include a general policy to protect and enhance open space provision or include specific standards for open space provision?
Current provision of sports facilities and playing pitches

17.28 The Northumberland Sports Facilities Strategy finds no significant gaps in major sports facilities in the County. Swimming pools and sports centres are located in the larger towns, as expected, with few overlapping catchment areas. Unmet demand is limited to more thinly populated areas remote from these towns. Northumberland is relatively well off for some facilities such as golf courses and fitness centres. There are shortages of smaller scale facilities such as pitches, especially synthetic turf pitches, and accessible indoor spaces in some areas.\(^{(61)}\) The Strategy aims to maintain the current facilities to a high standard, replace them when they reach the end of their useful life, maximise community use and set suitable standards.

17.29 The Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy has, however, found deficiencies for some sports – in particular mini soccer, youth football, cricket, rugby and hockey. It recommends that all community accessible provision should be rated as ‘Good’ or above\(^{(62)}\) but across Northumberland over a third of pitch sites fall below this level. To help address current and future requirements, it is considered the Core Strategy should maximise high quality, accessible sports facilities and playing pitches by seeking:

- To protect and enhance existing pitches;
- The dual-use of facilities and greater use of education pitches;
- Improvements to quality to allow more games on each pitch; and
- To secure new facilities on new sites.

17.30 The Playing Pitch Strategy also proposes a number of management measures.

**Question 90**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy to increase provision of high quality accessible sports facilities and playing pitches?

**Hierarchy of provision**

17.31 In addition to the preceding information it is also possible to establish a hierarchy of provision, relating to the settlement pattern across Northumberland.\(^{(63)}\) An indicative ‘Sports Facility Hierarchy’ to guide future playing pitch provision is shown in table 17.5.

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\(^{(62)}\) Northumberland County Council Playing Pitch Strategy, May 2011, Table 5.1
\(^{(63)}\) This would accord with advice contained in ‘Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17’, September 2002, Paragraphs 10.31 to 10.36
### Table 17.5 Suggested Sports Facility Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement tier</th>
<th>Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 settlements</td>
<td>Strategically located multi-pitch sites with scope for different sports, providing for competition and training, with good quality on-site changing and toilet provision, appropriate for, and accessible to, all user types. Each site to be linked to a key youth and senior club to implement development pathways. This provision potentially to be in partnership with education. One site to be designated as a hockey focus; ideally an artificial grass pitch (AGP) appropriate for hockey use, floodlit where possible, linked to a school site. All other pitch sites to have a minimum of toilet provision on site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2 settlements</td>
<td>Minimum of 1 multi-pitch site providing for competition and training, with good quality on-site changing and toilet provision, appropriate for, and accessible to, all user types. Each site should be linked to a key youth and senior club to implement development pathways. This provision potentially to be in partnership with education, to include facilities for training and competitive play, appropriate to the needs of the on-site sports. Small sided floodlit multi-use games area (MUGA) for training/floodlit grass area for training. All other pitch sites to have a minimum of toilet provision on site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3 settlements</td>
<td>At least one playing pitch site per settlement /settlement cluster which can accommodate football and or cricket/rugby. Small sided multi-use games area (MUGA) for training (preferably floodlit) / grass area for training (preferably floodlit). Minimum ancillary provision of toilets on site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 91

Is the suggested Sports Facility Hierarchy identified in table 17.5 appropriate and should it be included in the Core Strategy to guide future playing pitch provision?

### New development and the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities

#### 17.32

New open space, sport and recreational facilities will need to be provided to serve the occupants of new housing either within or close to the new developments. The Core Strategy could include policy criteria to ensure that:

- Developments contribute to open space, sports facilities and playing pitch provision and improvements in accordance with agreed standards, appropriate to the location and the scale of the development;

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64 Source: Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy, May 2011 (adapted to reflect the proposed settlement roles and functions)
17. Green infrastructure

- This provision is within the site boundary, unless the Council has agreed off-site provision or funding in lieu of provision; and

- Where off-site provision or contributions are agreed, developers make the appropriate contribution towards the identified improvements or additional provision.

17.33 This will, however, be considered in the context of the Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy.

**Question 92**

Should the Core Strategy include policy criteria on open space, sports facilities and playing pitch provision associated with development, as set out in paragraph 17.32?

**Protection of open space, sport and recreational facilities**

17.34 Government policy is that existing open space, sport and recreational facilities should not be built on unless they are assessed as surplus to requirements. The Northumberland Assessment has identified open space sites which require improvement as well as those which should be protected (65). The Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy has also identified deficiencies in playing pitch provision.

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65 Northumberland County Council Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities – PPG17 Assessment, May 2011, Appendix 1. (PPG17 now superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework)
17.35 In terms of national guidance losses in provision of open space can only be accepted where satisfactory alternative provision is made or it can be demonstrated that the asset is no longer needed or the benefits of development clearly outweigh the loss of the facility. The Core Strategy will have to set this within the local context recognising, for example, that changes from one type of facility, where there is an oversupply, to another type where there is a deficiency could be considered.

**Question 93**

Should the Core Strategy contain policy criteria to ensure that the protection of open space, sports and recreational facilities takes full account of local circumstances?

**Local Green Spaces**

17.36 Local green spaces are important elements of the character and appearance of an area which can contribute positively to the cultural heritage, quality of life and health and well being of local communities. The government through the NPPF is seeking to introduce a new Local Green Spaces designation for locally important green space that is not currently protected by any national designation.

17.37 Within Northumberland there are areas of open space which are currently protected through existing development plan policies but this is not consistent across the County. There are over 50 registered village greens but these are not consistently distributed, being mostly limited to rural villages and hamlets. The Core Strategy therefore has a role to play in ensuring the protection of locally important green spaces.

**Question 94**

Should the Core Strategy contain an overarching policy objective to ensure the protection of local green spaces with specific designations being considered as part of the Northumberland Delivery Development Plan Document?

66 Village greens are designated through non-planning legislation, often following local campaigning.
18. Water environment

18.1 It is important to consider Northumberland’s water environment when planning where new development is located, to avoid areas at greater risk of flooding. The Government supports a ‘sequential’ approach to this, which firstly directs development to areas of lower risk, particularly due to the predicted increased risk of flooding resulting from climate change.

