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Foreword

At the time of writing we are experiencing significant economic uncertainty including a double dip recession, the impacts of the eurozone crisis on exports, the ongoing debate on balancing austerity with investment and difficulties in accessing finance. This all paints a gloomy future in respect of growth.

What business and industry clearly require is long term opportunity and certainty and I believe this is what the County Durham Plan provides. Built on solid research and evidence the Plan clearly identifies a strategy which will improve our economic opportunities by identifying sites which will attract new investment to the area.

The A1 and A19 corridors are key routes providing excellent links to our neighbouring conurbations as well as to the rest of the country. We want to maximise the opportunity presented by Hitachi's forthcoming investment in Newton Aycliffe, ensure that the locational benefits offered by Durham City are brought forward, as well as ensuring that the role and function of our other towns such as Bishop Auckland, Consett and Barnard Castle are maximised. The Plan also acknowledges local needs and the growing home working sector and looks to support indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs through the roll out of broadband and ensuring that a range of suitable employment sites is available across the County.

The Plan also focuses on the delivery and improvement of the choice and quality of our housing. It seeks to do this in the most sustainable way whilst supporting the drive for economic growth. The Plan also addresses gaps in provision, particularly for executive and affordable homes but also will ensure that what is built contributes to building sustainable communities.

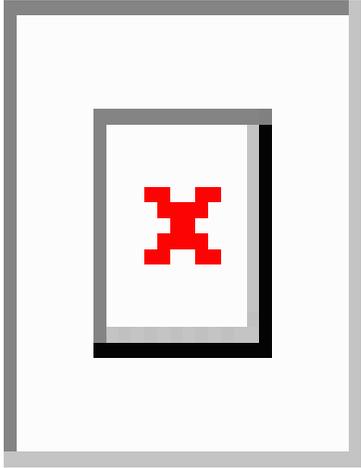
Infrastructure is a key element of the Plan and the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies key infrastructure that is needed to support the delivery. As well as school, health and social provision the Plan identifies

the need for investment in the road infrastructure. Whilst in isolation this can be seen as controversial the new roads will bring real benefits in terms of job creation and relieving traffic at key locations. It should also be viewed in a wider context of improving public transport and increasing opportunities for walking and cycling.

Finally, but certainly not least the County has a unique environment and has developed a reputation for its quality of place, created by reversing the industrial blight of our former industries. Our coast has won UK landscape of the year and Durham Cathedral was recently voted the nation's favourite building. The County's diverse landscape is a major asset which we need to continue to improve and enhance.

I am therefore extremely pleased to support the County Durham Plan, which offers significant hope to our young people in finding jobs and homes, promotes sustainability throughout the County, supports the needs of our ageing population and will continue to enhance the environment and improve the quality of life for existing and future residents.

Councillor Neil Foster
Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development



1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome to the County Durham Plan, one of the first new look Local Plans to be developed in England. First things first, what does it seek to achieve? A Local Plan seeks to guide the future development of a place to improve the lives of its existing and future residents. We therefore need a Plan that meets the differing needs of our communities. The County has seen some successful regeneration in the past but our overall economy is the weakest in the north-east, itself the poorest performing economy in England. To address this the Plan seeks to set the policy framework for the next 20 years to support the development of a thriving economy in County Durham while at the same time protecting those things that are important to us all. With improved economic performance central to the Plan, it identifies a number of sites for new employment, new housing and new infrastructure to accommodate the growth needed to achieve these ambitions.

1.2 The Plan identifies the quantity and location of new development across the towns and villages of County Durham and the detailed planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications. It also sets out the measures required of Durham County Council and other key service providers and stakeholders to successfully achieve the ambitions of the Plan. We acknowledge that the Plan is ambitious but we know from the evidence we have gathered that it needs to be.

1.3 The following sections in the introduction set out a little more context to how the Plan has and will develop, how it fits into the national context, how we have evidenced our approach, how we have engaged with neighbouring Councils, and, importantly, how you can be involved as the Plan evolves. We will also seek to ensure that this is not a plan that will sit on a shelf but one that can drive forward the County for the next 20 years.

The Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework

1.4 The Plan is being prepared at a time of great change, the Localism Act has introduced a number of important reforms to the planning system and the National Planning Policy Framework is a streamlined framework replacing the previous Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements. The County Durham Plan embraces the requirements of these changes.

The Localism Act

1.5 The Localism Act (2011) retains the idea of a two tier Development Plan providing coverage over different geographical areas, but rather than having a regional plan for the North-East (Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)) with a Local Development Framework for County Durham as the Development Plan, the Act abolishes the regional level plan, replaces the Local Development Framework with a Local Plan and introduces the concept of Neighbourhood Planning for smaller areas. The Development Plan will therefore now comprise the County Durham Plan (i.e. this Local Plan), and Neighbourhood Plans prepared by local communities.

1.6 Although at the time of writing, the RSS remains in force, it is clear that the RSS is to be abolished and we have prepared the County Durham Plan on that basis. We do however, take into account the relevant evidence that was used to prepare RSS. In place of the RSS the Localism Act introduces a 'Duty to Co-operate', requiring the Council to work with neighbouring authorities on cross boundary planning issues and issues of common concern, more on this below.

1.7 Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by town or parish councils, or in un-parished areas by Neighbourhood Forums. They allow communities to develop a vision of what their area should be like and make decisions on where certain types of development should go. They go through a formal preparation process but importantly need to be in line with the strategic policies of the County Durham Plan. As such the Plan clarifies which are the strategic policies. Notably, the Government has made it

clear that Neighbourhood Plans are about facilitating development, not stopping it. The County Council is expected to support neighbourhoods preparing plans and is developing a pro-active approach to do so.

The National Planning Policy Framework

1.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) states that each local authority should produce a Local Plan for its area which can be reviewed in whole or in part. Additional planning documents should only be used where justified. This is different from the previous Local Development Framework system with its suite of documents with an overarching Core Strategy. It does however, reiterate that planning should be genuinely 'plan led' when determining planning applications.

1.9 The NPPF streamlines national guidance and we have sought to ensure that the policies in the Plan are in conformity with the NPPF. The Plan includes a greater range of policies in its role as a Local Plan and to reflect the Localism agenda, bearing in mind the removal of Planning Policy Statements and the RSS, which formerly provided detailed policy coverage.

1.10 The inclusion in the NPPF of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, particularly in the absence of a comprehensive up to date development plan could challenge the Council's ambition for a clear coherent development strategy. A Core Strategy on its own, as had been the initial approach of the Council prior to the Localism Act, would only provide part of the answer to this challenge and we have therefore decided that the inclusion of housing, employment and retail allocations and development management policies in a new style Local Plan is the most sensible response. As the general thrust of the Plan reflects the key elements of the NPPF and given the extensive consultation that has been undertaken we are confident that the Core Strategy can be converted to a Local Plan without the need to go back to the start of plan preparation. Therefore, rather than discard all of the progress made to date and return to the beginning of plan preparation, this stage of the Plan

is a Preferred Options document.

Cross Boundary Working - The Duty to Cooperate

1.11 One of the changes brought about by the Localism Act is the introduction of the Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities in preparing our Plans. County Durham borders a number of County, District and Unitary Councils and we have greater interaction with some more than others. The Council has taken its responsibility very seriously on this matter and has created a protocol to ensure that the correct liaison takes place. Regular liaison meetings have been held with neighbouring Councils to inform plan preparation at each key stage of its development and to ensure that issues of common concern continue to be taken into account as the Plan evolves. Notably, the Council has developed working groups with the Tyne & Wear authorities and also those in Tees Valley, where we have our closest interaction.

1.12 As an outcome of this cooperation the Plan seeks to recognise the economic, social and environmental linkages with neighbouring areas. Similarly this process will allow County Durham to influence organisations in neighbouring areas to help support the delivery of the Plan.

Developing the Local Plan

1.13 To date, working to the requirements of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the preparation of the Plan has focused on the development of a 'Core Strategy' including strategic policies to define the quantity and distribution of new development across the County and identify strategic development sites essential to the delivery of the Plan as a whole. These strategic sites include sustainable extensions to existing towns and major employment allocations essential for the creation of new jobs. We have now modified this approach, taking the opportunity to develop a Local Plan as recommended by the National Planning Policy Framework. This opportunity has made it possible for us to adopt an innovative approach to plan preparation, to both accelerate the detail of

the Plan and to provide greater certainty for developers and communities.

1.14 Whilst the County Durham Plan still provides a new framework for development over the 20 year period to 2030, it now includes a comprehensive range of policies to determine planning applications as well as identifying strategic development sites essential to the delivery of the Plan and other non-strategic allocations. This revised approach will ensure that the Plan will be finalised at the earliest possible opportunity, and that deliverable development sites will be available across the County to deliver the Plan as soon as it is adopted. It also embraces the concept of Localism, should local communities wish to promote additional development sites through the development of Neighbourhood Plans, setting out policy guidelines to aid their preparation.

