

# **Consett Neighbourhood Plan**

**Pre-submission draft**

**DRAFT**

**June 2024**

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## Foreword

Xxxx

### How to get involved

This draft plan has been informed by community engagement and evidence work. Consett Neighbourhood Forum needs your input to ensure the plan and policies as drafted fully reflect the views of local people. There will be a drop in event on xxx where you can come along to find out more.

You can let the CNF know your views on this draft plan in the following ways:

- Using the online form available at: xxxxx
- By picking up a response form from xxxx and dropping it off xxxx;
- By email to: xxxx; or
- By letter to: xxxx.

If you have any questions about the plan, you can get in touch using the contact details above.

**Comments must be received by noon on xxxx.**

# 1. Introduction

## Background to neighbourhood planning

- 1.1 Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans are community-led, prepared by town and parish councils and in areas without parish councils they are prepared by neighbourhood forums. Neighbourhood plans set out guidance on how new development will be managed. They do this by creating land use 'planning policies'. Plans can deal with a wide range of issues like housing, employment, heritage and transport. In some cases, they may only focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in a local area. Policies within neighbourhood plans cannot block development or support less than already committed in the statutory development plan. What they can do is help shape where that development will go and what it will look like.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood plans can also cover issues which are not related to the use and development of land. They can provide a useful document in which to establish priorities for action to improve an area. These are often referred to as 'community actions'. The main purpose of a neighbourhood plan, however, is to set policies for the use and development of land.
- 1.3 Once a neighbourhood plan has been examined by an independent examiner, agreed at the referendum stage by the local community and 'made' (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority, it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

## Planning context

- 1.4 As they are part of the development plan, neighbourhood plans must be prepared in accordance with legal requirements. The way in which neighbourhood plans are prepared and the policies they contain are tested by an independent examiner who assesses whether the plan meets the 'basic conditions' to ensure they are legally compliant. Neighbourhood plans must:
  - Have regard to national planning policy and guidance;
  - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
  - Be compatible with legal obligations.

### National planning policy and guidance

- 1.5 National planning policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) respectively.

### Development plan

- 1.6 The development plan for the Consett Neighbourhood Area area comprises the policies contained within the County Durham Plan (CDP) which was adopted by Durham County Council (DCC) in 2020. The Consett Neighbourhood Plan ('the plan') has been informed by the planning policies contained within the CDP and its associated evidence base.

### Sustainable development

- 1.7 The purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development as defined by the NPPF. This specifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be the basis for every plan and every planning decision. The most recognised definition of 'sustainable development' is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The basic conditions statement, that

will accompany the submission plan, will explain how the implementation of the plan is expected to contribute to sustainable development.

#### Legal obligations

- 1.8 Neighbourhood plans must be compatible with legal obligations, specifically strategic environmental assessment regulations and conservation of habitats and species regulations. A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a way of ensuring that the environmental implications of policies are taken into account before plans are brought into force. The habitats regulations assessment (HRA) process aims to ensure that the plan will not result in significant damage to internationally important nature conservation sites. Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded an appropriate assessment (AA) must be undertaken.
- 1.9 DCC provided a screening opinion on whether a SEA and/ or AA was required for the plan. The conclusion of the screening opinion for the SEA was xxxx. The HRA screening opinion was that the xxxx.

### **Background to the Consett Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.10 Consett Neighbourhood Area (figure 1) was designated as a neighbourhood area, for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, by DCC on 7 November 2023, the Consett Neighbourhood Forum (CNF) was designated on the same date. CNF established a management committee to guide the preparation of the plan – do you want to say anything more about the forum and management committee?

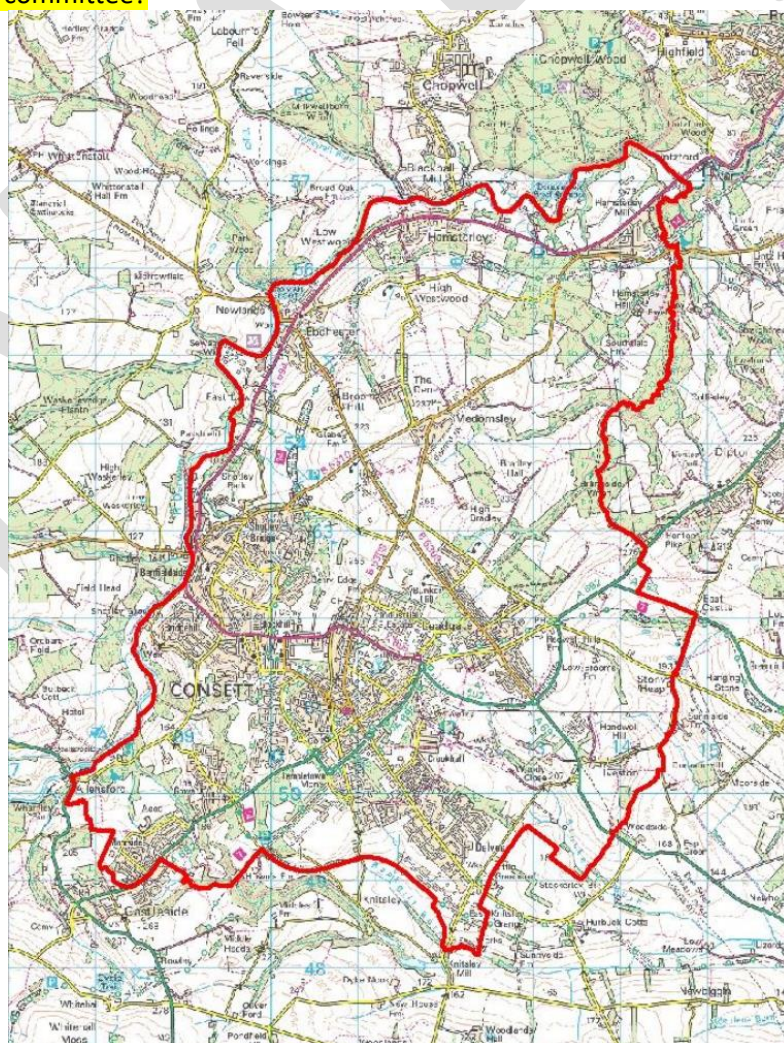


Figure 1 - Consett Neighbourhood Area

1.11 To inform the preparation of the neighbourhood plan the following engagement activities have taken place:

- Summarise the engagement that has taken place

1.12 This draft plan is the result of the early engagement and evidence work. It was approved for consultation by CNF at its meeting on xxx. It identifies:

- The context in which the plan has been prepared – an overview of the area and the **opportunities and challenges** for the plan to address;
- A **positive vision** for the future of the area;
- How the vision of the plan will be **delivered through planning policies** i.e. the policies that **will be used to determine planning applications** within the plan area – providing a framework for sustainable development; and
- How the vision of the plan will be **delivered through community actions** i.e. measures which are **intended to encourage action and influence decisions** taken by relevant bodies.

1.13 The plan covers the period to 2035, which aligns with the CDP [do you want to have a longer plan period? Most NPs are around 15 years, maybe 2040 would be more appropriate?]. During this period, the neighbourhood plan will be reviewed and updated where required. All the background information and feedback from the local community that has informed this pre-submission draft plan is available online at <https://www.canf.org.uk/>

### Next steps

1.14 Following the end of the consultation period the responses will be reviewed to identify whether any modifications need to be made to the plan and its evidence base.

1.15 The current timetable<sup>1</sup> for the next stages of the plan making process are:

- Submission of the plan to DCC for examination: xxx;
- Consultation on the submission plan: xxx;
- Examination of the plan by an independent examiner: xxx;
- Referendum: xxx; and
- Neighbourhood plan 'made' by DCC: xxx.