18.2 The design of new development is also important, to ensure that it is resilient to flooding, that surface water flows are managed, and that water is used efficiently. This is especially important if an exception is made to the sequential test which allows development to be located in an area of flood risk. Additionally, there needs to be careful consideration of the potential impact on water quality, water supply and sewerage facilities and whether Northumberland’s infrastructure can cope with extra development, including consideration of whether additional infrastructure is required in association with new development.

18.3 There are five issues which the Core Strategy needs to consider:

- Flooding and the location of development;
- Increasing the resilience of development to flooding;
- Management of change from coastal erosion;
- Water quality; and
- Water supply and sewerage facilities and networks.

Flooding and the location of development

18.4 There are five main river catchment areas in Northumberland, each containing a number of rivers. Together with the North Sea coast and the county’s reservoirs they make up the water environment of Northumberland. This is shown in figure 18.1. These are the main sources of flood risk, along with surface water run-off, groundwater, and sewerage.
Figure 18.1 Map showing Northumberland's water environment
River catchments

18.5 For each river catchment the Environment Agency has produced a high level ‘Catchment Flood Management Plan’ (CFMP), and has mapped smaller areas within each to look at the potential cause, scale, and location of flood risk, known as ‘policy units’. Each policy unit has been assigned a high level flood risk management policy option to assist in the management of flood risk. Further details are available from the Environment Agency’s website.\(^{(67)}\) These CFMPs will assist in informing future spatial planning policy on flood risk in Northumberland.

**Question 95**

The Core Strategy will include a policy on flood risk and it is proposed that the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans together with their policy approaches should form part of this policy. Do you agree with this approach and that there are no other options?

Principles for flood risk management

18.6 Evidence shows that while flooding is not a widespread issue for much of Northumberland, within settlements such as Morpeth, Rothbury, Hexham, Blyth, Belford, Haydon Bridge, Haltwhistle, Alnmouth, and Berwick-upon-Tweed, the risk of flooding is high. Whilst the Core Strategy should not repeat national policy, based on local evidence it is considered that a policy on flood risk management should be included in the Core Strategy to assist in reducing the risks and impacts of flooding.

18.7 It is proposed that the Core Strategy should include a flood risk management policy which would:

- minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure;
- clearly set out flood risk zones;
- avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding, through the application of a ‘sequential test’ to look for alternative sites with a lower flood risk where appropriate, utilising the findings and recommendations of the Council’s SFRA;
- ensure that, where new development is exceptionally necessary in flood risk areas, such development is safe and does not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduces flood risk overall;
- require more detailed flood risk assessment where necessary; and
- assess how development may impact on existing flood defences.

Question 96
Are the principles for flood risk management, set out in paragraph 18.7, appropriate for the Core Strategy?

The sequential test

18.8 National policy requires a sequential test which aims to minimise the risk of flooding when allocating land and determining planning applications by steering development towards low risk areas. There are three stages to this process:

Table 18.1 Sequential test stages

| Stage 1 | Aim to steer new development to areas of lowest flood risk. |
| Stage 2 | Where Stage 1 is not possible, ensure that the vulnerability of the development is compatible with the flood zone. |
| Stage 3 | Where Stage 2 cannot be achieved, then it may be suitable to apply the Exception Test, which would show that the development would: Provide wider benefits to the community; Be safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduce the risk overall. |

Table 18.2 Flood risk vulnerability classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Examples of type of development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Infrastructure</td>
<td>Transport, energy infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water compatible development</td>
<td>Outdoor recreation, docks, quarries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly vulnerable</td>
<td>Caravan and basement homes, flood response emergency services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More vulnerable</td>
<td>Places where people live, stay or gather for long periods (for example homes, care homes, hospitals, schools, prisons, hotels, pubs and holiday parks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less vulnerable</td>
<td>Places that are not lived in or used continuously (for example offices, factories, shops, restaurants and takeaways)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 18.3 Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility \(^{(68)}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flood Zone</th>
<th>Flood risk vulnerability classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essential infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Exception test required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Exception test required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Y - Development is appropriate; N - Development should not be permitted)

#### 18.9

[Para. *P*] The Northumberland Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment suggests more detailed stages to the sequential test, which could be included within the Core Strategy. \(^{(69)}\) This includes placing mixed use developments into a higher classification, consideration of the possible effects of climate change, and disregarding existing flood defences when applying the test. Also when the sequential test is used to allocate land all 'highly vulnerable' development should be considered first, then 'more vulnerable' and so on.

#### Question 97

Should the Core Strategy include a policy which applies the sequential test and the exception test, taking into account local circumstances and the findings and the findings of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, including the more detailed stages to the sequential test identified in 18.9?

#### Flood Defences

18.10 There are a number of existing flood defences and other flood management structures across Northumberland. These are mostly on rivers close to low lying populated areas or other vulnerable land uses.

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68 Source: Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Table 5-3
69 Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Paragraph 5.3
In January 2012 the Council and the Environment Agency (EA) secured funding for a number of flood and coastal defence schemes throughout the county, with an indication that more schemes could be funded in 2013-14.

- Blyth Sea Defences;
- Morpeth Flood Alleviation Scheme;
- Till Tweed Site of Special Scientific Interest Restoration Strategy;
- Netherton Flood Alleviation Scheme;
- Newbiggin Bay Beach Management Phase 2;
- Newbiggin Point Coastal Protection Scheme; and
- North Blyth Coast Protection Scheme

Following the 2008 flood at Morpeth, work has begun on designing a major flood alleviation scheme with the preferred scheme at the moment involving raised flood defences and storage of flood water upstream.

Despite existing and proposed flood defences there are still many settlements and areas affected by flooding where there will be a need to plan for additional flood defence and management schemes. The Core Strategy should, therefore, include criteria against which proposals can be assessed and any impacts mitigated, including the need to safeguard land from development that is required for future flood management.