1.15 The Plan identifies a clear strategy for County Durham centred upon the ambition to make sure that the County's economy is strong and able to generate employment opportunities and high quality jobs. To achieve this, the Plan deals with the difficult decisions required to ensure that the Plan can be delivered across all communities and settlements in County Durham. Active community involvement at each key stage of plan preparation has helped to mould the Plan and previous consultation responses can be viewed at:

<http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/>

Policy Delivery Areas

1.16 In order to discuss issues across an area the size of County Durham with its many different communities, it is useful to break the County down into geographical areas which have similar characteristics. We have therefore identified five Delivery Areas influenced by the housing market areas⁽ⁱ⁾, functional economic market areas,⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ and retail catchment areas⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

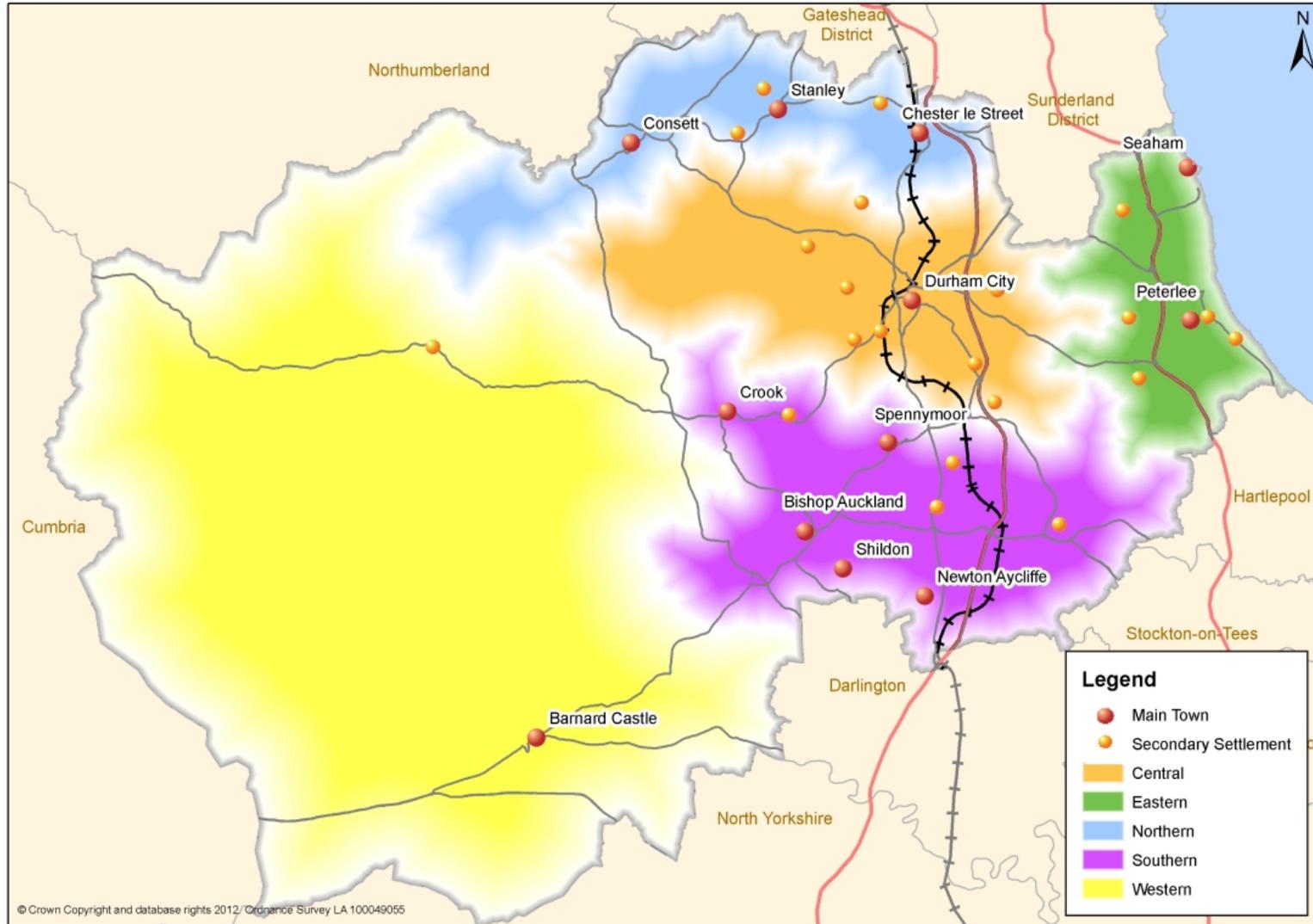
i Identified in the County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)

ii Identified in the Functional Economic Market Areas in County Durham (2010)

iii Identified in the Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2010)

1.17 Although these Delivery Areas have defined boundaries this is mainly for monitoring purposes. In reality, the boundaries between these areas are not distinct and in some cases overlap as many issues are not physically discrete. The general extent of the five Delivery Areas is shown below.

Map 1 Policy Delivery Areas



Supporting Documents and Evidence Base

1.18 The County Durham Plan Preferred Options is accompanied by a number of other documents, some of which are essential to the delivery of the Plan.

1.19 The Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the strategic and local infrastructure necessary to deliver the development proposals in the County Durham Plan. New development is often dependent on the delivery of essential infrastructure including flood prevention, transport improvements and sewage treatment works. Similarly, the development of new sustainable communities requires the provision of health, education and community facilities as well as access to jobs, to create sustainable communities for the future. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be constantly reviewed and updated throughout the lifetime of the Plan to identify and ensure the timely delivery of essential infrastructure.

1.20 The Draft Charging Schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) sets the appropriate financial levy to be applied to new development, to fund the delivery of the new infrastructure identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The funds received via the CIL will supplement the capital development programmes of infrastructure providers to deliver the required infrastructure capacity. The draft CIL charges are based on a detailed assessment of market conditions and viability considerations to ensure that the charge is appropriate and will not stifle development. Three different rates of CIL are proposed across the County reflecting the different land values and local markets. The draft Charging Schedule reflects the difficult market conditions in the UK at this time, but as market conditions change, the Charging Schedule will be reviewed to reflect the changing viability of development.

1.21 A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) also accompany the Plan and give more detail on most of the Strategic Allocations that will deliver the Spatial Approach. These are listed below:

- Aykley Heads SPD;
- Sniperley Park SPD;
- North of Arnison SPD;
- Sherburn Road SPD; and
- Lambton Park Estate SPD.

1.22 These documents are available for you to view or make comments on the County Durham Plan Consultation Pages at: <http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/>. SPDs will be produced for the other Strategic Housing Allocations for inclusion in the Submission Draft version of the Plan.

1.23 There are also a number of other supporting documents and evidence papers that have contributed to the preparation of the Plan. Although not specifically out for consultation they can, of course, be commented on as part of any response to the relevant part of the Plan. All can be found on the Evidence Base page of the Council's website.

- The Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan (2012);
- Habitat Regulations Assessment (2012);
- Rural Proofing Baseline Report (2012);
- Defining Economic Growth in the County Durham Plan (2012);
- Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2010);
- Retail Site Search Evidence Paper (2012);

- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment (2010);
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2010);
- The Economic Case for the County Durham Plan (2012);
- County Durham Settlement Study (2012);
- Executive Housing Study (2012);
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2011);
- Towards a Minerals Delivery Strategy for County Durham (2010);
- Energy Minerals (2010);
- Safeguarding Mineral Resources for the Future (2010);
- New Minerals and Waste Sites in County Durham (2010);
- Towards a Low Carbon Energy Strategy for County Durham (2011);
- Towards a Waste Strategy for County Durham (2011);
- County Durham Employment Land Review (2012);
- Playing Pitch Study (2011);
- TIF Transport Modelling (2006/7);
- Transport Modelling for County Durham Plan (2011/12);
- AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Western Route (2011);
- AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Northern Route (2011);
- Water Cycle Study (2012);
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012); and
- Strategic Employment Sites Study (2012).

Sustainability Appraisal

1.24 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory process integrated into the preparation of all aspects of the County Durham Plan. The process measures the potential impacts of the Plan on a range of economic, social and environmental considerations, and includes the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation.

1.25 At the Issues and Options stage, the Plan was subject to a full SA. The results of this exercise were used to inform the preparation of the Policy Directions Consultation Paper and the process has been repeated in preparing this Preferred Option document. Furthermore all policies and proposals in the Preferred Options Local Plan have been subject to SA and where appropriate changes made to incorporate SA recommendations. Where the recommendations have not been incorporated into the Plan an explanation is provided.

1.26 The detailed SA appraisal has been published in an accompanying document and can be downloaded from the Council's website^(iv).

Habitat Regulation Assessment

1.27 Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is integral to the development of land use plans such as the County Durham Plan as it

iv For more information on Sustainability Appraisal please visit: www.durham.gov.uk/cdp

provides a statutory process ^(v) to assess the potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within Europe: they include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU 'Wild Birds' Directive, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the EU 'Habitats Directive', and European Marine Sites (EMS). As the Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle, plans can only be adopted if no adverse impact on the integrity of site(s) in question is proven. To ascertain this a Screening Assessment, followed by an Appropriate Assessment, where necessary, must be undertaken.

1.28 In order to comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations a HRA Screening Assessment was undertaken at the Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan. This not only informed the Screening Assessment of the Preferred Options, but also identified areas that would require Appropriate Assessment. The draft Final HRA Report which accompanies this Plan presents the Screening and Appropriate Assessment of its policies and allocations as well as their cumulative effects. In light of the changes made to policies and allocations, together with proposed mitigation, the draft final HRA report concludes that the County Durham Plan will have no significant impact on identified Natura 2000 sites.

1.29 The Screening Report and draft Final HRA Report are both available on the Council's website ^(vi).

Rural Proofing

1.30 Rural proofing aims to ensure that the needs of, and issues affecting, those living and working in rural areas are considered as new planning policies are developed. We have incorporated rural proofing at each stage of plan preparation and undertaken a high level exercise for

the Preferred Options, which consider the likely impact of policies and proposals on the rural parts of the County. Rural Proofing is not about providing special treatment for rural areas, but about understanding the fact that policies offering 'urban' solutions will not necessarily work in rural areas with their dispersed population, settlements and economic markets. Further details of rural proofing can be found in the Rural Proofing Baseline Report ^(vii). A more detailed assessment of each individual policy in the Preferred Options will be undertaken and inform the final wording of policies in the Submission Draft.

Equality Impact Assessment

1.31 Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) ensures that everything we do promotes equality and allows us to assess any risk of discrimination before introducing new policies. An EQIA was initially undertaken at the Issues and Options stage and has been built into the development of the policies and proposals in the Preferred Options. Sometimes certain groups (such as Gypsies and Travellers or older people) will be treated differently to ensure that they are not unfairly impacted however, this is compatible with promoting equality. We will continue to incorporate the principles of EQIA into all elements of the Plan as it develops.

Stages of Plan Preparation and Next Steps

1.32 Preparation of the County Durham Plan began in 2009, starting with the collection of a comprehensive evidence base. We subsequently published three consultation documents and undertook extensive public engagement:

- The Core Strategy Issues Paper (October 2009), which following Local Government Review and the creation of the new unitary council

v In accordance with Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which transposes the EU Habitats Directive

vi <http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

vii <http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

for Durham, identified the issues that the new Plan for the County would need to address;

- The Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper (June 2010), which set out different options for the future development of County Durham; and
- The Core Strategy Policy Directions Paper (May 2011), which identified the Council's preferred spatial strategy and identified options for some of the more detailed aspects of the Plan.