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<sup>1</sup> The timetable is subject to change, for example feedback from the consultation on the draft plan could result in additional work being undertaken or further engagement and therefore submission delayed.



## 2. Background to Consett Neighbourhood Area

### A brief history of the area

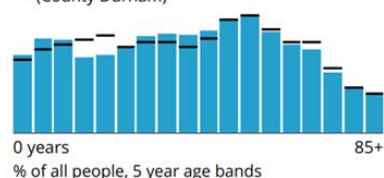
#### 2.1 Add summary of the history of Consett and the settlements within the NA.

### Population, households and housing

- 2.2 Information from the 2021 census illustrates that the plan area has 39,700 people, living in around 18,000 households. Figure 2 illustrates that the age and gender profile of residents in the area is similar to that of the county as a whole. Household size and composition are also similar to those within the wider county, household deprivation levels lower than the county as a whole (see figure 3).

#### Age profile

■ Consett Neighbourhood Area  
— (County Durham)



#### Sex

■ Consett Neighbourhood Area  
■ (County Durham)

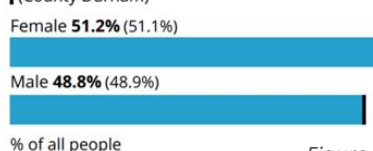
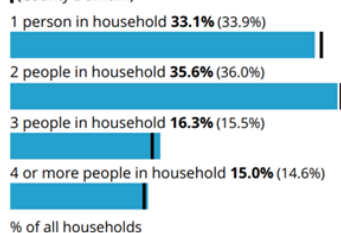


Figure 2 - Age and gender profile

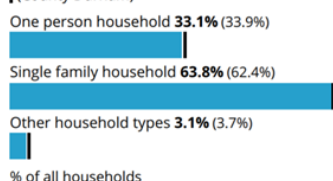
#### Household size

■ Consett Neighbourhood Area  
■ (County Durham)



#### Household composition

■ Consett Neighbourhood Area  
■ (County Durham)



#### Household deprivation

■ Consett Neighbourhood Area  
■ (County Durham)

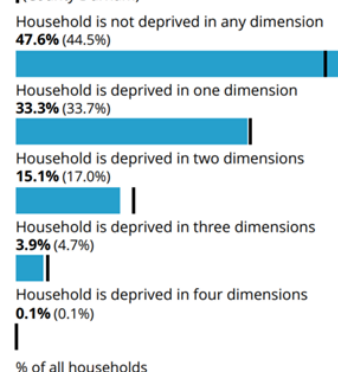


Figure 3 - households

- 2.3 The general health of the population is also comparable with the county as a whole, with 43.6% of the population stating that they were in very good health (43% at the county level). Analysis of ward level population information, does not highlight any significant differences at smaller local levels.
- 2.4 Most dwellings within the neighbourhood area are houses/ bungalows (94.8%, compared to 64.4% in the county), with 5.1% flats, maisonettes or apartments, the remaining 0.1% of households live within a caravan or other mobile/ temporary structure. Within the neighbourhood area 33.9% of households own their properties outright, 32.8% own with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership, 17.6% rent privately or live rent free and 15.7% social rent (compared with 34.5%, 28.3%, 17.2% and 20% in the wider county).

#### 2.5 Any other housing issues to identify here e.g. level of housing development or other housing issues raised through early engagement?

## Access to employment, services and facilities

- 2.6 A higher proportion of the population of the neighbourhood area aged 16 and over, are in employment 56.3% compared to 51.2% in County Durham. Figure 4 illustrates that the level of hours worked are similar to those within the wider county. The population of the neighbourhood area are more highly qualified than those within the wider county with 44.2% having level 1,2 or 3 qualifications and 28.5% having level 4 qualifications and above (compared with 43.7% and 26.7% in the county). There are also slightly more managers, directors and senior officials in the neighbourhood area (10.5% compared to 10.1%) and slightly more employed in professional and associate professional/ technical occupations (29.6% compared to 28.8%).

### Hours per week worked

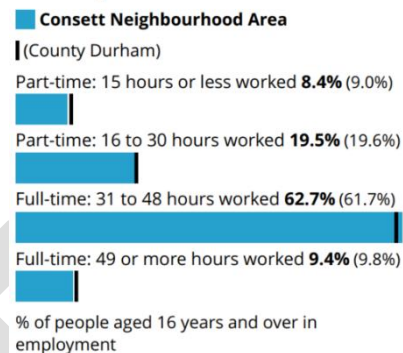


Figure 4 - number of hours per week worked

- 2.7 Add background information on the range of services and facilities provided in the area e.g. retail, leisure, schools, healthcare, community groups, road connections, walking and cycling network, public transport etc.

## Natural, historic and built environment

- 2.8 The plan area has a rich natural environment. The southern boundary of the area lies adjacent to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Figure 5 illustrates that the area includes areas of higher landscape value and figure 6 identifies important biodiversity and geological assets including: areas of ancient woodland; the Allensford Woods Local Nature Reserve; Derwent River Gorge Local Geological Site; and seven local wildlife sites (Knitsley and High House Wood (part), West Wood, Sodfine and Howden Wood, Grove Ponds, Westlaw Wood and Spa Well Paddock, Broomhill Dene, and Pontburn Wood (part)).

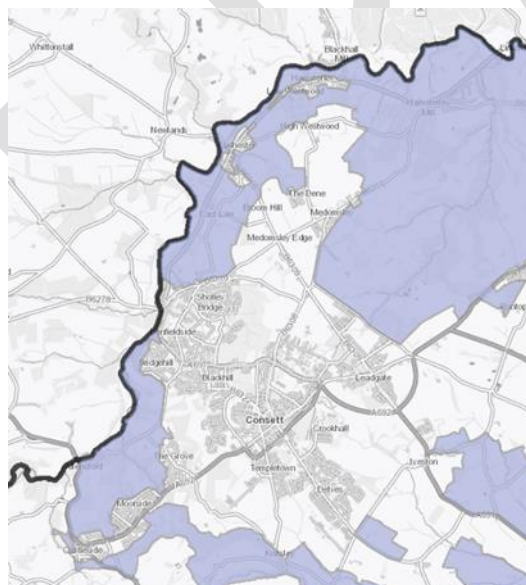


Figure 5 - Areas of Higher Landscape Value

- Areas of Higher Landscape Value (AHLV) - Durham
- Trees, Woodlands and Hedges - Ancient Woodland
- Protected Species and Sites - Local Nature Reserves
- Protected Species and Sites - Local Geological Sites
- Protected Species and Sites - Local Wildlife Sites

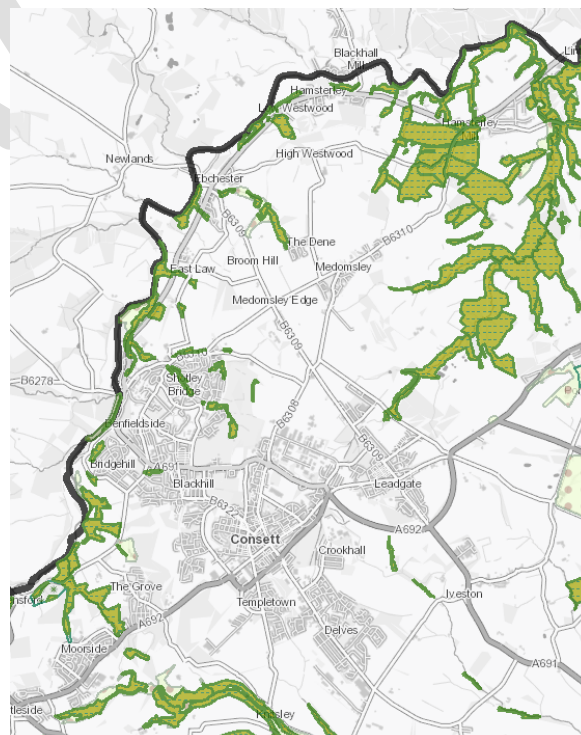


Figure 6 - Natural environment designations



- 2.9 Figure 7 shows the location of the seven conservation areas that lie in the neighbourhood area: Blackhill, Shotley Bridge, Ebchester, Low Westwood, Medomsley, Iveston and Lintzford (part).