**Question 98**

Should the Core Strategy include a criteria-based enabling policy which seeks to ensure the implementation of approved flood alleviation schemes?

**Making development more resilient to flooding**

Areas which are protected by flood defences and other flood management structures may still be at risk of potential flooding. Occasionally, new buildings will need to be located in flood risk areas. This additional flood risk can be managed through means such as improving water flow, building secondary barriers behind main flood defences, creating drainage networks, using the most vulnerable land for parkland, or by making the buildings themselves resistant or resilient.

Where buildings are likely to be affected by flood waters, they can be designed to be resistant to flood waters entering ('dry proofing'), or, if this cannot be achieved, to be as resilient as possible should the water enter ('wet proofing'). The Northumberland Level 1 SFRA has identified a number of resistance and resilience measures for the Council.

18. Water environment

to consider when assessing development proposals which would make developments better placed to deal with flooding. This detailed guidance broadly covers building materials, foundations, floors, walls, doors and windows, fittings and utilities.\(^7\)

18.16 Populated areas, including town centres in Northumberland are at risk from flooding, and it is considered that a Core Strategy policy should set criteria on flood resistance and resilience measures for assessing new development, redevelopment and change of use proposals at risk from flooding. To not include such a policy would increase vulnerability of development to flooding.

Question 99

Do you agree the Core Strategy should include a policy setting out the principles for measures to increase resilience and resistance to flood risk when considering development proposals, based upon national guidance and the findings of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment?

Managing surface water in developments

18.17 Relatively small changes in hard surfacing and surface gradients can cause flooding (i.e. garden loss and reuse of brownfield sites). As a result, surface water flooding can become more frequent. Surface water flooding is an issue within parts of Northumberland, particularly Cramlington, Blyth, Hexham, Morpeth, and Ponteland. In these areas there is a need for surface water management planning to reduce the risk of flooding from new development.

18.18 The management of surface water can be achieved via a requirement to restrict runoff from developed sites. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are the key method for doing this. There are many different types of SuDS that could be used in new developments including use of surfaces that water can easily pass through (permeable surfaces), re-use of rainwater, green roofs, filter drains to separate surface water from waste water, and ponds and wetlands to deal with excess water. The various methods are intended to either increase the amount of rainwater soaking into the ground, or holding back excess water away from development. Different areas will have different types of SuDS which are the most effective.

18.19 There are also two specific local surface water issues within Northumberland:

- Areas of south east Northumberland are reliant on a system of pumps to deal with surface water. The impact of new development on this system must be carefully considered. Evidence suggests that SuDS will be essential.

- A small part of the wastewater from South East Northumberland and South and West Northumberland is treated at Howdon Wastewater Treatment Works in North Tyneside, along with wastewater from neighbouring authorities. There are potential future capacity issues relating to the treatment works. A large part of the Howdon catchment is served by combined sewers and there is often no option but to accept both foul and surface

71 Northumberland County Council, SFRA Level 1, September 2010, Table 6-1
18. Water environment

Water from developments, leading to unnecessary treatment of surface water. To ensure wastewater from future new development can be accommodated at the treatment works, there is a need for the Council to work with other local authorities as well Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency on a strategic policy to reduce the amount of surface water in new developments, and separate it from the sewerage system.

18.20 Examining the evidence in relation to surface water issues in Northumberland, it is considered essential that the Core Strategy should ensure that new developments aim to control, separate and minimise surface water runoff.

**Question 100**

Should the Core Strategy include a policy which requires all new development to control, separate and minimise surface water runoff as well as employ Sustainable Drainage Systems, where appropriate?

**Coastal erosion and coastal change management**

18.21 Much of the Northumberland coastline has important natural assets and distinctive land and seascapes. The remainder is fronted by a number of Northumberland’s settlements including Berwick-upon-Tweed, Seahouses, Amble, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Blyth and intervening villages such as Beadnell, Alnmouth, Craster, Cresswell, Cambois and Seaton Sluice. All of these are important communities and contributors to the local economy. Only a small proportion of the coastline is protected by man-made defences, most notably in the more urban areas.

18.22 The Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2) provides a large-scale assessment of the risks to places and people as well as the historic and natural environment from coastal erosion and sea flooding. It presents a policy framework to manage these risks over the next 20, 50 and 100 years. Based on five policy development zones for Northumberland\(^{(72)}\), the SMP2 broadly recommends the following measures to be appropriate in each zone.

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\(^{(72)}\) Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2, May 2009 (Figure 3.2: Policy Development Zones)
Table 18.4 Summary of shoreline management plan policies for policy development zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intent of shoreline management policies</th>
<th>Zone 1: Scottish Border to Budle Bay</th>
<th>Zone 2: Bamburgh to Seaton Point</th>
<th>Zone 3: Seaton Point to Beacon Hill</th>
<th>Zone 4: Beacon Hill to Beacon Point</th>
<th>Zone 5: Newbiggin Moor to Seaton Sluice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain the naturalness of the undefended areas of coast</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow natural devolution to maintain / enhance landscape, tourism and environmental value.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage evolution over undefended parts to maintain / enhance landscape, tourism and environmental value.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain / enhance ecological interest and amenity benefits.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect residential / commercial from sea flooding / coastal erosion</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect commercial / regeneration opportunities from sea flooding / coastal erosion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install local defences where sustainable to protect communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance natural environment through rearrangement of defences within estuaries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain defence to urban and industrial areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2, Non-Technical Summary, October 2010
There are areas where there is the need to address the issue of coastal erosion and to ensure the implementation of shoreline management policies to protect commercial, economic and residential areas. Key challenges posed by the Shoreline Management Plan include the possible need to relocate caravan parks or golf courses and realign sections of roads in certain zones, as well as specific issues of eroding colliery spoil in the Lynemouth area and sea flooding at Blyth.

The Core Strategy has a role to play in overseeing and planning for this coastal change over time and directing development accordingly. To help guide the location of new development the Council has started work to identify areas of the coast likely to be significantly affected by coastal change over the next 100 years. This will establish Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs), within which there will be the need to set out the type of development that will be appropriate, the circumstances in which certain types of development may be permissible and the allocations of land for appropriate development.