1.33 We have also been keen to practice continuous engagement throughout the plan preparation process and have continued to attend public meetings and receive comments outside of formal consultation periods. This included an update for Durham City residents undertaken in October 2011^(viii).

1.34 All of the comments we have received have been used to inform each subsequent stage of the Plan, including the Preferred Options. Once the consultation on the Preferred Options is complete the comments received will again be assessed and, where appropriate changes will be made and incorporated into the next version of the Plan.

Next Steps

1.35 The project plan for the preparation of the County Durham Plan is available in our published Local Development Scheme available on our website^(ix).

1.36 Following consultation on the Preferred Options in September and in order to give sufficient time to consider the responses, which will likely

include significant numbers of representations on proposed housing sites, the Submission Draft of the Plan will go to Cabinet in May/June 2013 followed by publication and a further round of consultation.

1.37 Following consideration of the consultation responses following Publication and the making of any changes, the Plan will be formally submitted in the autumn of 2013 with the Public Examination to follow in spring 2014 and finally Adoption in July 2014.

1.38 To give us time to collect the necessary evidence a separate Minerals and Waste Allocations document will be prepared subsequent to the Examination of the County Durham Plan.

How do you Get Involved

1.39 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will undertake consultation on the County Durham Plan to ensure it reflects the views of stakeholders and the community.

1.40 The Preferred Options consultation is the fourth significant stage for involvement in the development of the Plan. The Plan has been refined as a consequence of the feedback you gave us at each previous consultation stage. A very brief summary of the responses received and how they have been incorporated into the Plan is included within the supporting text and summary box for each policy. Much more detail and our response to every individual comment at the Policy Directions stage is available in the Statement of Consultation on our website^(x).

1.41 This is perhaps, the most significant stage in the development of the County Durham Plan and a further opportunity for you to contribute your views. It is the document where the Council, for the first time, identifies the scope and content of the preferred plan in detail. There will be further

viii <http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/CountyDurhamPlanUpdateForDurhamCityResidentsOctober2011.pdf>

ix <http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

x <http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

opportunities for you to get involved in the preparation of the Plan in the future, but this is the key stage for you to make comments before the Council publishes the Final Draft Plan that it intends to submit to the Secretary of State for approval.

1.42 You can send your responses in a number of ways, but we would like to encourage you to submit your views online, via the County Durham Plan consultation pages at:

<http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/>

1.43 This method should save you time and it will allow us to process and consider your comments more quickly. We hope that you will find the website quick and easy to use and will use it as your preferred way to access and comment on documents in the future. Once your comments have been submitted they will be checked and added to the interactive website where you will also be able to see what comments have been made by others. To protect your privacy, all other information you provide when registering with us will not be open to public view.

1.44 You can also send us your comments by e-mail to:

CDPconsultation@durham.gov.uk

1.45 Alternatively you can send us your comments to our special freepost address (all you need to do is write this one line on an envelope - no other address details are needed):

FREEPOST Spatial Policy

1.46 As well as being available on our website this document is also available to view at all local libraries and Customer Access Points across County Durham. Paper copies of the document and response forms are available on request using the contact details below.

1.47 For enquiries and to request copies of the document, including in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, audio cassette or an alternative language, please call:

0300 026 0000

1.48 You can also download an electronic copy of this report and learn more about the County Durham Plan from our main website:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

1.49 All comments and completed response forms should be received by:

Friday 2nd November 2012.

2 County Durham Context

2.1 County Durham is the largest local authority in North East England, lying at the heart of the region, with Tees Valley to the south and Tyne and Wear and Northumberland to the north. The County stretches from the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the west to the North Sea Heritage Coast in the East and also borders Cumbria and North Yorkshire. The County's rural setting and sparse settlement pattern was largely determined by mining and other extraction and processing industries, which means there are a number of challenges that the County Durham Plan must address.

2.2 The County's economy is primarily driven by manufacturing and engineering, logistics activities, and the public sector. The main economic challenge over the Plan period is to support private sector job growth and enable people to access jobs that are within the County and in neighbouring areas. There are also a number of opportunities. County Durham has some world class economic assets including Durham University, North East Technology Park (NetPark), and multi-national companies such as Thorn Lighting, Glaxo Smith Kline, Caterpillar, and 3M. There is also a wide range of world class local businesses such as EBAC, Elddis, and Kromek that provide thousands of jobs and have the potential to expand their operations within the County. At the heart of the County, Durham City is a hub of economic and cultural activity with a UNESCO World Heritage Site and symbolises the economic potential of the County.

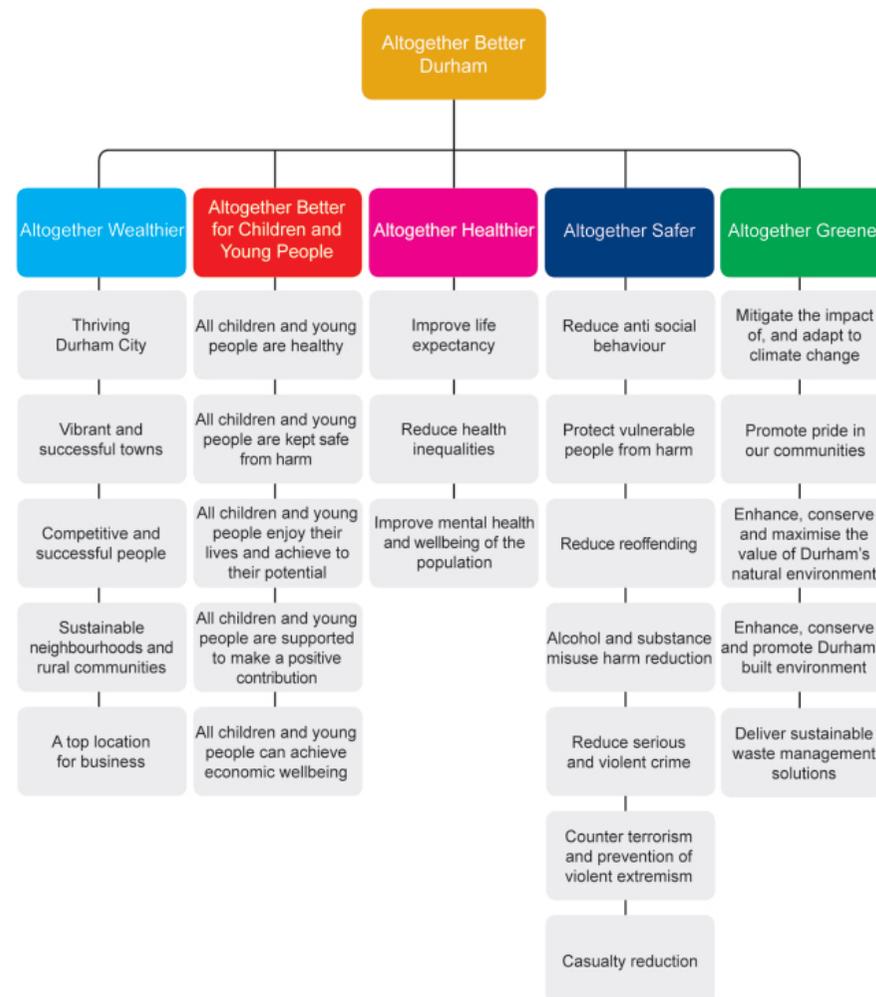
Map 2 County Durham



Strategic Context

2.3 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) demonstrates the priorities of communities across County Durham to 2030, and provides a strategic context for the development of the County Durham Plan. The County Durham Plan builds on the SCS to demonstrate how economic, social and environmental priorities will be delivered. The key priorities of the SCS are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Sustainable Community Strategy priorities



Regeneration Statement

2.4 The County Durham Regeneration Statement underpins the Altogether Wealthier strand of the SCS, focusing on shaping a County Durham where people want to live, work, invest and visit whilst enabling our residents and businesses to achieve their potential. Our 'Whole-Town' approach to regeneration is creating places that are attractive, well-designed, and well-managed, with good amenities and transport connections, providing a focal point for business and social interactions. It focuses on tailored solutions for each settlement and business location in the County, shaping the places people live, work and socialise including investment in education and skills, business, housing, public realm and the wider built environment. The five aims of the regeneration statement are:

- **A Thriving Durham City:** Exploit the City's potential as a major retail, business and residential centre, academic hub and visitor destination and deliver the cultural and tourism ambitions for the City which will benefit the entire County
- **Vibrant and Successful Towns:** Embed a "Whole-Town" approach through coordinated investment in housing, infrastructure, employment, retail, leisure, education and health and improve the Economic Transport Corridors to unlock the potential of our network of major centres
- **Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Rural Communities:** Establish communities where people can live and want to live by improving the housing offer, supporting equality of access to employment and services and mitigating the impact of welfare reform on our most vulnerable residents.

- **Competitive and Successful People:** Raise the aspirations, participation and attainment of young people; reengage adults with work, moving economically inactive residents into the labour market; and stimulate the demand for higher level skills.
- **A Top Location for Business:** Nurture business creation, development and growth, aligned with key wealth creating sectors, create the right environment for innovation and growth and promote County Durham as an attractive economic location for investment

2.5 Building on the momentum generated through an integrated "Whole Town" approach, we are aligning activity and leveraging private sector investment to deliver the aims and objectives outlined in the Regeneration Statement. Building on and investing in the County's major assets alongside complementary interventions will release the County's potential for growth and connect areas of growth with deprived places in need of regeneration. By following a planned phased approach across the County, utilising these opportunities we will be able to deliver greater impact for each locality and the whole of the County, using the resources available to us to best effect.

Challenges

2.6 County Durham faces a number of inter-connected challenges that provide the context for interventions that will be brought forward by the plan.