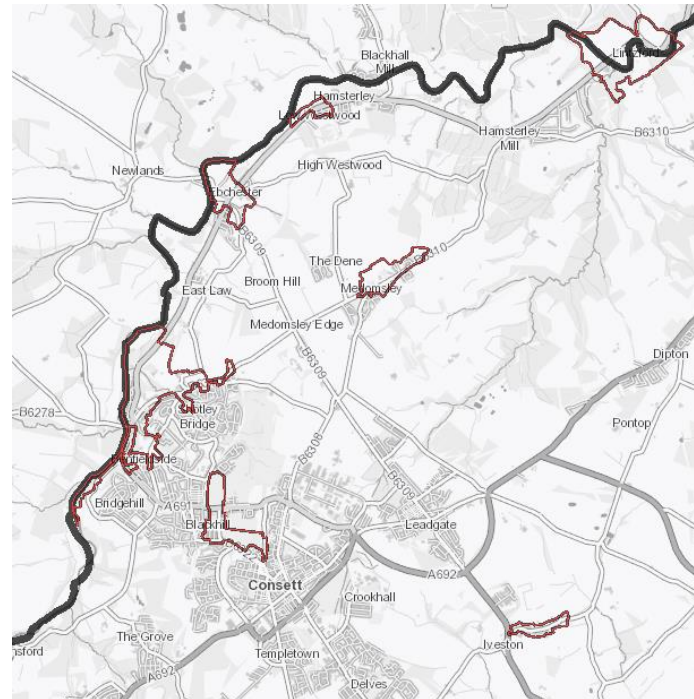


Figure 7 - conservation areas

- 2.10 There are also:
- 33 listed buildings of which one is grade II\* and 32 are grade II [need DCC to provide list]
  - Four scheduled monuments - Allensford Blast Furnace (part), Ebchester (Vindomora) Roman Station, Derwentcote Steel Cementation Furnace and Colliery Chapel; and
  - xx entries on the historic environment record [requested list from DCC]

Could add some historical context about how the plan area has developed/ changed over time and its important history?

### Key issues for our Plan

- 2.11 The early engagement, described in section 1 and evidence work, including the summary presented above have identified the following key issues for the plan, which are not in priority order:
- xxxxx.
- 2.12 These issues have informed the vision and objectives for the Plan.

### 3. Vision and objectives

#### Vision

- 3.1 The vision sets out what the Consett Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve over the plan period to 2040. It informs all the objectives, draft planning policies and community actions.

A vision for the Consett Neighbourhood Area in 2040
<p><i>By 2040, the Consett Neighbourhood Area will have benefited from appropriate and sustainable development, which recognises the needs of the locality. Vibrant economic growth and the preservation of our distinctive environment go hand in hand, supported by investment and infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>It will be a place where the whole community thrives. Young people can access education, employment, services, and homes they can afford, encouraging them to remain in the area and support the future sustainability of our town.</i></p> <p><i>Visitors to the area are welcomed, with the potential of the visitor economy realised. Our rich heritage and natural beauty will be protected and enhanced for future generations.</i></p>

Any further amendments?

#### Objectives

- 3.2 The vision is supported by five objectives. These clearly relate to the issues identified through early engagement with the local community and other stakeholders, as well as the evidence base supporting the plan. The draft planning policies and community actions contained within the plan, should deliver the objectives.

Objectives
<p><b>Objective 1 – Sustainable development and climate change:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To place sustainability at the heart of planning decisions.</li> <li>To ensure that new development makes a positive and sustainable contribution to social, environmental and/or economic needs.</li> <li>To work towards the creation of a sustainable economy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective 2 – Growing and vibrant town:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To grow and diversify our economy by capitalising on our unique strengths, including tourism, linked to our rich heritage and natural environment.</li> <li>To increase vibrancy and activity in Consett Town Centre and the smaller retail centres across the area.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective 3 – Thriving and healthy communities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure new development meets the needs of all residents, young and old, including supporting the right type of housing in the right locations, creating a thriving community where everyone feels welcome and safe.</li> <li>To contribute to community wellbeing by ensuring the community, young and old, have access to the services and facilities they need.</li> </ul>

**Objective 4 – Distinctive environment:**

- To protect and enhance the distinctive natural, built, and historic character of the Consett Neighbourhood Area, including our landscape, important spaces, biodiversity, heritage assets and water environment.

**Objective 5 – Connected and accessible:**

- Promoting access to sustainable modes of transport which connect people to a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities. As well as enhancing opportunities for safe and active travel and ensuring access for all.

Any further amendments?

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## 4. Sustainable development and climate change

### Introduction

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>2</sup>. It highlights three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways<sup>3</sup>. The NPPF therefore includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development<sup>4</sup>. This presumption is repeated within the County Durham Plan (CDP), which contains a sustainable development statement, describing how the presumption will be applied across County Durham (3.3).

### Sustainable location of new development

- 4.2 Managing the location of new development is an important way in which the planning system can support the delivery of sustainable development, particularly by focusing the majority of new development in larger settlements which contain a range of services and facilities. The NPPF requires planning policies to promote a sustainable pattern of development.
- 4.3 The strategic approach of the CDP is to allocate sites for housing and economic development to support sustainable growth. The approach to the allocation of sites for development was informed by a settlement study, which assessed the availability/ access to jobs, shops, schools and public transport in each settlement. The settlement study considered clusters of settlements and individual settlements – 229 were assessed. Within north west Durham, the Consett Cluster comprised: Benfieldside, Blackhill, Bridgehill, Castleside, Conset, Crookhall, Delves Lane, Leadgate, Moorside, Shotley Bridge, Templetown and the Grove. All settlements/ clusters of settlements then received a 'score' based on the provision of services and facilities. The Consett Cluster had the third highest score of 646.7 - Durham City Cluster scored 1217.6, the Bishop Auckland Cluster scored 732.5 and the Peterlee Cluster scored 469.
- 4.4 The settlement study provided an understanding of the roles and relationships of the different settlements and informed the strategic approach to development. In order to maximise access to jobs, minimise the increase in commuting and to deliver sustainable patterns of development, the County Durham Plan focuses new housing and economic development in the county's larger settlements: Durham City, Consett, Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland.
- 4.5 The CDP does not however identify settlement boundaries, to seek to manage the location of new development. Where sites are not allocated for development, CDP policy 6 applies. This seeks to focus development within built up areas, or areas that are well-related to a settlement, provided specific criteria are met.
- 4.6 Settlement boundaries are a planning tool which can manage the sustainable location of development, protecting the countryside for unsuitable development. They comprise a line on a map, drawn around towns and villages, reflecting its built form. In general, there is a presumption in favour of development within the settlement boundary. Any land and buildings outside of the boundary line are usually considered to be open countryside, where development would be managed with stricter planning policies. Any land which has been included within the boundary line does not have a guarantee of approval of planning permission, as there will be other planning policies which development should accord with.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 7

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 8

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 11

- 4.7 Feedback from early engagement suggested that there was a need for greater clarity on the location of possible future development across the plan area, it was therefore concluded that there was a need to define settlement boundaries through the neighbourhood plan [correct?]. Policy 1 therefore seeks to focus the majority of development within the Consett (including Moorside, The Grove, Templetown, Delves, Crookhall, Leadgate, Blackhill, Bridge Hill, Benfieldside and Shotley Bridge), Iveston, Medomsley, Ebchester, Low Westwood/ Hamsterley Colliery and Hamsterley Mill settlement boundaries. The identification of settlement boundaries will support the delivery of all the plan objectives. CDP policy 6 provides detailed policy criteria which will be used to assess proposals for development outside the settlement boundaries. A settlement boundary background paper has been prepared to explain the approach to the identification of boundaries across the area.