The Council and its partners are only at the early stages of defining CCMAs for Northumberland and it is considered that the designation of CCMAs should form part of the Northumberland Delivery Development Plan Document with the Core Strategy containing a high level policy to provide the context for the determination of planning applications and the allocation of sites for development in areas subject to coastal erosion and coastal change. In developing such a policy there will be the need to take account of the requirements of the UK Marine Policy Statement and the forthcoming marine plan for the north east to ensure integration of land-use and marine planning.

It is proposed that the Core Strategy should include a high level criteria-based policy on coastal erosion and coastal change management which would seek to ensure that:

- Development proposals avoid areas vulnerable to coastal change, having regard to the Shoreline Management Plan;
- Development proposals demonstrate the need for a coastal location;
- In areas identified as being vulnerable to coastal change, development proposals are accompanied by a coastal change vulnerability assessment;
- An assessment of the impact of development on existing coastal defence infrastructure is provided, including whether new infrastructure is required; and
- Proposals for new or replacement coastal defence schemes are permitted where it can be demonstrated that the works are consistent with the relevant management approach for the area as set out in the Shoreline Management Plan.

**Question 101**

Are the factors for coastal erosion and coastal change management, set out in paragraph 18.26, appropriate for the Core Strategy?
18. Water environment

Water quality

18.27 European legislation requires all inland and coastal waterbodies to achieve a ‘good’ or ‘good potential’ status by 2015. Just under half of the inland waterbodies in Northumberland are already achieving this target. For those that are not River Basin Management Plans have action plans to assist in bringing them up to standard. Northumberland has 13 designated bathing water areas, of which 11 are achieving the standards set out in European policy. Spittal and Low Newton failed to reach the required standards in 2011. There is also one designated ‘shellfish water’ around Holy Island, which has intermittently achieved the required water quality over recent years.

18.28 The challenge for the Core Strategy is to maintain current water quality and improve areas which are not currently meeting required European and national standards. It is important that discharges from new developments do not compromise the quality of river and coastal waters, nor should development be put at risk from water pollution.

18.29 It is proposed that the Core Strategy should include a policy regarding water quality, covering the need to:

- Maintain and improve the water quality of Northumberland, having regard to local river basin management plans and the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study;

- Avoid development which would have a harmful impact on the quality and quantity of water bodies and groundwater resources, and the ecosystems that they support;

- Ensure that, through effective water management, new development should not result in deterioration in existing water quality, and where appropriate should contribute towards improving it; and

- Ensure that new or improved water and sewage treatment facilities, including coastal outfalls, contribute towards improvement in water quality and demonstrate there is no significant adverse impact upon the natural environment.

Question 102

Are the principles for water quality management, set out in paragraph 18.29, appropriate for the Core Strategy?
Water supply and sewerage facilities and networks

Water supply

18.30 In terms of water resources and supply, water stress occurs when water demand exceeds availability during a period of time. Northumberland is classed as an area of low water stress.\textsuperscript{74} Most of the river catchments in Northumberland are classified as having ‘Water Available’; however the rivers Coquet and Font have been identified as experiencing water resource availability issues.

18.31 The supply of water in Northumberland is split into two ‘water resource zones’ (WRZ); Kielder WRZ and the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ. The Kielder WRZ serves the majority of development and population in Northumberland and the majority of proposed new development which would fall within this WRZ is capable of being supported. The Berwick and Fowberry WRZ serves the far north of Northumberland and whilst there is a surplus water supply, shortages of supply have been experienced during periods of high demand. Work has been undertaken by NWL to improve this situation however there may be a need for further action, including improving infrastructure, demand management and leakage control.

18.32 Water availability is not a major issue for Northumberland. However, the Core Strategy needs to make sure that the expected level and distribution of development will not result in water supply issues.

Sewerage facilities and networks

18.33 The capacity for existing sewerage infrastructure to cope with new development in the county is also an important issue and a high level assessment has also been undertaken to assess the capacity of both the sewer network and the wastewater treatment works\textsuperscript{75}.

18.34 In terms of network infrastructure, a number of potential development areas have experienced incidents of sewer flooding which could mean that the use of the existing network is not an option. Any further development in these areas could require upgrades to the system, although this is likely to impact on the phasing of development rather than the overall amount of development. Further detailed work is needed once development locations are known in order to establish whether improvements would be needed.

18.35 A number of Northumberland’s wastewater treatment works have capacity to accommodate wastewater from proposed levels of new development, however several treatment works do not have any spare capacity to accept and treat further wastewater from new development either at the current time or in the near future and solutions would be needed to treat additional wastewater generated as a result of proposed development. Once development locations are known further detailed work will need to be undertaken to ensure that sewerage facilities are adequate to support the development strategy for Northumberland, taking into account the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy also.

\textsuperscript{74} Environment Agency, Areas of Water Stress: Final Classification, October 2007
\textsuperscript{75} Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study
18. Water environment

18.36 Examining the information in relation to the capacity of the water supply and sewerage facilities and networks, the Core Strategy will need to ensure that the suggested level and distribution of development proposed is deliverable and will not result in issues that cannot be resolved.

18.37 It is proposed that the Core Strategy should include a policy for water supply and sewerage which will:

- Ensure that there is adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure to serve existing and proposed developments;

- Minimise the need for new infrastructure by directing development to areas where there is existing or planned capacity in the sewerage infrastructure and an adequate supply of water can be guaranteed, having regard to the infrastructure provider’s Water Resource Management Plan and Strategic Business Plan as well as the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study;

- Ensure that where new infrastructure is needed to serve a new development it does not have a harmful impact on existing systems, the amenity of local residents and the environment; and

- Ensure that new infrastructure provision is phased alongside new development.

**Question 103**

Are the principles for water supply and sewerage infrastructure, set out in paragraph 18.37, appropriate for the Core Strategy?
19. Historic environment

19.1 Northumberland’s rich cultural heritage has left a huge legacy of well-preserved archaeological sites, historic buildings and other assets - many of national and international importance, including Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site. These represent a valuable resource for communities and visitors alike. Key issues for the Core Strategy are:

- How to conserve, protect and enhance Northumberland’s heritage assets and their settings
- Maintain the integrity of Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site and its setting.