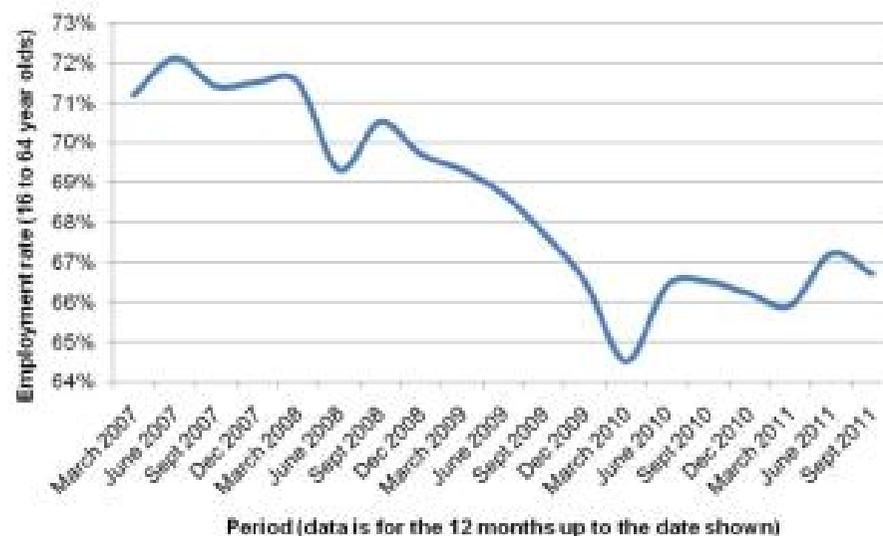
Economic Challenges

Employment

2.7 In 2007 County Durham's employment rate had steadily risen and achieved a level that was close to the national average. Since the 2008

recession the County's employment rate has fallen substantially so our principle aim is to achieve and maintain employment at around 73% of the economically active population by the end of the Plan period. In order to achieve sustainable, private sector-led, economic growth we need to generate between 25,000 and 30,000 jobs. In order to achieve this we need to take an approach that involves tackling the high levels of economic inactivity and unemployment in the County, and attracting talented, skilled, and educated people to the County. This is an ambitious objective which needs a coherent approach that focuses on harnessing opportunities to tackle economic, social and environmental issues that have constrained growth for several decades.

Figure 2 Change in County Durham Employment Rate (2007 - 2011)



Productivity

2.8 There has been a gap between the overall productivity of County Durham and that of the North East and UK for decades, but since 1995

this gap has widened substantially. In 1995, County Durham's productivity was around 73% of the UK average, but since it has dropped to 61%. The main reason for this widening gap relates to the fact that the County has become more reliant on producing low value goods and services, increasingly reliant on the public sector, and has traditionally had a high proportion of people who do not work. Through the Plan, we will support opportunities to create new jobs as well as help people to improve their education and skills levels, obtain work, and set-up businesses.

Social Challenges

Education, Training and Worklessness

2.9 County Durham has a higher proportion of people with no qualifications and a lower proportion of people with degree-level qualifications than the regional or national averages. However, education and skills levels are improving particularly at lower levels (e.g. basic literacy and numeracy, NVQ levels 1 and 2), which are those in most demand by employers in County Durham. The ongoing challenge is to continue to promote educational improvements as a means of helping people to improve their social as well as economic wellbeing, and helping people to progress to higher levels in their education, training and careers. Ongoing changes to the welfare system are likely to accelerate the number of people making the transition from benefit dependency to work, which places a significant emphasis on the Plan to bring more jobs to all parts of the County.

2.10 There is also a need to retain more graduates from Durham University and attract more talented graduates from elsewhere in the region, UK and abroad to live and work in the County. Doing so would provide a major boost to the County's economy because higher-skilled jobs are generally more secure and people with higher-level skills are often more able to change jobs, set-up businesses, and create jobs for other people.

Deprivation

2.11 Almost half of the residents in County Durham live in communities that are in the 30% most deprived areas in England. Although conditions are generally improving, deprivation is concentrated within and on the fringes of Bishop Auckland, Crook, Peterlee, and Stanley. The Plan can help to overcome concentrated deprivation by improving access to education, employment, housing, healthcare and other factors and thereby improving the sustainability of those communities. However, welfare reforms and recent severe cuts to regeneration investment will provide major barriers to combating deprivation.

Ageing Population

2.12 The proportion of young people in the County is set to reduce over the plan period as the number and proportion of older residents substantially increases. This presents a number of challenges in terms of ensuring there is an appropriate mix of facilities, services and housing within and close to communities which must be tracked and addressed over the Plan period.

Environmental Challenges

Natural and Historic Assets

2.13 County Durham has a wealth of attractive natural and historic assets which present unique opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors. The Plan must successfully balance the protection and enhancement of these assets with the regeneration of large parts of the County and new developments which will support economic growth. New development in and around Durham City and other historic towns and villages must complement their built heritage and natural landscapes. Across the County, and particularly in rural settlements, development pressures must not compromise the natural and historic assets that make them attractive and valuable.

Town Centres

2.14 Town and village centres provide a range of public and community services, business premises and shops but have been hit hard by the recent economic downturn. Despite a long-term commitment to regenerating town centres and planning policies that position town and village centres at the heart of the County's economic, social and environmental infrastructure, many remain in a critical condition because of the loss of investment and customers. A balance is needed which protects successful elements and unique strengths of town and village centres whilst supporting development and regeneration that improves their long-term sustainability and visitor spending.

Infrastructure Challenges

Affordable Housing

2.15 There is a need to ensure a supply of affordable housing across the County in those areas where need is most acute. Furthermore, there is a need to differentiate between urban and rural parts of the County which tend to have a different mix of requirements and constraints. The ageing population may lead to an increase in the demand for affordable housing as will welfare reforms which will reduce the overall availability of support as well as specific support for people and households. Both of these factors may also change the types and sizes of new housing that are needed.

Business Sites and Premises

2.16 It is important to ensure there is a portfolio of available business sites to attract new employers to the County and respond to the changing needs of existing and new businesses. The redevelopment of previously developed sites will also be supported where possible. The portfolio must facilitate growth of the manufacturing, logistics and energy sectors which are likely to need larger industrial units in central locations. Professional,

scientific and technical activities are also likely to need office and laboratory space in most parts of the County. Health and social work activities will also need a presence in, or access to, most communities.

Transport

2.17 In addition to promoting more sustainable communities where residents and businesses have local access to the services they need, wherever possible, there is a need to continue to improve links between places within and outside the County. Due to the County's dispersed settlement pattern residents will need to travel outside of their community, village, town or the County to access services, education and jobs in some cases. A key challenge will be to direct private sector development to the most sustainable and accessible locations whilst not undermining the sustainability of settlements, particularly in rural areas, with small populations.

Communications Infrastructure

2.18 The County's telecommunications infrastructure is diverse but largely reflects the County's settlement pattern. Telecoms companies tend to provide the best infrastructure in areas with the greatest concentrations of business and residential properties because these locations are most cost-effective. Continual improvements are being made across the County to mobile telephone coverage and broadband services and the technology for each is merging with increasing demand for mobile broadband services. In addition to the growing usage of both, there is also growing demand for a basic level of quality, and choice of providers. In this respect there is a need to demonstrate locations where business and residential populations will grow so that they can plan their investments and public sector providers can address gaps.

3 The Vision for County Durham

3.1 The key community priorities set out in the County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) draw upon the needs, expectations and aspirations of local communities, groups and partner organisations across the County. Looking to the end of the plan period in 2030, the SCS vision to create an 'Altogether Better Durham' is used to inform the objectives, strategy, policies and proposals of all the documents that will make up the County Durham Plan.

Vision

3.2 We have now revised the Vision to reflect the responses received:

Spatial Vision for County Durham

By 2030, County Durham will have a thriving economy and will be bridging the gap in its economic performance with other parts of the North East and elsewhere. Past successes and strengths will have provided the platform to create a County where people have the chance to achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to the success of the County.

County Durham will be a top location for business having intensified growth in key employment sectors and capitalised on its central location in the North East aligning with the Tyne and Wear and the Tees Valley conurbations. County Durham's strategic location on the A1(M), A19, East Coast Mainline and within close proximity of Durham Tees Valley and Newcastle Airports puts the County on the national and international stage. The East Coast Mainline Rail halt at Chester-le-Street and the creation of a new station at Peterlee/Horden on the Durham Coast Railway Line have created economically sustainable solutions to some of the access constraints. Working together with stakeholders and partners, County Durham

will have successfully provided improved employment, infrastructure, housing, leisure, education and training, distinctive retailing, and tourist opportunities to its people.

County Durham will have become a County of sustainable communities with local people and stakeholders having been engaged successfully in the delivery of attractive and sustainable new developments. The County's distinctive multi-centred settlement pattern will have formed the backbone for new development, with the internationally recognised Durham City as the hub of its sub-region, leading to a County of competitive places. County Durham is proud of its vibrant and successful towns with enhanced town centres. The County's towns and villages will have grown and regenerated and will be thriving and attractive places to live and visit with vibrant and healthy town centres. Deprivation and inequalities will have been tackled and communities successfully regenerated.

County Durham will have an accessible range and choice of housing, services and community facilities appropriate to the needs and aspirations of local people, complementing the area's thriving economy and supporting its services and facilities. At the heart of every community will be accessible green infrastructure not only improving the quality of place but people's quality of life. New development, neighbourhoods and transport will be designed in collaboration with the community to meet the needs of everyone, including older people, people with disabilities, and growing children. The communities themselves will be helping to deliver local services and crime and anti-social behaviour are at an all time low.

County Durham's exceptional natural, built, and historic environment will have been protected and further improved, ensuring healthy ecosystems across both rural and urban landscapes. New development will have recognised local distinctiveness and, where appropriate, will have positively incorporated heritage assets into

new schemes, delivering wider benefits to environmental quality and the quality of life of the County's residents. County Durham's agricultural industry will be continuing to play a significant role in the County's economy and farm diversification will have increased employment and tourism opportunities. All businesses and residents will have access to high quality broadband connectivity. This will have improved employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas and villages, and the increase in residents working from home will have relieved traffic congestion on the County's roads, especially at peak commuting times.

County Durham will be at the centre of the green economy playing its part in addressing Climate Change by using its natural resources sustainably, improving energy efficiency, and increasing renewable energy production in appropriate locations. All new development will have achieved the highest feasible standards of sustainability and the re-use of previously developed land will have been achieved where possible. Through sustainable design and land and water management programmes any negative impacts of Climate Change will have been mitigated against and adaptive measures implemented. The valuable role that trees and woodlands play in addressing Climate Change and enabling wildlife to adapt to the changes will have been harnessed.