#### Policy 1: Location of new development

Development within the Consett, Iveston, Medomsley, Ebchester, Low Westwood/ Hamsterley Colliery and Hamsterley Mill settlement boundaries, as identified on the policies map, will be supported. Outside the settlement boundaries development will be treated as lying within the open countryside, whose intrinsic character will be recognised in all decisions on planning applications.

#### Climate change

- 4.8 The requirement for the planning system to meet the challenges of climate change is also clearly explained within the NPPF<sup>5</sup>. It stresses the need to shape places in ways which contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources; and support renewable and low carbon energy. Planning policies are therefore required to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, including considering the long-term implications of flood risk.
- 4.9 Several CDP policies refer to the need for new development mitigate climate change and to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from it, such as flooding (policies 6, 10, 26, and 35). It is not necessary for the neighbourhood plan to repeat policies contained within the CDP and it is considered that the CDP provides an appropriate framework against which planning applications can be assessed.

<sup>5</sup> Section 14



## 5. Growing and vibrant town

### Introduction

- 5.1 One of the elements of sustainable development, as defined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is that the planning system should help to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity. The social element relates to supporting strong, vibrant and health communities.

### Economy

#### 5.2 Anything to add from the feedback from the business survey?

- 5.3 The County Durham Plan (CDP) recognises the need to deliver economic growth whilst safeguarding the environment and community wellbeing. It highlights the important role of Consett as one of the key locations within the county for local and regional businesses which contributes to the employment base and local economy. Policy 2 allocates employment land. In the plan area there are 18 sites allocated as protected employment sites:

- Number One Industrial Estate - 30.4ha;
- Delves Lane (South) - 23ha;
- Crookhall Industrial Estate - 7.9ha;
- Leadgate Industrial Estate - 6.8ha;
- Hownsgill Industrial Estate - 6.7ha;
- Derwentside Business Park - 6.3ha;
- Bradley Shops/ Wattling Street - 5.8ha
- Castleside Industrial Estate - 5.5ha;
- Delves Lane (North) - 5.2ha;
- Park Road Industrial Estate - 2.3ha;
- The Grove - 1.9ha;
- Hamsterley Industrial Estate - 1.6ha;
- Ponds Court - 1.1ha;
- Park Road Industrial Estate (North) - 1ha;
- Park Road Industrial Estate - 1ha;
- Derwentdale Industrial Estate - 0.6ha;
- Blackhill - 0.6ha;
- Hownsgill Industrial Estate - 0.5ha

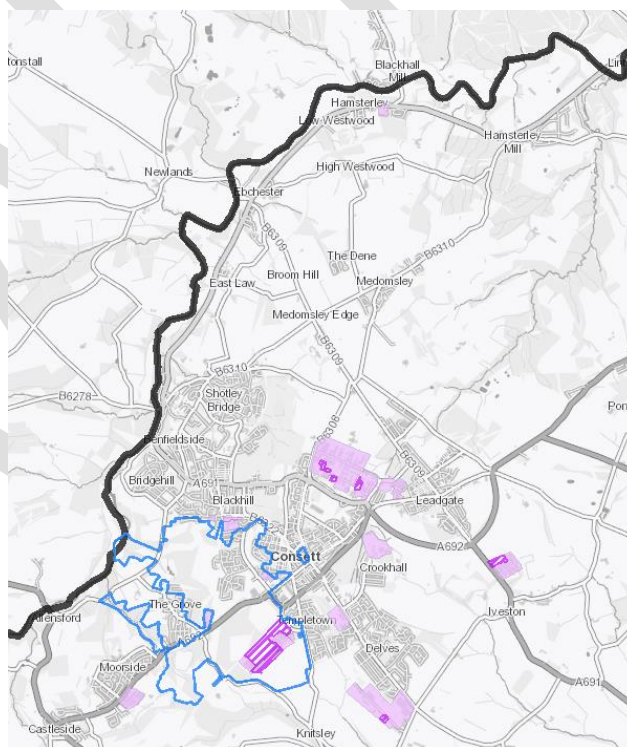


Figure 8 - CDP employment land allocations

- Project Genesis
- Employment Land - Protected Site
- Employment Land - Allocation

- 5.4 The plan area also includes 8 new employment land allocations:

- Hownsgill Industrial Estate - 10.6ha;
- Hownsgill Industrial Estate - 3.9ha;
- Delves Lane (South) - 0.6ha;

- Leadgate Industrial Estate - 1.6 ha;
- Villa Real (Consett Business Park) - 0.8ha;
- Number One Industrial Estate - 0.6ha, 0.5ha and 0.3ha.

- 5.5 Furthermore, the County Durham Plan identifies over 300ha of land for Project Genesis, supporting a mixed use development. There is the opportunity through the neighbourhood plan to develop more detailed and locally specific policies for the employment allocations. [Has a decision been made on whether you want to have locally specific policies for the employment allocations? Personally I feel the policies within the CDP are sufficient to guide new employment development - the text I add will depend on the decision of the group.]

### Town centre, retail and facilities

- 5.6 National planning policy requires planning policies and decision to support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. This is reflected within the CDP which acknowledges the importance of town centres to the economy of the county. It identifies a retail hierarchy (policy 9), informed by an assessment of the roles of each of the centres across the county. Consett is classified as a large town centre. A town centre boundary and primary shopping area boundary are identified. Through the neighbourhood plan, the town centre and primary shopping area boundaries can be reviewed [do you want to do this? If you want to amend boundaries or identify new smaller centres this will need to be informed by a robust methodology and the approach described within a background paper].
- 5.7 Leadgate and Shotley Bridge are identified in the CDP as a local centres which support a number of local shops and services that meet local residents' daily shopping needs. The neighbourhood plan can review the boundaries, provide additional detail on the important services that are provided within the areas and could also identify other important local centres which provide shops and services [as above, do you want to do this?].
- 5.8 Whilst CDP policy 9 is detailed, feedback from early engagement suggested that there was a need to consider whether the boundaries were appropriate and whether there was a need to identify other smaller centres [assuming it did]. A review concluded xxxx details contained within x. Policy 2 therefore.... This will deliver plan objectives xxxx

### Policy 2: Retail development

1. Main town centre uses should be located within the Consett Town Centre boundary as identified on the policies map.
2. Retail development will also be supported in the following existing retail parks, as identified on the policies map:
  - i. Xxxx
  - ii. Xxxx
  - iii. xxxx
3. Development within the following smaller local centres, as identified on the policies map, will be supported where it strengthens the vitality and viability of these areas. Applicants should demonstrate how the proposal would add to the attractiveness of these smaller local centres and how it would not have an adverse impact on the amenity and operation of neighbouring properties and businesses:
  - i. Xxxx
  - ii. Xxxx

iii. Xxx

### **Tourism**

- 5.9 The visitor economy is a growing part of the economy of the county. The CDP includes a policies to support the development of visitor attractions (policy 7) and visitor accommodation (policy 8), including that they are: located in sustainable and accessible locations and appropriate to their location in terms of scale, design, layout and materials.

[Does the NP need any additional detail?]

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## 6. Thriving and healthy communities

### Introduction

- 6.1 The social element of sustainable development, as defined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is that the planning system should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, as well as supporting communities health, social and cultural well-being.