19.2 The built and historic environment makes an important contribution to the character, quality, sense of place, environment and economy in Northumberland. Northumberland’s cultural heritage, detailed in table 19.1 has been shaped by a unique combination of factors which include the quality of its agricultural and natural resources, its position as a national and maritime frontier, its importance for north-south communication between England and Scotland and by its political and physical remoteness.

Table 19.1 Designated heritage assets in Northumberland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Number of assets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Heritage Site</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Monuments</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade I listed buildings</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade II* listed buildings</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade II listed buildings</td>
<td>5,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Areas</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Battlefields</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: English Heritage, the National Heritage List for England, June 2011
19. Historic environment

19.3 It is important that the built environment is managed and developed in a sustainable way. New development should reinforce and complement local character and distinctiveness. The Core Strategy should recognise the importance of the historic environment as a cultural asset, contributing to character and sense of place, a potential catalyst for regeneration and tourism and a key element of the sustainability agenda.

Conservation, protection and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings

19.4 National policy gives strong protection to the historic environment, recognising the multiple ways it supports and contributes to the economy, society and daily life. Within this context, the Core Strategy should set out a positive proactive strategy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the historic environment that recognises its significance and uniqueness within Northumberland.

19.5 The Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER)(77), and a range of other local studies such as conservation area character appraisals, conservation area management plans, and the Historic Landscape Characterisation, provide a comprehensive evidence base which will inform the decision making process in guiding and determining applications.

Question 104

Should the Core Strategy include a policy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting informed by the Historic Environment Record, with particular emphasis on locally specific criteria?

Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

19.6 Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, in Northumberland, was designated by UNESCO in 1987. The World Heritage Site has a management plan which is a UK government requirement for a World Heritage Site to provide an essential framework for the management of the site to ensure its preservation for present and future generations.

19.7 One of the key objectives within the Hadrian’s Wall Management Plan 2008-2014 is to secure protection of the World Heritage Site’s Outstanding Universal Value, fabric, integrity and authenticity through appropriate legislative provision. Government guidance states that “it is essential that appropriate policies are included in the Core Strategy” and that the importance of maintaining the integrity of Hadrian's Wall and its landscape setting must be recognised. The Hadrian’s Wall Management Plan states that local authorities should carry forward the proposals of the three-level framework, detailed below, into their local development plans. The Core Strategy will ensure:

77 The Northumberland Historic Environment Record contains wide ranging information on the entire historic environment including nationally, regionally and locally important non-designated heritage assets.
19. Historic environment

- there should be a presumption in favour of preserving the fabric, integrity and authenticity of archaeological sites that form part of the World Heritage Site. Development that would have a detrimental effect on archaeological remains and their setting should be refused;

- proposed development in the Buffer Zone should be assessed for its impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, and particularly on key views both into and out of it: development that would have an adverse impact on Outstanding Universal Value should be refused; and

- proposed developments outside the boundaries of the Buffer Zone will be carefully assessed for their effect on the Outstanding Universal Value, and any that would have an adverse effect on it should be refused.

**Question 105**

Do you agree with the proposed policy approach to the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site?
20. Making it happen

20.1 The Core Strategy sets out a vision and aspiration for Northumberland to 2030. It is the county’s key document in delivering sustainable development and managing land use change.

20.2 Covering a 15 year timeframe, the plan provides a positive and realistic framework. Delivery is central to the Council’s approach, ensuring objectively assessed development and infrastructure needs are met, balanced with appropriate environmental protection.

Decision taking

20.3 Importantly, the relationship between the Northumberland Core Strategy and decision taking on planning applications should be seamless. The plan will be positively translated into high quality development on the ground.

20.4 Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal will be included in the plan. Significant adverse impacts on any of the economic, social and environmental dimensions will be avoided. Where such effects are unavoidable, adequate mitigation or compensation will be secured through planning obligations and conditions.

Infrastructure delivery and Community Infrastructure Levy

20.5 Developers currently contribute to infrastructure and other site specific facilities or services through planning obligations or S106 agreements. Whilst agreements for certain aspects of developments will still be sought in this way, it is intended that shared infrastructure will be delivered through a Community Infrastructure Levy. This will support and incentivise new development particularly through linking levy receipts to the neighbourhoods where development takes place.

20.6 The Council is currently preparing an infrastructure delivery plan. This will establish key infrastructure requirements across the county including transport, utilities, community facilities and other aspects vital to the proper functioning of Northumberland.

Cross boundary working

20.7 Through implementation of the Northumberland Core Strategy, the Council will continue to work collaboratively with adjoining authorities. This approach will ensure appropriate land and infrastructure is provided as necessary to support current and future levels of development.

Neighbourhood Plans

20.8 In translating the Northumberland Core Strategy into implementation the Council will continue to support neighbourhood planning. Already the Council has a number of neighbouring planning ‘front-runners’ and these should provide for a powerful local tool to ensure neighbourhoods deliver the sustainable development they need.
20. Making it happen

Monitoring and ensuring delivery

20.9 The Northumberlnd Core Strategy must be deliverable. The Council will pay careful attention to viability and costs. Policy obligations and burdens should not be such that otherwise acceptable developments are stopped.