County Durham will remain a regionally important source of minerals. Its quarries will continue to produce the steady and adequate supply of minerals which is required by the economy and needed to construct and maintain the built environment. New mineral workings will be guided to the most environmentally acceptable locations and carried out to the highest environmental standards, with quarries always being promptly and progressively restored, and helping to deliver substantive improvements to the County's environment including to its landscape and biodiversity.

County Durham's waste will be viewed as a valuable resource and waste recycling will be a mainstream part of the thinking of householders and businesses, with waste reduction a key element in the design, construction and operation of new development. Energy from waste, in the form of electricity and renewable heat, will be an important part of the County's energy mix, displacing fossil fuels and playing a key part in the County's programme to address climate change.

County Durham will have an accessible, integrated and sustainable transport system, resulting in increased public transport use. There will also be a network of safe, well used and attractive cycling and walking routes. People with disabilities will have appropriate transport options available to them. Together with successful demand management initiatives, the transport system will have reduced reliance on the private car, reduced congestion and enabled residents to access jobs and services throughout the County and beyond.

The County's importance as an international visitor destination will have been enhanced by improved access to local rail services and the high speed railway network. Links to the region's ports and airports will also have been enhanced. Durham City, Durham Heritage Coast, Durham Dales, Hamsterley Forest and other attractions such as Beamish Museum and the Riverside International Cricket Ground will enhance the tourist offer and will be popular and accessible tourist destinations.

In Central Durham, Durham City will be a distinct driving force of economic growth in County Durham, providing the employment, housing and retail facilities to meet the needs of local people and to attract and retain high achieving entrepreneurs and a highly skilled workforce. Durham University will continue as a flourishing centre of learning and research and development, having strengthened its links with businesses. Further commercial and employment schemes,

particularly high quality office development at Aykley Heads, will have enhanced the City's role as a nationally important employment area and a location of choice for the economy's growth sectors which will be realised following the completion of the northern and western relief roads. Durham City's role as a long stay tourist destination will have been achieved via further quality accommodation and by sensitively optimising existing heritage and cultural attractions and developing new family attractions in and around the City Centre. Major new residential communities will have been successfully developed at Sniperley, Sherburn Road and on land North of Arnison offering a range of house types within a high quality environment. Development in the remainder of Central Durham will have continued to meet local needs whilst aiding their successful regeneration. This development will also have supported Durham City in its role as the key driver of County Durham's economy.

North Durham will have increased its employment and commercial capacity in order to meet employment needs particularly recognising the role of Chester-le-Street as a strategic employment area. Chester-le-Street will be a thriving market town exploiting its location close to major transport corridors to become a first class location for business. The extension to Drum Industrial Estate will be a successful centre for employment strengthening Drum's role as a major employment site within the region. North Durham's town centres will be the focus for local and surrounding communities, with Stanley and Consett having developed their educational, retail and leisure offer and improved the quality of their town centres, re-establishing them as vibrant and safe places to visit. Lambton Park Estate will offer high quality executive housing whilst having successfully restored the historic environment which will have been made accessible to the public.

East Durham will no longer be associated with deprivation and will have successfully utilised its large working age population to attract

new businesses. Seaham will have built its growing reputation as a major coastal tourist destination and exploited Seaham North Dock's position as the only port and marina in the County. Its Centre for Creative Excellence will have also helped raise the profile of the town as well as creating jobs for local people. Seaham will be seen as the 'gateway' to Durham's Heritage Coast and its quality transport links will have helped create a thriving business environment at Spectrum and Hawthorne Business Parks. Peterlee will have developed its transport and leisure offer and improved the quality of its town centre making the centre more accessible to all members of the community. Peterlee will have a vibrant, regionally important, industrial and manufacturing employment base with a regenerated town centre, that provides jobs and wealth for local people.

South Durham will be reinvigorated by an improved local employment base including the successful flagship projects of NetPark at Sedgefield, Durham Gate at Spennymoor, and the continuing strong performance of regionally important Aycliffe Business Park. Amazon Park will have been successfully developed with approximately 1000 jobs created. Hitachi will be the home of train manufacturing in the UK and will employ significant numbers of South Durham residents. Its rise in prominence will have reinvigorated the Bishop Auckland and Weardale Railway Lines and unlocked tourist accessibility in South Durham. The existing attractions, such as Locomotion at Shildon, Bishop Auckland Castle, and Sedgefield Racecourse will be major attractions, boosting the local economy. The major retail centre of Bishop Auckland will have consolidated its role and its town centre strengthened but will have also developed a reputation as a visitor destination, including the provision of suitable accommodation. New development in Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor will have improved the range and choice of housing in support of growth in the local economy, helping to improve their town centres and public realm, and expand customer choice in retail and community facilities. The unique character of Crook will have been maintained and

enhanced with the Town taking advantage of its strategic location between Bishop Auckland and Durham City, performing a role as both a gateway and as a major service centre for communities of the Durham Dales.

West Durham's strong communities will have contributed to improving its retail, leisure, housing, employment, tourism and transport infrastructure. Barnard Castle is recognised as being the gateway to the beautiful landscape of the Durham Dales which will be internationally renowned. The Barnard Castle Vision will have delivered imaginative and distinctive environmentally sensitive new developments to enhance facilities for local people and to attract higher levels of tourism with employment benefits for the local community. Locations such as Stanhope, Middleton in Teesdale and Wolsingham will be known for their high quality of life and will be realising their tourism potential. These settlements will perform the role of service centres for strong rural communities in their locality. Existing assets such as the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will have been respected and will be continuing to contribute to the local economy, whilst rural diversification projects will have been supported to recognise the importance of existing business in the area. Local communities in West Durham will have helped deliver new land for housing that will address a range of housing needs in the area, in particular, the need to provide affordable accommodation for first time buyers. Transport accessibility will have been improved by tapping into a range of financial mechanisms.

You told us that...

A draft Vision was included in the County Durham Plan:Core Strategy - Policy Directions Paper (2011). Analysis of the responses received

told us that there is general support for the overall Vision. Generally, the increased acknowledgement of the development needs of smaller settlements together with the role that these settlements can play towards achieving the County's Vision was welcomed. Suggested additional amendments to the Vision include:

1. Increased recognition of the linkages between Durham and the rest of the North East particularly the conurbations of Tyne and Wear and the Tees Valley;
2. Greater emphasis on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and historic environment acknowledging the importance this asset can have on social well being, tourism and wider economic objectives;
3. Include within the Vision, the approach for dealing with minerals and waste;
4. Harness retail-led regeneration as a means to encourage the vitality and viability of the County's town centres and recognise they are at the heart of communities; and
5. Recognise the Housing Market Renewal Areas across the County and ensure they remain a priority.

Question 1

Do you agree with this Spatial Vision for County Durham? If not, can you suggest how it can be improved.

Objectives

3.3 The strategic objectives are derived from the Vision and focus on the key issues that the Plan needs to address. The objectives provide the broad direction for the spatial strategy and the detailed policies of the Plan. They will also serve as a basis for monitoring to measure success in implementation and delivery.

Objective 1: To ensure County Durham improves the economic performance of its main towns and other settlements by increasing the percentage of its residents of working age in full time employment to 73% from the current 66%. Focusing on improving the quality and accessibility of employment areas by investing in sites that are viable, sustainable and attractive to key business growth sectors.

Objective 2: To fulfil Durham City's economic potential as a regional economic asset for the benefit of the whole County by attracting investment and creating an environment for enterprise to flourish. Building on the City's cultural heritage, exploiting its potential as a major retail and residential location, academic and transport hub, and visitor destination, whilst respecting its outstanding historic environment and setting.

Objective 3: Improve the vitality and economic performance of the main towns by directing the majority of development to these centres as part of a whole town approach. To improve the environmental quality, public services, retail, leisure, education, employment and housing offer of smaller towns, villages and neighbourhood centres across the County as a means of tackling economic and social forms of deprivation.

Objective 4: To support and encourage the diversification of the rural economy and encourage the retention of key facilities and services.

Appropriate new development will be supported in rural settlements.

Objective 5: To ensure that new housing is accessible to and meets the needs and aspirations of County Durham's communities in terms of the number and type; including the provision of affordable housing, family housing, executive housing, housing for older people and for other specialist groups.

Objective 6: To ensure that the regeneration needs of County Durham's communities are met in order to reduce social, economic and environmental inequalities both within the County and between the County and elsewhere. Using new housing development, investment in infrastructure and working with communities to help aid regeneration.

Objective 7: To safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of educational, social, sporting, health, recreational and cultural facilities to contribute to the quality of life, satisfaction and health and well being of people who live, work within and visit County Durham.

Objective 8: To encourage greater prosperity by supporting education, training and research establishments that help to raise the aspirations, participation and attainment of young people, re-engage adults with work and lifelong learning, and develop workforce skills.

Objective 9: To strengthen County Durham's role as a visitor/tourist destination, building on and adding to, the strength of existing attractions, townscapes and its exceptional river valleys and landscapes. The sensitive development of new visitor attractions and accommodation should be encouraged, ensuring it is of a scale and type that respects and enhances the environmental qualities of the assets of Durham City, Durham Heritage Coast and the Durham Dales and promotes some of the County's 'hidden gems'.

Objective 10: To reduce the causes of climate change and support the transition to a low carbon economy by encouraging and enabling the use of low and zero carbon technologies and transport. Promote and facilitate renewable and low carbon energy and its supporting infrastructure in appropriate locations to create an attractive environment in which the private sector can bring forward investment in renewable energy.

Objective 11: To adapt to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather conditions by promoting green infrastructure in new developments, promoting sustainable land management initiatives such as peatland conservation and restoration, and, ensuring that new development is located away from areas of flood risk.

Objective 12: To protect, enhance and manage the County's natural environment and green infrastructure including; landscapes, biodiversity and geodiversity resources, air quality, soil and best agricultural land, water resources, water quality, coastal areas and trees and woodlands, particularly ancient woodland, ensuring that designated sites and priority species and habitats are afforded the highest of protection. Opportunities for enhancements within new developments will be maximised aiming for "net gain" in biodiversity value.

Objective 13: To protect and enhance County Durham's locally and nationally important cultural and historic environment including its wide range of buildings, sites, archaeology and other heritage assets.

Objective 14: To ensure that all new development incorporates the highest quality of design and innovation, reflects local distinctiveness, promotes sustainable and secure communities and where practicable improves open spaces and delivers green infrastructure.