### Housing

- 6.2 The NPPF highlights the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes<sup>6</sup>. Neighbourhood plans have an important role in supporting the delivery of the number, type and mix of homes that are required in the area. They must support the strategic development needs that are set out in local plans and not promote less development. The NPPF also highlights that neighbourhood planning groups should consider opportunities for allocating sites for housing in their area<sup>7</sup>. Housing needs assessments and housing needs surveys are tools to help understand the types of homes that are needed in an area.

[I would normally include information here from a HNA e.g. population and household characteristics, tenure and affordability, need for specialist housing – given the plan isn't proposing housing allocations etc, this is not essential but it could be helpful to include some background information?]

- 6.3 The County Durham Plan (CDP) contains detailed policies on delivering affordable and market housing. Policy 15 requires the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs on sites of 10 or more units, in rural areas, schemes of between 6 and 9 units are required to provide a financial contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing. The policy also states how the needs of older people and those with disabilities should be met.

- 6.4 Five sites for housing development are allocated within the CDP:

- Laurel Drive – approximately 290 homes
- South of Knitsley Lane – approximately 200 homes
- Former Blackfyne School – approximately 100 homes
- Rosedale Avenue – approximately 50 homes
- East of Muirfield Close – approximately 30 homes

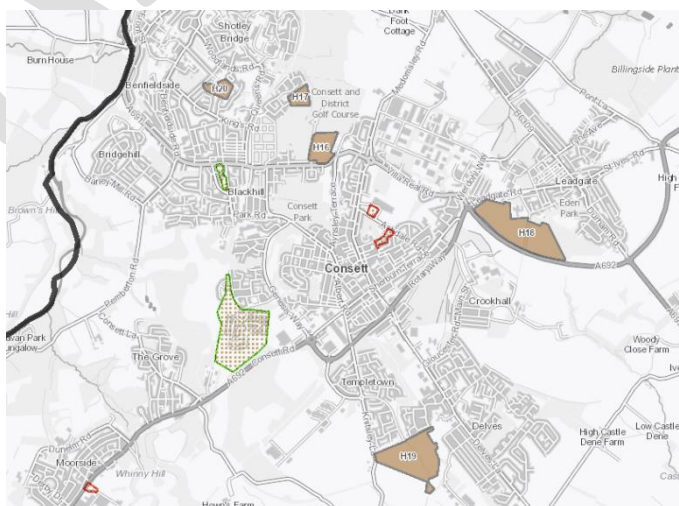


Figure 9 - CDP housing allocations and commitments

- Housing Commitments - Started
- Housing Commitments - Mixed Use - Started
- Housing Commitments - Not Started
- Housing Land Allocations

- 6.5 In addition to the allocations, there are a number of existing commitments – sites that have planning permission for housing and those where development is underway:

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 60

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 71

- Genesis Site Berry Edge – 480 homes
- Former Pimpernel – 53 homes
- Site of former Belle Vue Swimming Centre – 24 homes
- Magistrates Court, Ashdale Road – 20 homes
- The Moorside Hotel, Todd Hill – 12 homes

[Updated housing delivery information should be requested from DCC]

- 6.6 As previously explained, it is not necessary for neighbourhood plans to repeat policies contained within the CDP. It is considered that CDP policies will, informed by the HNA [assume not requesting technical support?], provide an appropriate framework to ensure that local housing needs are addressed through the planning application process.

### Community facilities

- 6.7 Community facilities are identified in the NFFP as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. These facilities enhance the sustainability of local communities and residential environments. The planning system has an important role in supporting the development of new community facilities as well as seeking to retain valued facilities. It is acknowledged that planning permission is not always required to change the use of a building or land, and this restricts the ability to secure the continued use of an important facility. Notwithstanding this, neighbourhood planning presents an opportunity to identify facilities which are of importance to the local community and also identify where additional facilities are needed.
- 6.8 Section 2 of the plan highlights that there are a several important community facilities within the plan area. The local community has identified concerns regarding xxxx – need to see all feedback from engagement and a list of facilities to inform this policy and a background paper.
- 6.9 Whilst it is acknowledged that planning permission is not always required to change the use of a building or land, and this restricts the opportunity to examine the possibility of securing the continued use of a facility threatened with closure. Notwithstanding this there is the opportunity through a neighbourhood plan to identify facilities which are of importance to the local community. The facilities identified in policy 3 have been informed by early engagement.

#### Policy 3: Community facilities

1. The following facilities are identified as having great importance to the local community and are identified on the policies map:  
CF1 xxxx  
CF2 xxxx  
CF3 xxxx
2. Development that would result in the loss or change of use of the valued facilities identified above will not be supported unless it can be robustly demonstrated by the applicant that:
  - a. Appropriate alternative provision is available in a suitable, accessible location; or
  - b. The facility is no longer required to serve the community in its existing or an alternative community use;
  - c. The use is no longer economically viable.



3. Where planning permission is required, development proposals will be supported which sustain or protect existing shops, facilities and services, subject to compliance with relevant policies within the development plan.

DRAFT

## 7. Distinctive environment

### Introduction

- 7.1 The natural, built and historic environment of the plan area is highly valued by the local community, as well as its many visitors.

### Design

- 7.2 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It creates better places in which people live and work. It is fundamental to what the planning and development process should deliver and ensures that new development contributes positively to the local environment and therefore, enhances the quality of life for residents.
- 7.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights<sup>8</sup> the importance the government attaches to good design and the national design guide<sup>9</sup>, which forms part of national planning practice guidance, sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. The national model design code provides further detailed guidance to promote successful design. There are several good practice guidance documents that can help inform the design of development, such as Building for a Healthy Life<sup>10</sup>, which is a government endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live.
- 7.4 The County Durham Plan (CDP) includes policies to manage the design of new development. Policy 29 is the main design policy, this includes countywide principles to allow the assessment of the quality of new design in development, such as the need to contribute to an areas character and identity, minimise greenhouse gas emissions, embed renewable energy and provide high standards of amenity. There is the opportunity through neighbourhood plans to develop locally specific design policies, these could be for specific areas and/ or types of development.
- 7.5 As a result of the level of detail contained within the CDP it was concluded that the neighbourhood plan could not add any further detail to the adopted design policies. [Without a design code I don't think there is a great deal you could add to CDP policies]

### Local green space

- 7.6 Green spaces are a vital part of a vibrant and healthy community and are of great importance to the character and identity of a place. They are valued for a wide range of reasons including visual amenity; historic significance; recreational value; tranquillity; and richness of wildlife. Uncontrolled changes to green spaces can irrevocably alter their special character or intrinsic value.
- 7.7 The NPPF enables neighbourhood plans to designate areas of local green space for special protection, thereby preventing development on these sites other than in very special circumstances<sup>11</sup>. These spaces do not need to be publicly accessible but must be in reasonably

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<sup>8</sup> Section 12

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/\\_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Building-for-a-Healthy-Life-July-2020.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Building-for-a-Healthy-Life-July-2020.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Paragraphs 105-107

close proximity to the community they serve as well as being demonstrably special to them, holding a particular local significance. The designation cannot be applied to an extensive tract of land.

- 7.8 The sites listed in policy 4 and shown on the policies map are proposed to be designated as local green spaces as they meet the criteria set out within national policy and guidance. A local green space and protected open space background paper<sup>12</sup> has been prepared to outline the reasons why the sites are of particular importance to the local community and to explain the process that led to their proposed designation. I need the updated assessment tables which includes any sites proposed through consultation feedback and has the planning history/ allocation checked. Assessment tables should include all sites assessed, not only those that are proposed for allocation.