20.10 Recognising however that the plan will operate for 15 years it is important that sufficient flexibility is incorporated to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances. As such the plan will be kept up to date through annual monitoring and as necessary review.
## Appendix 1: Audit of services and facilities survey data

### Settlement services audit for North Northumberland (tier 1 and tier 2 settlements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source (data correct at November 2013)</th>
<th>Local Land and Property Gazetteer / Northumberland County Council Education</th>
<th>Local Land and Property Gazetteer</th>
<th>NCC Employment Land Schedule 2009</th>
<th>Tiers of Local Authority</th>
<th>Retail and Town Centres Study/Trading Standards</th>
<th>Trading Standards</th>
<th>Local Land and Property Gazetteer</th>
<th>Northumberland County Council Transport</th>
<th>InfraNet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tier                                       | Category                       | Nursery | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private 
|                                            |                               | GPO Post | Trading Standards |  |
| Arnot                                    | 1                              |ibrary | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private  |  |
| Belford                                   | 2                              |ibrary | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private  |  |  |
| Entrance to Tweedale (including East Ord/Spittal/Tweedmouth) | 3                              |ibrary | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private  |  |  |
| Rothbury                                 | 4                              |ibrary | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private  |  |  |
| Seahouses/North Sunderland                | 5                              |ibrary | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private  |  |  |
| Widdow                                   | 6                              |ibrary | First school | Primary school | Junior school | Senior school | Hospital (including community hospitals) | Max Health Centres/CAs | Outpatient | Government | Public transport | Social Care | Private care | Private  |  |  |
### Appendix 1: Audit of services and facilities survey data

#### Settlement services audit for North Northumberland (tier 3 settlements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Audit Score</th>
<th>District Area</th>
<th>District Area</th>
<th>District Area</th>
<th>District Area</th>
<th>District Area</th>
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<td>Lellington</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table above provides a comprehensive audit of services and facilities for tier 3 settlements in North Northumberland, including specific scores and details for each settlement.
Appendix 1: Audit of services and facilities survey data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Primary Use</th>
<th>Secondary Use</th>
<th>Tertiary Use</th>
<th>Quaternary Use</th>
<th>Total Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northumbur</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table above is a simplified representation of the data provided in the document.*
## Settlement services audit for South and West Northumberland (tier 1 and tier 2 settlements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Local Land and Property Gazetteer / Northumberland County Council Education</th>
<th>Local Land and Property Gazetteer</th>
<th>NHS</th>
<th>NCC Employment Land Schedule 2009</th>
<th>Retail and Town Centres Study / Trading Standards</th>
<th>Trading Standards</th>
<th>Local Land and Property Gazetteer</th>
<th>Northumberland County Council Transport</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data source (data correct at November 2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
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<td>Pontefract</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Notes
- "Excludes Sanderson Arms" indicates the exclusion of a specific location or feature from the data.
- "PT" in some cells likely stands for "Public Transport" or a similar category, but more context is needed for a precise interpretation.

### Analysis
- The table appears to be a detailed audit of services and facilities in various settlements, focusing on aspects such as education, employment, health, trading standards, transport, and public amenities.
- Specific indicators like "Bus Frequency" and "Train Frequency" suggest a focus on accessibility and connectivity.
- The presence of "NHS" and "Retail and Town Centres Study" highlights the range of services under review.

### Implications
- The audit is likely aimed at identifying gaps or strengths in service provision, informing policy or improvement strategies.
- Detailed data on transport (e.g., "Bus Frequency") suggests a consideration of how physical access impacts service delivery and usage.

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### Further Information
- The document is part of a larger strategy or consultation, possibly informing local development plans or service reviews.
- The date "May 2012" indicates the publication or data collection date, which is relevant for understanding the timeliness and context of the information.

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### Contextual Knowledge
- "NHS" typically refers to the National Health Service, a public healthcare system in the UK, which may indicate the importance of health facilities in the audit.
- "Bus Frequency" and "Train Frequency" are crucial for assessing connectivity and accessibility, which are key factors in service delivery.

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### Conclusion
- The table provides a structured and detailed view of settlement services, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions and improvements.
- The presence of "Excludes Sanderson Arms" and "PT" indicates a nuanced approach to data presentation, catered to specific needs or exclusions.

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### Additional Notes
- The document also includes a section titled "Appendix 1: Audit of services and facilities survey data," suggesting an supplementary resource for those interested in the detailed methodology or additional data.
- The "Transcript" might refer to a digital or printed version of the document, providing broader access to the audit findings.
### Settlement services audit for South and West Northumberland (tier 3 settlements)

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*Note: Data sourced from the Local Land and Property Gazetteer as of November 2010.*
Appendix 1: Audit of services and facilities survey data

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Notes:
- Settlement 1: Excellent
- Settlement 2: Good
- Settlement 3: Average
- Settlement 4: Below Average

South and West Northumberland (tier 4 settlements)
## Appendix 1: Audit of services and facilities survey data

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*Note: Y = Yes, N = No*
Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

Alnwick
Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

Ashington
Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

Berwick-upon-Tweed

Key
- Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Shopping Area

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Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

Blyth
Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

Cramlington
Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

Hexham

Key
- Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Shopping Area
Appendix 2: Town centre boundaries

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

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

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

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

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

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving biological diversity. Northumberland has a BAP and there are individual BAPs for different key habitats and species.

Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (BEREZ) Spanning the north and south banks of the River Blyth. A partnership of public and private organisations is working to bring further investment into this zone from the renewable energy sector, particularly in relation to offshore wind.

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) One of the world’s leading assessment methods for sustainable buildings, primarily commercial.

Cambois Zone of Economic Opportunity An area of expansion land at Cambois, designated in the existing Wansbeck Local Plan for development by businesses requiring large sites in non-estate locations.

Clean Coal Technologies that may reduce emissions of carbon dioxide \((\text{CO}_2)\) and other greenhouse gases associated with power generation from coal. This includes carbon capture and storage and coal gasification.

Climate Change Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth’s climate. Now accepted as partly attributable to increased carbon dioxide \((\text{CO}_2)\) emissions, such as those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, power stations, factories and homes.
**Community Right to Build** An order made by the Local Planning Authority under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Code for Sustainable Homes (CFSH)** A national standard developed by the Government, the Building Research Establishment and the construction industry, which measures the sustainability of a home against measures of energy and water use, surface water run-off, CO₂ emissions and other pollution, waste production etc.

**Commercial and Industrial Waste** Controlled waste arising from premises, used wholly or mainly, for industry and commerce of various kinds.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** A Levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area to help fund infrastructure necessary as a result of new development. Charges are based on the size and type of the new development. While there is more flexibility than Section 106 Agreements in terms of how the money can be spent, the system gives developers greater clarity from the start as to these additional development costs.