Objective 15: To ensure that the location and layout of new

development reduces the need to travel and can be easily and safely accessed by all members of community by, wherever possible, sustainable forms of transport to reduce carbon emissions and the impact of traffic on communities and the environment, and to minimise congestion.

Objective 16: To encourage the efficient, effective and environmentally sensitive use of the County's natural resources, particularly energy, water, soils, minerals and waste.

Objective 17: To oversee the provision of infrastructure and built development by ensuring a steady and adequate supply of energy and non energy minerals, in the most appropriate and sensitive way.

Objective 18: To support the development of a modern network of sustainable waste management facilities in the most appropriate locations.

Objective 19: To safeguard County Durham's mineral resources and waste management facilities from incompatible development and promote economic opportunities provided by the minerals and waste industry, ensuring restoration is carried out to the highest of environmental standards and where possible the restoration of sites to priority habitats.

You told us that...

The County Durham Plan: Core Strategy - Policy Directions Paper (2011) proposed a number of Strategic Objectives. Analysis of the responses told us that, in general, there was broad support for the objectives. Suggested additional amendments to the objectives include:

1. Reference should be made to the main towns and other settlements;
2. Greater reference should be made to biodiversity and to include reference to protecting designated habitats and encouraging habitat creation; and
3. Reference to the restoration of mineral and waste sites should be included within the objective.

The strategic objectives have been revised to reflect the comments received to the consultation and the recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal:

Question 2

Do you agree with these strategic objectives for County Durham? If not, can you suggest how they can be improved?

Sustainable Development

3.4 The clear purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework carries a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In accordance with this, the County Durham Plan encourages sustainable development as a means of growing the County's economy, supporting the wellbeing of communities across the County, and protecting and enhancing the environment.

Policy 1

Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

All development proposals, from design through to implementation, will be considered against the following criteria to assess their sustainability:

- a. Locate development with the aim of reducing the need to travel, both for people, goods, and materials, with the emphasis on improving accessibility between homes, jobs, services and facilities, and promoting and increasing opportunities to make necessary journeys by foot, cycle or public transport, and to move freight from road to rail or sea;
- b. Promote sustainable communities and better neighbourhoods, recognising the particular development requirements of rural areas by allowing small scale development to meet local needs, supporting diversification, protecting and enhancing jobs, local services and facilities and supporting opportunities for faster and more reliable broadband;
- c. Support the local economy and businesses by enabling a mix of uses that provide employment opportunities suitable for local people, contributing towards business expansion and growth in key sectors, and providing for lifelong learning and skills development;
- d. Minimise the use of non-renewable and unsustainable resources, including energy and materials, during both construction and use, encourage waste reduction and appropriate reuse and recycling of materials, and prioritise the use of local materials;
- e. Adhere to the energy hierarchy in order to reduce the need for energy and use energy efficiently, through design, layout and specification which meets Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards;
- f. Maximise opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation, either on or off-site, including developing and utilising district heat networks and recovery of energy from waste;
- g. Ensure development takes into account the risks and opportunities associated with future changes to the climate by safeguarding important carbon sinks and incorporating suitable and effective climate change adaptation principles, demonstrating how the development is resilient to climate change, minimises flood risk, incorporates flood protection and alleviation measures and utilises sustainable drainage systems; and optimises solar gain through appropriate design and use of green infrastructure;
- h. Make the most effective use of land, buildings and existing infrastructure, re-using land that has been previously developed, wherever possible, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- i. Promote sustainable, well designed and accessible places that enhance local distinctiveness, contribute to regeneration of deprived communities and degraded environments, respect the setting and character of place;
- j. Conserve and enhance the quality, diversity and distinctiveness of County Durham's towns and townscapes, villages, and landscapes, including the conservation and enhancement of designated and non-designated heritage assets of architectural, historic or archaeological importance and their settings;
- k. Protect, maintain and enhance the County's biodiversity and geodiversity. Avoid negative impacts on important biodiversity resources and actively enhance the biodiversity resource, ensuring that development contributes to a net gain in the County including the connectivity and creation of habitats;
- l. Reduce flood risk, incorporate flood protection and alleviation measures and utilise sustainable drainage systems wherever

possible and appropriate;

- m. Minimise water consumption and wastage and ensure that total water use after development does not exceed total water use before development, and minimise the impact on water resources and water quality;
- n. Minimise and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and other forms of pollution from new development, including by promoting the use of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in appropriate new development;
- o. Ensure that development is supported by appropriate provision of physical, green and social infrastructure, enhancing existing provision and addressing identified deficiencies and integrating development with surrounding townscape and landscape, and with adjoining communities using green infrastructure;
- p. Promote inclusive and cohesive communities and encourage community involvement in the design, development and management of places and by delivering safe, well designed and accessible places that meet identified need and are adaptable to changing needs, encouraging social interaction and reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- q. Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of County Durham's town centres;
- r. Promote health, well being and active lifestyles by protecting, maintaining, providing or enhancing green space and sport and recreational facilities;

- s. Protect the productive potential of the County's agricultural land and forestry and economically important minerals resources; and
- t. Recognise potential risks to development from contamination and unstable ground conditions, as a result of previous land uses and the legacy of past coal mining and promote remediation and good soil management in land reclamation.

All proposals for major development ^(xi) should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement or other supporting Planning Statement which demonstrates how these criteria have been met. A relevant supporting Sustainability or Planning Statement may be required for other development which raises particular planning or sustainability issues.

3.5 All development in County Durham should contribute to the sustainability of the County's social, economic and environmental resources by supporting and adhering to the Sustainable Development Policy set out above. Where necessary, subsequent policies in the Plan set out in more detail how these criteria should be applied in new development.

3.6 Addressing climate change is a principal concern for sustainable development and a key priority for the planning system. Spatial Planning should encourage the prudent use of non-renewable resources, contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change (mitigation) and take into account the unavoidable consequences (adaptation). However, addressing climate change is multi-faceted and cannot be addressed through a single policy or a single Plan. Climate change mitigation and adaptation must be integrated throughout the Plan, within our vision for

xi Major development is defined as comprising 10 or more dwellings or 1000m² of employment floorspace, or 2,500m² of retail floorspace (see GPDO (2006, as amended), and NPPF.

County Durham's future, our objectives and spatial strategy for delivering new development and protecting our environment and local communities.

3.7 The Local Plan needs to set a path to ensure that the carbon emissions from new development contributes to the Council's overall carbon reduction target of 40% by 2020 ^(xii). It will need to ensure that new development is appropriately located and support the fullest possible use of sustainable transport. It should also be designed in a way that limits carbon dioxide emissions, uses decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy, and minimises vulnerability to future climate impacts. New development should be designed in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy, as summarised in Table 1 below, prioritising the need to reduce the need for energy in the first instance and use energy more efficiently.

Table 1 The Energy Hierarchy

<p>Reduce the need for energy</p> <p>Landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and to maximise cooling, avoiding excessive solar gain</p>
<p>Use energy more efficiently during occupation</p> <p>Energy efficient appliances, lighting, fans controls and pumps</p>
<p>Supply energy from renewable sources</p> <p>Maximise the potential for renewable energy technologies - Solar PV, Solar Thermal, Wind, Hydro, Biomass</p>

<p>Reduce the need for energy</p> <p>Landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and to maximise cooling, avoiding excessive solar gain</p>
<p>Supply energy from low carbon sources</p> <p>Heat Pumps, CHP, Tri Generation</p>
<p>Highly efficient fossil fuel use</p> <p>Heat recovery technologies</p>

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

You told us that...

The Plan should include an overarching policy on sustainable development, and for the scope broadly as proposed.

The Plan needs to recognise the difficulties of accessibility to jobs and services, and the constraints on public transport, particularly in rural areas of the County and provide sufficient flexibility to respond to particular issues in each area of the County, rather than attempting to establish a uniform solution.

xii Set out in An Energy Management Plan for County Durham.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us...

SA of the Issues & Options found that the Policy would have mixed social and economic effects as it aims to direct development to areas with good public transport links. This should help to ensure that future development is in sustainable locations but does not contribute to improving the viability of rural parts of the County and may make inequalities in terms of access to housing, education, employment worse. A reference to ensuring that development contributes to the vitality and viability of rural areas needs to be included. The Policy also should include reference to:

- Safeguarding and enhancing the vitality and viability of rural areas within the County;
- Improving economic sustainability;
- Protection and enhancement of the County's heritage assets; and
- Sustainable development of minerals and waste activities.

SA of the Preferred Options made a range of detailed recommendations in order to strengthen mitigation elements of the Policy and provide further clarity.

Response to SA recommendations...

Recommendations accepted and policy revised.

The NPPF tells us that...

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It carries a presumption

in favour of sustainable development.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

There were no realistic alternatives to the selected option; two suggestions which were made but rejected were:

- a. Not having a sustainable development policy and relying on detailed policies in each topic area. This option was rejected because it is considered that an overarching policy is necessary to set the context for each of the topics covered by the plan, in order to deliver the requirements of the NPPF.
- b. Having a sustainable development policy which is narrower in scope. This option was rejected because it is considered that a comprehensive policy is the most effective way of providing the clarity to encourage and guide sustainable development across the County.

Policy Delivery

The Policy will be delivered through detailed policies throughout the Plan and through the Development Management process.

Question 3

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

4 Strategic Policies

4.1 There is broad agreement that the overarching priority for County Durham is to improve its economic performance. This priority is reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy and Regeneration Statement and is the central theme of the County Durham Plan.

4.2 This ambition is based on increasing the economic performance of the County by enabling a step change in the role and function of Durham City and the other main towns to act as economic drivers, whilst ensuring the rest of the County shares in the benefits of economic prosperity.

4.3 The spatial approach of the Plan will therefore seek to deliver a more prosperous economy, housing that meet the needs of existing and future residents, and town centres that are vibrant and attractive. This will be achieved by ensuring new development is located in the right places and is of the highest quality possible.