#### Policy 4: Local green space

The following areas, as defined on the policies map, are designated as local green space which will be protected from development in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt:

LGS01 xxxx  
LGS02 xxxx  
LGS03 xxxx  
LGS04 xxxx  
LGS05 xxxx  
LGS06 xxxx  
LGS07 xxxx  
LGS08 xxxx  
LGS09 xxxx  
LGS10 xxxx  
LGS11 xxxx  
LGS12 xxxx  
LGS13 xxxx  
LGS14 xxxx  
LGS15 xxxx

#### Protected open space

- 7.9 In addition to local green space designation, neighbourhood plans can also protect other areas which are valued for their local amenity value, such as natural and semi-natural greenspace and/ or for formal and informal recreational purposes, but which do not meet the detailed allocation criteria for designation as local green space. The sites listed in policy 5 and shown on the policies map are proposed to be designated as protected open space, with the intention that they should be safeguarded, and development only permitted where specific criteria are met. The local green space and protected open space background paper outlines the reasons why the sites are important and explains the process that has led to their proposed designation.

<sup>12</sup> Available at xxxx

### Policy 3: Protected open space

The following areas of open space, as defined on the policies map, have been identified as contributing to local amenity and character and will be protected from development:

POS01 xxxx  
 POS02 xxxx  
 POS03 xxxx  
 POS04 xxxx  
 POS05 xxxx  
 POS06 xxxx

Development that would result in the loss of protected open space will only be supported where the applicant has demonstrated that the:

- a. Open space is surplus to requirements; or
- b. Loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by open space of equal or better value in terms of quantity and quality, including amenity value, in a suitable location; or
- c. Development is for alternative recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss of the open space.

### Heritage

- 7.10 As indicated in section 2, the town has a rich history, with many designated and non-designated heritage assets. Designated heritage assets have statutory status and include listed buildings and conservation areas. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that any works for the demolition of a listed building, or for its alteration or extension requires listed building consent. It is a criminal offence to carry out work which needs listed building consent without obtaining it beforehand. The Act also includes provisions to require conservation area consent for some works of demolition within a conservation area. Where planning permission is required for works within a conservation area, the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. A non-designated asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which does not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.
- 7.11 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and the NPPF requires them to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Also, that planning decisions affecting a heritage asset are required to be based on a sound understanding of the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposal on that significance<sup>13</sup>. Policy 44 of the CDP requires that heritage assets are conserved and enhanced in accordance with their significance.
- 7.12 The plan area has xx nationally protected buildings, structures and sites on the National Heritage List for England in the neighbourhood plan area. This includes xx listed buildings/structures and four scheduled monuments.
- 7.13 There are also seven conservation areas: that lie in the neighbourhood area: Blackhill, Shotley Bridge, Ebchester, Low Westwood, Medomsley, Iveston and Lintzford (part). There is an opportunity through the neighbourhood plan to include policies to guide new development

<sup>13</sup> Section 16

within conservation areas. Three of the conservation areas within have conservation area character appraisals (Blackhill, Ebchester and Shotley Bridge).

- 7.14 The conservation areas include many non-designated heritage assets that are important to their character. A non-designated asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which does not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. There are currently xx entries on the Durham Historic Environment Record for the plan area, several of which do not lie within the conservation areas.
- 7.15 As part of the early engagement on the neighbourhood plan, feedback identified the importance of the heritage of the area, including those assets that are not designated. As a result, it was concluded that the neighbourhood plan would include policies for the conservation areas and identify non-designated heritage assets. [did the feedback support this?] The methodology and assessment process for the identification of non-designated heritage assets is outlined within the non-designated heritage assets background paper<sup>14</sup>.

#### Blackhill Conservation Area

#### 7.16 Information about the CA from the CACA:

- Designated in xxx
- Summary of the character of the CA

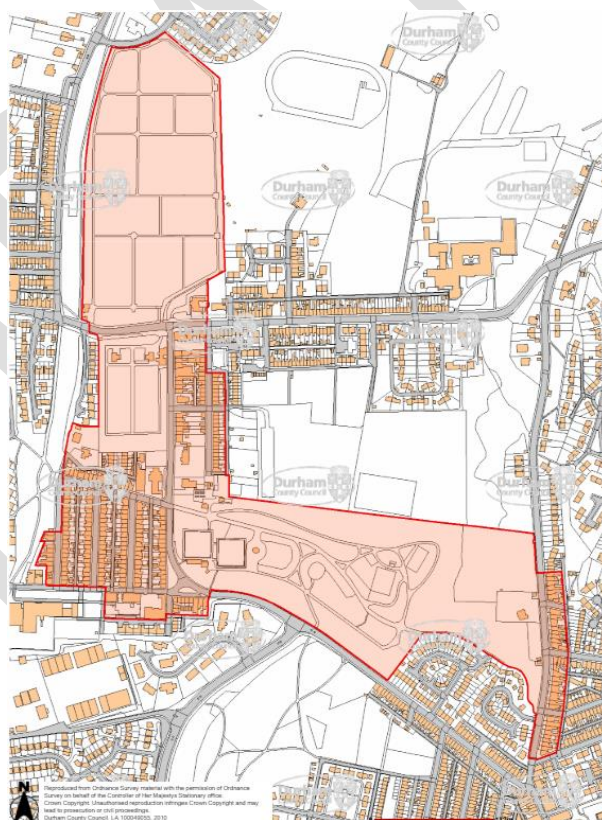


Figure 10 - Blackhill Conservation Area Boundary

- 7.17 Policy 4 seeks to ensure that development in or affecting the Blackhill Conservation Area preserves or enhances its character, appearance and setting.

<sup>14</sup> [Add link](#)



#### Policy 4: Blackhill Conservation Area

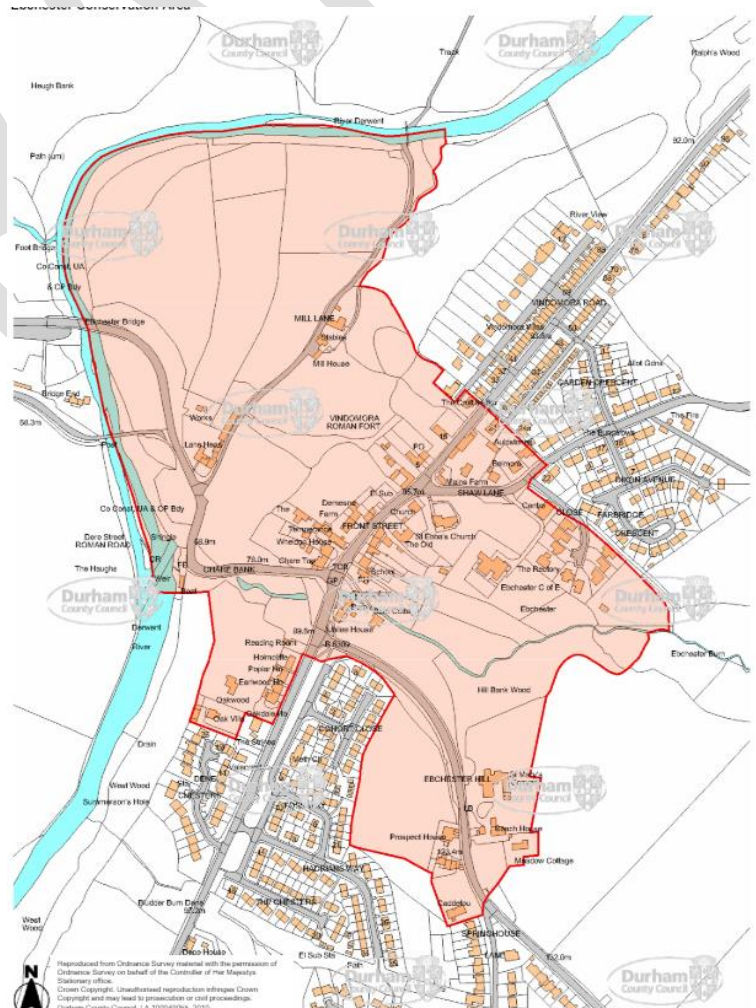
1. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Blackhill Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:
  - a. xxxx;
  - b. xxxx;
  - c. xxxx.
2. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)

#### Ebchester Conservation Area

##### 7.18 Information about the CA from the CACA:

- Designated in xxx
- Summary of the character of the CA

Figure 11 - Ebchester Conservation Area Boundary



- 7.19 Policy 5 seeks to ensure that development in or affecting the Ebchester Conservation Area preserves or enhances its character, appearance and setting.