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

**Conditions (or ‘planning condition’)** Requirements attached to a planning permission to limit or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.

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

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

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

**Core Strategy** A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area, having regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy. This document forms the first stage of the Core Strategy for Northumberland excluding the area of Northumberland National Park.

**Delivery Area** Any of three areas defined for planning purposes for the core strategy, based on those in the Sustainable Community Strategy and on housing market areas.

**Delivery Development Plan Document** The development plan document that will be prepared following the Core Strategy in order to set out more detailed policies, proposals and allocations the main purpose of which is to ensure that the Core Strategy policies are realised on the ground.

**Designated area** An area defined by a line on a map which, by virtue of statute, enjoys a degree of protection from development that would impact adversely on the wildlife, landscape or other natural asset within its boundary.
**Glossary**

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

**Development Management** The process whereby a local planning authority considers a planning application and whether it should be given permission.

**Development Plan** This includes adopted council development plan documents such as core strategies and any future adopted neighbourhood plans setting out the authorities policies for the development and use of land (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act).

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** DPDs are adopted plans and documents that form part of the development plan. Once adopted, planning decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise. DPDs can include core strategy, allocations and delivery plans, area action plans, and neighbourhood plans.

**District Centres** A second tier of shopping / service centres identified in the Town Centre and Retail Study for Northumberland consisting of five centres: Amble, Bedlington, Ponteland, Prudhoe and Haltwhistle.

**Ecosystem approach** The integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, and which recognises that people with their cultural and varied social needs, are an integral part of ecosystems.

**Ecosystem services** The benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

**Employment Land** Land allocated / reserved for industrial and business use.

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

**Environment Agency** A governmental body that deals with issues of the environmental effects of activities including those arising from development – e.g. pollution, waste arising, water issues including flood protection advice.

**Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)** Undertaken to ensure that equality issues are taken into account throughout the Core Strategy process, and that it promotes equality and diversity and does not adversely affect or discriminate against any of the ‘protected’ Equality groups.

**European Geopark** A defined area with a particular geological heritage that may also be archaeological, ecological, historical or cultural and where the development of Geotourism may take place. The North Pennines AONB has been designated as such.
European Marine Site (EMS) A sub-tidal and/or inter-tidal area of European importance for marine and coastal habitats and species, including any area that is the subject of SAC or SPA status that is also covered by tidal water. The whole of the Northumberland coastal area north of Alnmouth forms part of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland EMS.

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

Evidence Base The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development. It includes a wide range of numerical data and other information, including, surveys, studies, discussions and consultations.

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

Geodiversity The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green Belt (not to be confused with the term ‘greenfield’) A land designation with the fundamental aim to prevent urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in paragraph 80 of the NPPF are: to check the restricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and, assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

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

Greenfield Land or Site Land (or a defined site) which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

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

Groundwater An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.

Growth Point A Government initiative to support local authorities with plans for long-term sustainable housing-led growth. South East Northumberland, comprising the former Blyth Valley and Wansbeck Districts and some parts of the former Castle Morpeth district to the north, achieved Growth Point status in July 2008.

Gypsies and travellers (for planning purposes) Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.
**Glossary**

**Habitat** An area or type of natural area within which certain species or groupings of species can exist naturally. They should not be considered in isolation but instead they are linked, overlapping and take many forms.

**Habitats Regulations** A set of government regulations (currently the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), which sets out requirements within England regarding the protection and enhancement of important natural assets, giving expression to various European Directives, international Conventions and national statutes.

**Hazardous Waste** Wastes that have the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment, for example contaminated soil.

**Heritage Coast** Areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors. Northumberland’s Heritage Coast stretches from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border.

**Household** A person living alone or a group of people living together at the same address and with common housekeeping.

**Housing requirement** The amount of housing that has to be built in a given period to meet needs and demands. In the past it has been set at regional level but, in future, it will be calculated separately for Northumberland based on evidence.

**Independent Examination** The process by which an Independent Planning Inspector publicly examines a Development Plan Document to ensure that it is 'sound' in terms of factors such as the evidence on which it is based, national policy, consultations undertaken etc.

**Infill Development** Building on a relatively small site between existing buildings.

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** Telecommunications networks such as telephone lines, mobile phone masts and broadband and internet infrastructure.

**Infrastructure** The physical entities (for example roads, railways, sewers, pipes, telecommunications lines) that is necessary for communities to function and move around.

**Inset boundary** The inner boundary of the Green Belt around a town or village that is within its general extent and is not itself covered (or “washed over”) by the Green Belt designation. This means that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within the settlement concerned.

**Inspector’s Report** A report issued by an Independent Planning Inspector regarding the planning issues debated at the independent examination of a development plan or a planning inquiry. For DPDs it will contain recommendations to the authority on changes to the plan and an opinion as to whether it is a sound plan.

**Landfill (including land raising)** The permanent disposal of residual waste into the ground, by the filling of man-made voids or similar features. The construction of land forms above ground level is called land raising.
**Landscape Character** The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identified 44 landscape character types, and 108 landscape character areas with similar characteristics within the plan area.

**Listed Building** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II.

**Local Centre** A tier of shopping / service centres including a range of small shops and limited services serving either a small catchment or a sparsely populated larger catchment.

**Local Development Order** A mechanism to simplify planning guidance to encourage economic growth by allowing certain forms of development to be undertaken without the need for planning permission, subject to specified conditions and design guidance.

**Local Nature Reserve** Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.

**Local Plan** The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area such as Northumberland. The term also describes older planning documents prepared by the former Northumberland authorities. Many policies in these plans continue to be “saved” and form part of the Development Plan for decision-making purposes.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP)** The Council’s fifteen year strategy for maintaining and improving highways and transport, including key goals and challenges and how these should be addressed through policies, programmes and schemes.

**Local Wildlife and Geological Site (LWGS)** A defined area within which there are habitats, wildlife or geology which is considered, locally, important to protect and manage. Includes sites formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) and Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs).

**Low Carbon Energy** Energy which requires the burning of fossil fuels (i.e. not renewable) but generated through processes and technologies that release less carbon dioxide than conventional means, for example combined heat and power plants (CHP), and heat pumps.