Spatial Approach

Policy 2

Spatial Approach

Sustainable development and maximising opportunities for delivery are the core principles of the Spatial Approach. To achieve this development will be delivered across the County as follows:

- a. The 12 Main Towns will be the principal focus for significant retail, housing, office and employment providing better transport and service provision with Durham City as the sub-regional centre;
- b. The 23 Smaller Towns and Larger Villages will function as the

primary local employment and service centres and will continue to meet the needs of dispersed local communities across County Durham, supporting levels of growth commensurate with their sustainability, physical constraints, land supply and attractiveness to the market;

- c. Development in other settlements, not covered by criteria a and b, to meet their social and economic needs and contribute to regeneration, will be achieved by delivering smaller but significant levels of development commensurate with their size;
- d. To allow smaller communities to become more sustainable and resilient and to encourage social and economic vitality, development that delivers community benefits, social cohesion and sustainability will be permitted, notably if it benefits nearby communities that individually lack facilities; and
- e. In rural areas, development that meets the needs of the local community, for instance affordable housing and economic diversification, including appropriate tourist development, will be permitted providing the countryside is protected from wider development pressures and widespread new building.

4.4 The proposed spatial approach is a combination of the two options (Option A - Economic Growth and Option B - Regeneration) put forward in the Issues and Options document. The chosen approach reflects the key role of Durham City as a driver for growth but also recognises the important contribution other areas of the County can make. Although the preferred spatial strategy more closely resembles Option A it does incorporate important elements of Option B, including an increased emphasis on settlements outside of the Main Towns including the Smaller Towns and Larger Villages. The spatial approach is reflected in the scale

and distribution of development in the Plan, which seeks to ensure the long-term sustainability of all areas.

4.5 The 12 main towns referred to in the Policy are Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Peterlee, Seaham, Shildon, Spennymoor, Stanley and Newton Aycliffe. The 23 Smaller Towns and Larger Villages are Annfield Plain, Blackhall/Blackhall Rocks, Brandon/ Langley Moor/Meadowfield, Bowburn, Chilton, Coxhoe, Easington/Easington Colliery, Ferryhill, Great Lumley, Horden, Langley Park, Middleton in Teesdale, Murton, Pelton/Newfield, Sedgfield, Sacriston, Shotton/Shotton Colliery, Sherburn, Stanhope, Ushaw Moor, Willington, Wingate and Wolsingham.

4.6 An important aspect of the preferred approach is its deliverability. Previous approaches to new development relied heavily on public sector funding to ensure the viability of sites in areas of deprivation, focusing all efforts on these communities. This funding is no longer available and is unlikely to be for some time to come. It is also apparent that in some of those areas that received the investment it has had a limited impact on economic performance. Therefore to secure new development we must establish a better understanding of the market. As a result new development will be directed to locations that are attractive to the development industry but that will still deliver regeneration and economic growth. Furthermore if other priorities, such as the provision of affordable housing, are to be delivered then development must be allowed in those areas where there is sufficient land values to fund them. Concentrating development in places with a proven track record of delivery, is therefore essential. However this must not be to the exclusion of other areas which will be allowed to meet local needs and continue to regenerate. We believe the preferred spatial approach fulfils both of these requirements.

Policy Context

4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that the purpose of the planning system and Local Plans is to contribute

to the achievement of sustainable development. The three aspects of sustainable development are; building a strong responsive and competitive economy; supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. Planning should ensure that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure. This principle is fully reflected in the spatial approach and sustainable development is the theme that runs throughout the Plan.

4.8 Although RSS will shortly be abolished it does include a locational strategy that recognises the importance of Durham City and the County's other towns and rural service centres, where development that was appropriate in scale to meet local needs and achieve a balance between, economic development, infrastructure and services. RSS also recognised that 'Durham City's relatively small city centre restricts its ability to provide a wider sub-regional retail role, and the City's outward expansion will continue to be contained by the Green Belt'.

4.9 The Matthew Taylor Review of the Rural Economy and Affordable Housing recommends that local authorities do more to ensure that those who work in the countryside can also live there. Criteria d and e of the spatial approach policy will allow the sustainable growth of smaller settlements, including those in rural areas, thereby reflecting Matthew Taylor's recommendations.

The Economic Case

4.10 Over the last 30 years County Durham has gone through significant structural economic change with the decline of its traditional industries and the pressures of globalisation. Over this period Government initiatives and public sector investment enabled the development of regeneration programmes and settlement renewal. However, despite the receipt of significant resources and sustained efforts to attract inward investment

to support the creation of new jobs and businesses, economic performance has been weak and areas of deprivation persist.

4.11 The huge reduction in public sector expenditure witnessed since 2010 has hit the most deprived areas the hardest. Durham's local economy is a mixed economy with private and public spending closely related. The scale and speed at which regeneration and economic development programmes have been cut creates significant cause for concern, particularly when considered alongside other public sector cuts, rising unemployment and reductions in lending. Whilst Durham has many economic assets, not least its people and places, less spend in the local economy makes economic growth even more challenging.

4.12 After 30 years of population decline and more recent population growth, latest projections forecast that the population is likely to remain fairly static over the next 20 years in the absence of a significant change in policy. Although a significant change to the total population is not projected, by 2031 the working age population is set to decrease by more than 10% and the number of retired people aged 65+ will have increased by 61.6%. Our main focus on raising employment rates for the resident population, reducing worklessness and supporting economic growth will rely on increasing migration to mitigate the expected reduction in the working age population. To this end a co-ordinated plan of realigning market led sites for economic development and business growth, additional housing and improved infrastructure is essential for our future prosperity.

4.13 Previous plans and policies were designed to be supported by public funding but the current economic climate determines a different approach for County Durham which looks to the opportunities created by maximising private sector investment. By investing in opportunities across the County and capitalising on our strengths such as Durham City, Hitachi coming to Newton Aycliffe, access to universities and an excellent labour force as drivers for growth we will aim to support the reinvigoration of our economy. We need to make sure that we recognise our major assets as

those that have the potential to deliver the greatest impact. County Durham has some major under utilised assets such as Durham City, Durham University, NetPark, Aycliffe Industrial Estate and natural assets such as the coast and the dales. Building on and investing in these assets alongside complementary interventions will release the County's potential for growth and connect areas of growth with deprived places in need of regeneration. By following a phased approach across the County, utilising these opportunities we will be able to deliver greater impact for each locality and the whole of the County, using the resources available to us to best effect.

4.14 Durham City is an asset for the County, however, the limited scale and offer of the city as an employment and population centre prevents it from playing a much bigger role in the County's economy. The city needs a critical mass of employment, population and visitors to build on its strengths and become a city of regional, national and international significance. A central business core and a housing offer that complements economic growth and associated transport, retail, leisure and green infrastructure provision underpins our approach. The increased employment and resident population will in turn lead to and unlock other developments in and around the City. Evidence points to Durham City offering the best option to leverage in private sector investment and support the growth of employment numbers needed in the County, however, whilst Durham City must deliver direction and a step change, it will complement our approach in supporting growth and regeneration across all areas of the County.

4.15 The A1, A19 and A167 as key links between the areas to the north and south of the County representing the main corridors for the movement of goods and people in the region and shape our main economic market areas. The A1 Corridor includes many of the County's key office and industrial locations from Chester-le-Street to Durham City and Sedgefield and forms an economic market area of national significance. Newton Aycliffe, as a prime example, has become a major housing and

employment centre in the south of the County because of its proximity to the A1. Aycliffe Business Park is the second largest industrial park in the region and is a major source of manufacturing-related employment for the surrounding area. 250 firms are located here, providing employment for around 8,000 people and will also be the new home for Hitachi Rail Europe. The £4.5 billion Hitachi project will bring 500 highly skilled jobs to the site, plus thousands more throughout the supply chain. To build on this market attractiveness a significant amount of employment land is being allocated at this location. In addition significant levels of housing will be delivered in Newton Aycliffe, complemented by improvements to the town centre and the transport infrastructure. This major investment for County Durham along with other developments in our main market areas such as the A19 economic market area which is emerging as a renowned location for low carbon, automotive and high value manufacturing operations across the region will have a very strong impact on County Durham's economy. We will fully capitalise on the opportunities presented by the new employment prospects, potential in-migration and supply chain opportunities and embed this investment in County Durham and the region.

4.16 To realise the potential of all major centres and key employment sites within the County it is important that we have an environment that stimulates investment, enables growth, provides suitable locations for new businesses and retail premises and attracts residents and visitors. By utilising our assets, supporting private sector development and promoting County Durham as a place to invest, its offer will be improved creating more diverse employment opportunities, stimulating housing demand and development and enabling transport infrastructure improvements. Although the physical infrastructure is critical this will be enhanced through supporting an equally strong economic, environmental, social and cultural infrastructure.

4.17 As well as assisting in the wider economic growth of the County, the spatial approach seeks to address some key issues and vulnerabilities:

- An over-reliance on public sector jobs;
- An under-representation of growth employment sectors;
- High rates of unemployment and worklessness;
- An ageing population and projected decrease in working age population;
- A lack of top quality sites to meet investor requirements; and
- A need for high quality housing to attract individual investors and skilled workers.

The Housing Case

4.18 Regional Housing Aspirations Study (2005) recommended that economic growth should not be frustrated by a lack of the right type or amount of housing and that there needs to be an alignment between economic and housing policies. Furthermore in order to deliver an economic step change an area's housing stock will need to reflect the needs of a highly skilled workforce. Location is a key criteria when these groups are looking for new housing and there is a preference for new development of predominantly private housing within the suburbs. The preferred spatial approach looks to reflect these requirements.

4.19 In providing sufficient housing to meet existing and projected housing need we are also able to access the direct benefits of new housing construction as well as the benefits which come from the spending power of increased population and the ability to attract industry to areas which have good housing choice. Providing high quality housing in the right places can also attract a skilled work force and high earners, which have been shown to create new businesses and jobs.

Key Evidence Base

The extensive evidence base amassed supports the approach we have taken:

- Regeneration Statement (2010)
- County Durham Employment Land Review (2012)
- County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)
- Transport Modelling for County Durham Plan (2012)
- Regional Housing Aspirations Study (2005)

You told us that...

Responses received to the options for the Spatial Approach at the Issues and Options (2010) stage can be summarised as:

1. Option A (Economic Development) - It was recognised that locations that are attractive to the market have the most chance of delivering economic development in the County. However, there were concerns that this option could disadvantage some communities including those in rural areas;
2. Options B (Regeneration) - Respondents questioned whether regeneration settlements could deliver the scale of development envisaged although others felt that targeted regeneration was still necessary and the Plan should not forget areas of need;
3. Option C (a combination of the two) respondents recognised the need to encourage economic development in those areas

attractive to the market but did not want to prevent development in areas of need and rural communities. There was also a view that smaller settlements need to grow as well, to accommodate local needs and enable communities to become more sustainable. Respondents also thought that a combination of the two was the best strategy.