#### Policy 5: Ebchester Conservation Area

1. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Ebchester Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:
  - a. xxxx;
  - b. xxxx;
  - c. xxxx.
2. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)
  - xxxx (NDHAXx)

#### Shotley Bridge Conservation Area

#### 7.20 Information about the CA from the CACA:

- Designated in xxx
- Summary of the character of the CA

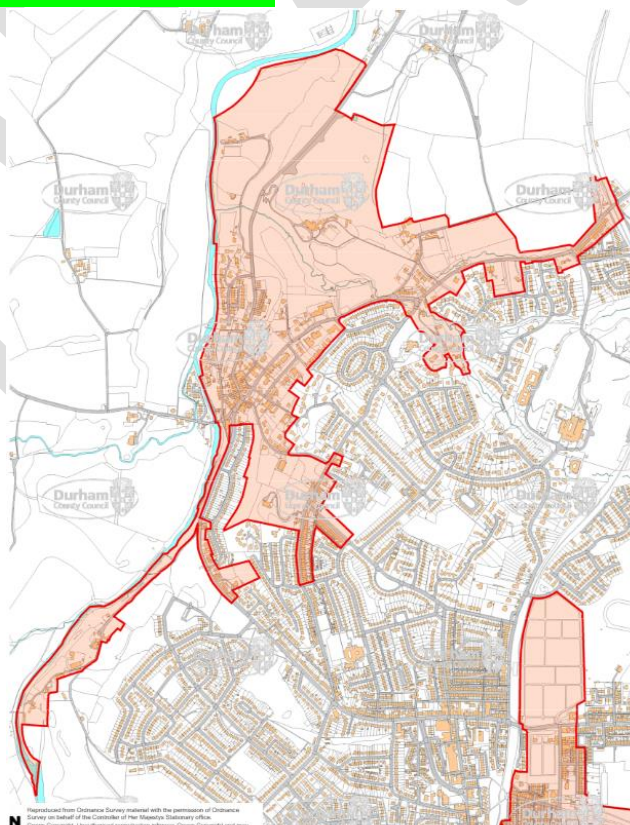


Figure 12 - Shotley Bridge Conservation Area

## Policy 6: Shotley Bridge Conservation Area

1. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Shotley Bridge Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:
  - a. xxxx;
  - b. xxxx;
  - c. xxxx.
2. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)

## Low Westwood Conservation Area

### 7.21 Requested details from DCC re character of the CA



Figure 13 - Low Westwood Conservation Area Boundary

## Policy 7: Low Westwood Conservation Area

1. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Low Westwood Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing

the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:

- a. xxxx;
- b. xxxx;
- c. xxxx.

2. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:

- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)

### Medomsley Conservation Area

#### 7.22 Requested details from DCC re character of the CA

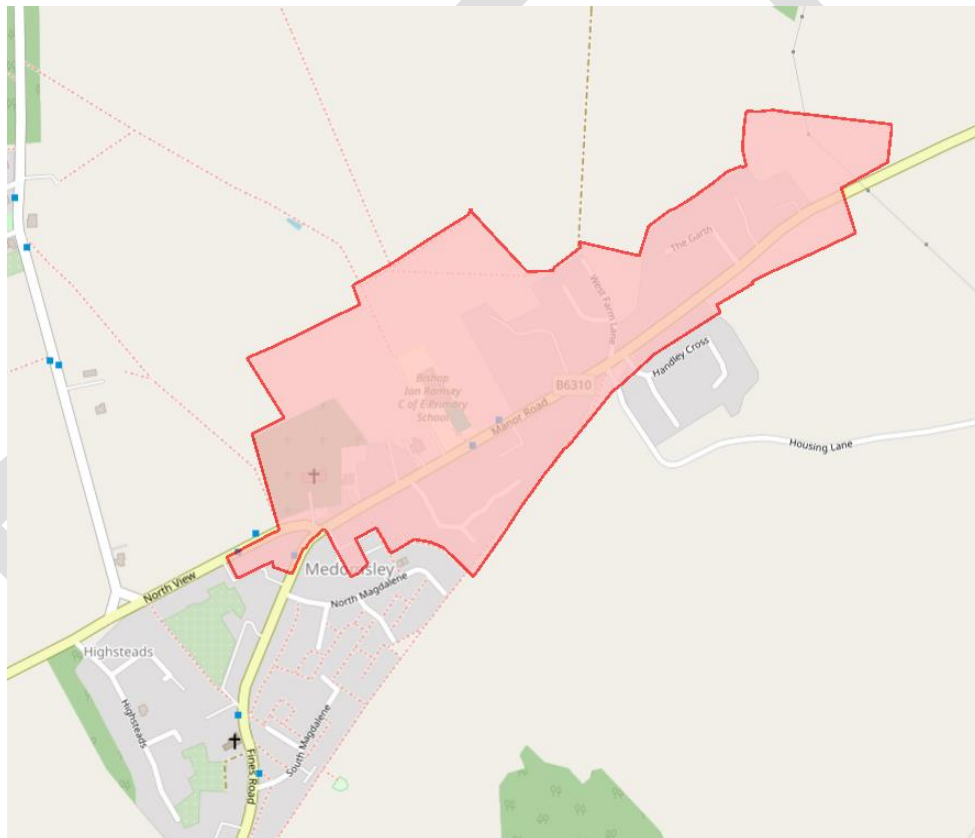


Figure 14: Medomsley Conservation Area Boundary

### Policy 8: Medomsley Conservation Area

1. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Medomsley Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:

- a. xxxx;

- b. xxxx;
- c. xxxx.

2. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:

- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)
- xxxx (NDHAXx)

### Iveston Conservation Area

#### 7.23 Requested details from DCC re character of the CA

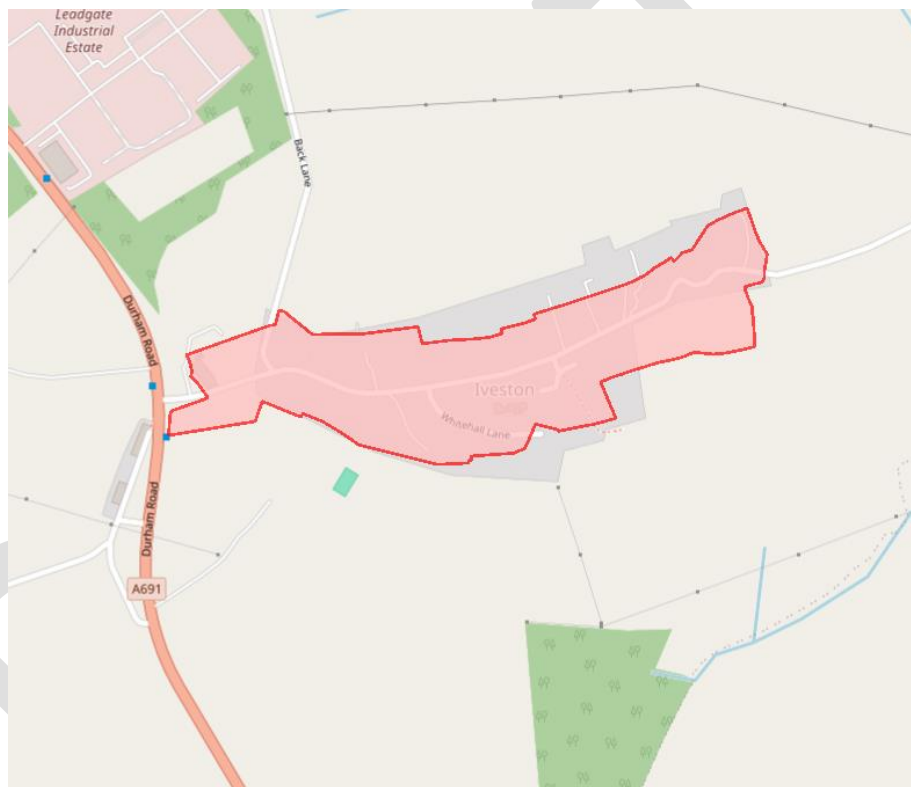


Figure 15 - Iveston Conservation Area Boundary

### **Policy 9: Iveston Conservation Area**

1. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Iveston Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:

- a. xxxx;
- b. xxxx;
- c. xxxx.



2. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:

- xxxx (NDHaxx)
- xxxx (NDHaxx)
- xxxx (NDHaxx)
- xxxx (NDHaxx)
- xxxx (NDHaxx)

#### Lintzford Conservation Area

#### 7.24 Requested details from DCC re character of the CA

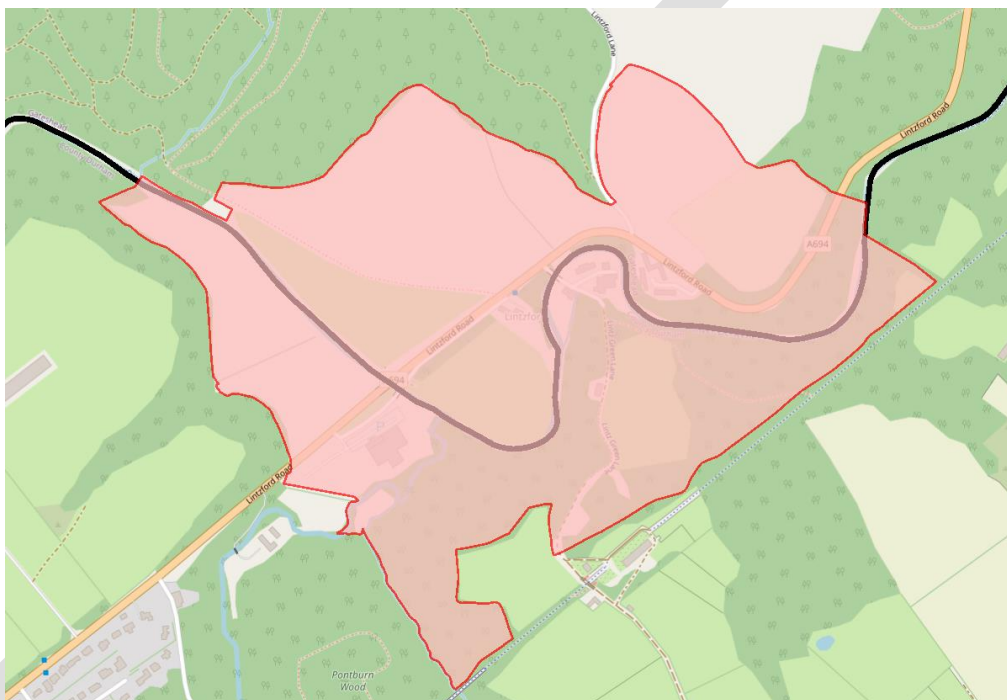


Figure 16 - Lintzford Conservation Area Boundary

#### Policy 10: Lintzford Conservation Area

3. Development within, or affecting the setting of the Lintzford Conservation Area will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. The following are key considerations when assessing the impact of the development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting, the need for development to:

- d. xxxx;
- e. xxxx;
- f. xxxx.

4. Special attention should be paid to the impact of the non-designated heritage assets, identified on the policies map, and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area, particularly:

- xxxx (NDHaxx)
- xxxx (NDHaxx)
- xxxx (NDHaxx)

- xxxx (NDHAxx)
- xxxx (NDHAxx)

#### Non-designated heritage assets outside the conservation areas

- 7.25 Of the xx non-designated heritage assets, xx lie outside the conservation areas. Policy 11 seeks to ensure that their significance is given appropriate weight in the consideration of development proposals. [requested info from DCC] Any information from the group on non designated HA?

#### **Policy 11: Non-designated heritage assets outside the conservation areas**

1. Development proposals will be encouraged and supported where they are designed to preserve or enhance the significance of non-designated heritage assets as defined on the policies map.
2. The non-designated heritage assets located outside the conservation areas are:
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
  - xxxx (NDHAxx)
3. The significance of non-designated heritage assets, as identified on the policies map, and their setting should be assessed in development proposals or works, against the following criteria, namely the:
  - a. special qualities of architectural and historic interest;
  - b. features of interest and the setting of the non-designated historic asset;
  - c. contribution the non-designated historic asset makes to local distinctiveness; local townscape; or rural character; and
  - d. conservation of interesting or unusual features; architectural detail; materials; construction; or historic interest.
4. Development which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of non-designated heritage assets, or their contribution to the character of a place, will only be permitted where the benefits of the development outweigh the harm having regard to the scale of the harm and significance of the non-designated heritage asset.
5. Prior to the loss of the non-designated heritage asset, an appropriate level of survey and recording will be expected including where appropriate archaeological investigation. The results of which should be deposited on the Historic Environment Record.
6. It is recognised that not all buildings or structures of significance are identified in the neighbourhood plan. Where the significance of these buildings or structures can be demonstrated, the above policy consideration should be applied.

## 8. Connected and accessible

### Introduction

- 8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages a reduction in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions through the introduction of measures which promote a decrease in the number of journeys made by car. The County Durham Plan (CDP) seeks to create a sustainable pattern of development to reduce the need to travel.

### Sustainable transport

- 8.2 Early engagement on the scope for the neighbourhood plan highlighted that xxxx.
- 8.3 CDP policy 21 requires that the transport implications of new development must be addressed as part of any planning application. Where appropriate it requires new development to deliver sustainable transport connections. Other policies, such as policy 6, requires new development to have good access by sustainable modes of transport to relevant services and facilities and policy 10 requires that development in the countryside must not be solely reliant upon unsustainable modes of transport. Policy 24 supports the delivery of new and improved transport infrastructure.
- 8.4 It is conserved that the existing policies contained within the CDP will provide an appropriate framework for the consideration of the transport elements of new development. As previously highlighted, it is not necessary for these policy provisions to be repeated within the neighbourhood plan. Furthermore, not all transport issues can be addressed through planning policies, therefore the plan includes community actions (annex 1). They seek to address issues including xxxx.

## Annex 1 Community actions

### Introduction

As part of the process of developing the neighbourhood Plan, the steering group identified aspirations and issues that cannot be addressed through the planning system. These have been listed as 'community actions' all of which related to the policy areas of the neighbourhood plan and are supported by CNF. Whilst it may be possible for CNF to take forward some of these on its own initiative, others will require collaboration with other bodies and, in some cases, funding will be required.

### Sustainable development and climate change

Community action 1: xxxx
xxxxx
Community action 2: xxxx
xxxxx
Community action 3: xxxx
xxxxx

### Growing and vibrant

Community action 4: xxxx
xxxxx
Community action 5: xxxx
xxxxx
Community action 6: xxxx
xxxxx

### Thriving and healthy communities

Community action 7: xxxx
xxxxx
Community action 8: xxxx
xxxxx

Community action 9: xxxx

xxxxxx

### Distinctive environment

Community action 10: xxxx

xxxxx

Community action 11: xxxx

xxxx

Community action 12: xxxx

xxxx

### Connected and accessible

Community action 13: xxxx

xxxxx

Community action 14: xxxx

xxxx

Community action 15: xxxx

xxxx