**Low Cost Market Housing** Usually refers to new build dwellings that are sold for 100% owner occupation but at a price that is discounted from the price than they could be sold for on the open market. These are not part of the definition of affordable housing.

**Major Developed Sites** Sites within and washed over by the Green Belt where there is a major development, in use or abandoned, such as a hospital, military site, industrial or commercial buildings.

**Material Consideration** A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

**Mineral Resource** A potential mineral deposit where the quality and quantity of material present has not necessarily been tested – see also “Resource Area”
Minerals Reserves  Mineral deposits which have been tested to establish the quality and quantity of material present and which could be economically and technically exploited.

Mineral Safeguarding Areas  An area designated by the Minerals Planning Authority (i.e. the County Council), which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to keep safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Municipal Waste  Household waste and any other waste, such as fly-tipped waste, food waste from restaurants etc. collected by the Waste Collection Authority (Northumberland County Council).

National Character Area (NCA)  A Nationally Defined Landscape Character Area. Nine NCAs fall within Northumberland and form the basis for the defining of the Northumberland LCAs.

National Nature Reserve (NNR)  Area designated with the aim of securing protection and appropriate management of the most important wildlife habitat, and to provide a resource for scientific research. All NNRs are Sites of Special Scientific Interest.


Neighbourhood Plan  A plan prepared for a defined area by a “qualifying body”, a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum. When adopted a neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan  A development plan document prepared by the former Northumberland County Council that covered strategic matters. Only one policy remains saved from that plan (policy S5), defining the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth.

Northumberland National Park  Designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, the designation seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The Park sits entirely within the boundary of Northumberland but is a separate local planning authority area.

Open Space  Usually used in relation to built-up areas. Refers to all open areas of public value, which can offer opportunities for sport, and recreation, as well as a visual amenity and haven for wildlife. Public open space is where public access may or may not be formally established.

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)  All World Heritage Sites must have cultural and/or natural heritage which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity (in Northumberland’s case, Hadrian’s Wall WHS).

Permitted Development  Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed without the need to make an application for planning permission.
**Planning Obligation** A legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL) or ‘Brownfield’ Land** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Primary Shopping Area** Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and secondary frontages). Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing, and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas, and businesses.

**Ramsar Sites** Sites designated under the European Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats.

**Recovery (of waste)** Value can be recovered from waste by recovering materials through recycling, composting or recovery of energy.

**Regeneration** The economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of rural and urban areas.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** This remains part of the development plan until abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act of 2011. It identifies the scale and distribution of new housing and specified priorities for regeneration, the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment. Many of these elements must now be dealt with in the Core Strategy.

**Registered Battlefields** An area designated in the English Heritage Register of Historic Battlefields, the purpose of which is to offer them protection and to promote a better understanding of their historic significance.

**Registered Parks and Gardens (Historic Parks and Gardens)** An area designated by English Heritage for its value as a historic planned landscape or garden. As with Listed Buildings they can be graded I (highest quality), II* or II.

**Renewable Energy** Energy produced using renewable sources such wind, water or biomass. Off shore renewable energy generation projects such as offshore wind or wave power are dealt with by the Marine Management Organisation and the Infrastructure Planning Unit rather than local planning authorities.

**Residual Waste** Waste remaining after materials for re-use, recycling and composting have been removed.

**Resource Area** An area within which a particular mineral, or energy resource occurs.
Rural exception sites Small sites where housing use would not normally be granted permission, which are nevertheless released in order to meet the local community’s affordable housing needs (in perpetuity).

Safeguarded Land Undeveloped land on the outskirts of an inset settlement within the Green Belt. The safeguarded land is not itself designated as Green Belt but, instead, remains as a long term allocation or as “White Land” that is safeguarded for the future expansion needs of the settlement concerned.

Safeguarding The protection of valuable areas of land from disturbance and/or development, due to the presence of natural assets, mineral resource or possible future proposals (such as a bypass line).

Scheduled Monument (SM) Sites that contain deliberately created structures, features and remains that are of national importance and for which scheduling is the best means of protecting them.

Sequential approach / sequential test A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before the consideration of others. For example, town centre retail sites, followed by edge-of-centre sites and then out-of-centre sites or housing in relation to various levels of flood risk.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Defined area containing nationally important wildlife or geology designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Spatial Vision A brief description of how the area is envisioned to have changed by the end of the plan period, as a result of the policies being implemented.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Areas given special protection under the European Union’s Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Areas (SPA) Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) The council’s approach to involving the community in the planning process and development management decisions.

Sterilisation (minerals) When development or land use changes prevent the possible future extraction of an underlying mineral resource.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) Non-statutory documents which add further detail to the policies in statutory documents such as the core strategy – e.g. providing guidance on design in general or on the development of specific sites. SPOs are capable of being a material consideration but do not form part of the development plan.
**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** The process of weighing and assessing policies for their global, national and local sustainability implications in relation to the environment, the economy and society, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with EU Directive 2001/42/EC.

**Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)** A long-term programme of action, published on behalf of the community which reflects the needs and aspirations of the area.

**Sustainable Development** Defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The Government makes clear that sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions which are further explained in the NPPF.

**Town Centre** There are two specific meanings in the context of the Core Strategy:

1. A tier of shopping and service centres identified in the Town Centre and Retail Study as seven centres (Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Morpeth, Blyth, Ashington, Cramlington, Hexham).

2. Defined areas in settlements that include the Primary Shopping Area and adjacent areas where other town centre uses are located. In some settlements, the Town Centre and the Primary Shopping Area may be the same.

**Washed-over** The application of the Green Belt designation to a specified area which may include settlements.

**Waste Streams** Sub-divisions of waste, such as household waste, commercial waste, hazardous waste etc., which will be dealt with in different ways.

**World Heritage Site (WHS)** A cultural or natural site of outstanding universal value designated by an international council of experts, Hadrian's Wall being the only example falling within Northumberland.

**Zero Carbon Building** A building which has net zero carbon emissions.
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