In response to the Policy Directions most agreed that a combination of options A and B presented the best opportunity to deliver a balanced approach to ensure the delivery of sustainable growth in Durham City and the main towns, while retaining the opportunity for targeted regeneration of smaller satellite communities.

Views to the contrary considered that a combination of A and B essentially diluted the economically oriented approach of approach A, and therefore priority should still be given to the focus of approach A. There was some concern that the current strategy will not deliver the housing required and is too close to the historic approach in the County which proved unsuccessful with housing allocations in some District Local Plans remaining undeveloped. Some suggested that the present strategy should be even more ambitious and should be allocating more houses in Durham to address an identified housing shortage.

A number of respondents acknowledge that though an onus on economic regeneration is required in the present economic climate, but that it should be within an approach which seeks to balance the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development more evenly.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The main findings from the SA in relation to the options for the Spatial

Approach were:

Option A (Economic Development)

Essentially, this option would lead to a more concentrated pattern of development within County Durham. Development under this option is likely to be broadly focused toward main towns in the County that have demonstrated strong economic performance, with the principal focus on Durham City as the main driver for economic growth in the County. This option scored positively against economic objectives and scored particularly well on its likely contribution to realising the economic potential of County Durham's main towns, the potential for creating new employment opportunities, enabling business expansion and growth in key economic sectors. In general this option will help raise the profile of the County as a place to live and work. This option also scored positively in terms of locating new development with good access to services and facilities which is more likely to contribute to the adoption of sustainable modes of travel.

However, without mitigation the scale and concentration of development to specific settlements could have the following negative effects; concentrates pressure on capacity of existing infrastructure including highways and drainage/sewerage systems; exacerbate congestion hot-spots and associated poor air quality; may lead to some loss of semi natural habitats, species and designated sites in and around main towns; reduce publicly available green space and impact on landscape quality and character; and require the development of Green Belt.

Option B (Regeneration)

Essentially, this option would lead to a more dispersed pattern of development across County Durham. Development under this option is likely to be targeted toward more deprived settlements across the

County in order to improve communities' quality of life and regenerate those areas in most need. This option scored well against social objectives. A more dispersed distribution of development is also likely to reduce pressure on existing infrastructure capacity in comparison to a more concentrated pattern of development within County Durham. However, it is important to emphasise that the positive effects of this option are heavily dependent on market conditions for targeted settlements due to a reduction of public sector funding and may not be viable in the short to medium term

The negative effects identified in Option B mean that it is unlikely to contribute significantly to addressing the economic under-performance of the County; an increase in private car use to access a wider range of employment and retail choice is likely due to the more dispersed pattern of development this option would deliver; increased congestion on routes into main towns due to a greater level of housing development being located in settlements outside of main towns, in comparison to Option A. This option may also give rise to a wider scale of habitat fragmentation and negative impacts on landscape character and the historic environment, but will be dependent upon specific locations and the scale and design of new development.

To conclude, SA recommends that a combination of spatial options A and B should be taken forward to ensure short to medium term deliverability and a more sustainable approach to spatial planning. Essentially ensuring that economic growth is not at the expense of social needs and vice versa.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

The Council believe that the preferred Spatial Approach chosen is the most effective. Set out below are the other approaches that have been considered and dismissed as being less effective. A 'do nothing' or 'no change' approach has not been considered to be a realistic

alternative as in reality, this would see the County's economy and the quality of life of its residents get much worse.

Option A (Economic Development) whilst considered to be broadly suitable did have a number of weaknesses which meant that it could not be taken forward in the form presented in the June 2010 Issues and Options document. The key elements of Option A including the emphasis on Durham City and other locations with a proven track record of delivery have been retained in the preferred Spatial Approach, however many respondents to the consultation believed that some settlements did not receive sufficient new development.

Option B (Regeneration) was considered to be undeliverable but did have some positive aspects that have taken forward in the preferred Spatial Approach. We believed that the concentration of development in areas where it was likely that public sector funding would be needed to persuade developers to build would result in insufficient development being delivered to meet the requirements of the County's existing and future residents. The preferred Spatial Approach now also draws upon the strength of Option B.

The NPPF tells us...

Planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable (paragraph 17).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- Supporting the delivery of sites allocated in the County Durham Plan and other proposals that secure sustainable development through the Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Jobs created
- Employment rate
- Number of businesses created
- Gross Household disposable income
- Per Capita GVA

Question 4

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

Quantity of Development

Policy 3

Quantity of New Development

In order to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future residents of County Durham and to deliver a thriving economy, including a reduced rate of worklessness and the creation of 30,000 new jobs, the following levels of development are proposed up to 2030:

- At least 30,000 new homes of mixed type, size and tenure;
- 300 hectares of general employment land for office, industrial and warehousing purposes; and
- 29,750 sqm (gross) of new retail floorspace.

4.20 As the Vision and Objectives make clear the overarching priority of the Plan is to improve the economic performance of County Durham. The Plan seeks to create the conditions, including an better environment for business and the necessary infrastructure, that are needed to enable an increased proportion of the working age population is in employment, with all the benefits to residents health, wellbeing and prosperity that follow as a result.

4.21 Macro-economic factors such as the continued fragility of the global economy and the impact of the Government's austerity measures are likely to present key challenges to securing economic growth within the County. However the Plan seeks to enable growth and economic prosperity by ensuring that sufficient employment, retail and housing land, of the right type is made available in the right locations to meet the needs of the market.

Population, Housing and Job Growth

4.22 Evidence produced in 'Defining Economic Growth in the County Durham Plan' includes 2009 based population projections produced by Durham County Council. The assumptions that underpin the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2008 based household projections have then been applied to these population projections to arrive at future estimates of household numbers. To avoid the distorting affects of the significant number of students in the County, particularly in Durham City, the communal population (ie students in halls of residents, prisoners and older

persons living in domiciliary care, etc) have been removed from the household projections. We have not used the 2008 or 2010 ONS population projections because we have identified discrepancies between ONS population projections and local data analysed by the Council which showed that the ONS were likely to be overestimating population change in the future. This work showed that it would be sensible to use the latest ONS estimates of current population but that the Council's projections of future population would be adopted for the Local Plan.

4.23 As both the ONS and Durham County Council's projections are still underpinned by the 2001 Census, the new figures that will be derived from the 2011 Census will be much more up to date and accurate. We will therefore update our evidence and the resultant requirements of the Plan when the Census data becomes available.

4.24 Unfortunately for statistical reasons the household and job projections have been calculated up to 2031. This is one year later than the County Durham Plan period which goes to 2030. It is has been possible to amend the household projections to 2030 but more work is needed to do the same for the job projections although the difference between 2030 and 2031 is not thought to be significant.

4.25 The population, household and job projections have been developed into a series of different scenarios which show varying degrees of future economic and employment growth in County Durham. In determining these scenarios we have reflected on past performance in better economic times rather than only projecting forward the current low point in an economic cycle. The scenarios provide an understanding of the likely impact that differing levels of economic and job growth will have on population and household growth within the County and the subsequent requirement for new homes. The Employment Land Review identifies the requirement for employment land for the projected numbers of new jobs.

4.26 To allow comparison a trend based baseline scenario has been included which assumes the current employment participation rate of

65.9% remains the same to 2030. This baseline scenario indicates a requirement for 23,800 additional homes and a population increase from 496,000 in 2009 to 516,300 by 2031. The Council believes, and previous consultations have confirmed, that this is not an acceptable future for County Durham. Therefore a number of other scenarios with varying levels of economic growth, and corresponding increases in employment participation rates, were modelled:

- Scenario 1 - Reducing worklessness to 2004 levels (71.8% employment participation)
- Scenario 2 - Scenario plus 5000 workers and their jobs (72.3% employment participation)
- Scenario 3 - Scenario plus 10000 workers and their jobs (72.8% employment participation)
- Scenario 4 - County Durham Economic Partnership Target (73% employment participation)
- Scenario 5 - Employment Land Review (75% employment participation)

4.27 Our preferred scenario and the one that the housing and employment land requirements are based on is Scenario 4. Before the onset of recession in 2008, the employment participation rate was regularly above 70%, peaking at 73% in 2004. Therefore although this scenario seems ambitious in the current climate, it has been achieved in the recent past. As this target is the same one adopted by the County Durham Economic Partnership it also aligns to its Altogether Wealthier Delivery Plan.

4.28 Scenario 4 requires the provision of 30,000 additional jobs and will result in a population increase from 496,000 in 2009 to 532,700 by 2031. Due to the existing and forecast age profile of the County it will be

very difficult to support this growth without an increase in in-migration. Scenario 4 therefore requires 12,600 people of working age to move into the County. This in-migration would not displace opportunities for residents but would rather increase the prospects for resident employment at all levels of the labour market in the short and long term. It would also mean that the spending power of these new residents will support the success and sustainability of our town and local centres. Whilst we recognise that the County will require significant change to realise the economic growth and job numbers required by Scenario 4, we believe the Plan is putting the policy framework in place to achieve these targets.

Housing Requirement

4.29 To support the population, migration and job growth in Scenario 4, and to minimise commuting and promote sustainable living, we need to provide sufficient housing to accommodate future households, including those that move into the County. This requirement has been calculated as 30,000 new homes and households by 2030. The Plan seeks to accommodate this number of new households by providing for a range of new homes of a mix of size, type and tenure across the settlements of County Durham in relation to their role, function and economic prospects.

4.30 Historic rates of housing delivery over the past 10 years and recent evidence of potential suitable housing sites in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment indicate that this figure is realistic and deliverable, whilst still being sufficiently challenging. It should be remembered that the housing requirement is not a ceiling but a target and if housebuilding was to surpass the target over the Plan period this would indicate a successful and growing economy.

4.31 Bringing empty homes back in to use is a key priority for the Council and will be pursued through a number of different approaches. However given uncertainty over the funds available to do this we have not included an allowance for empty homes, or any other allowance, when calculating the housing requirement.

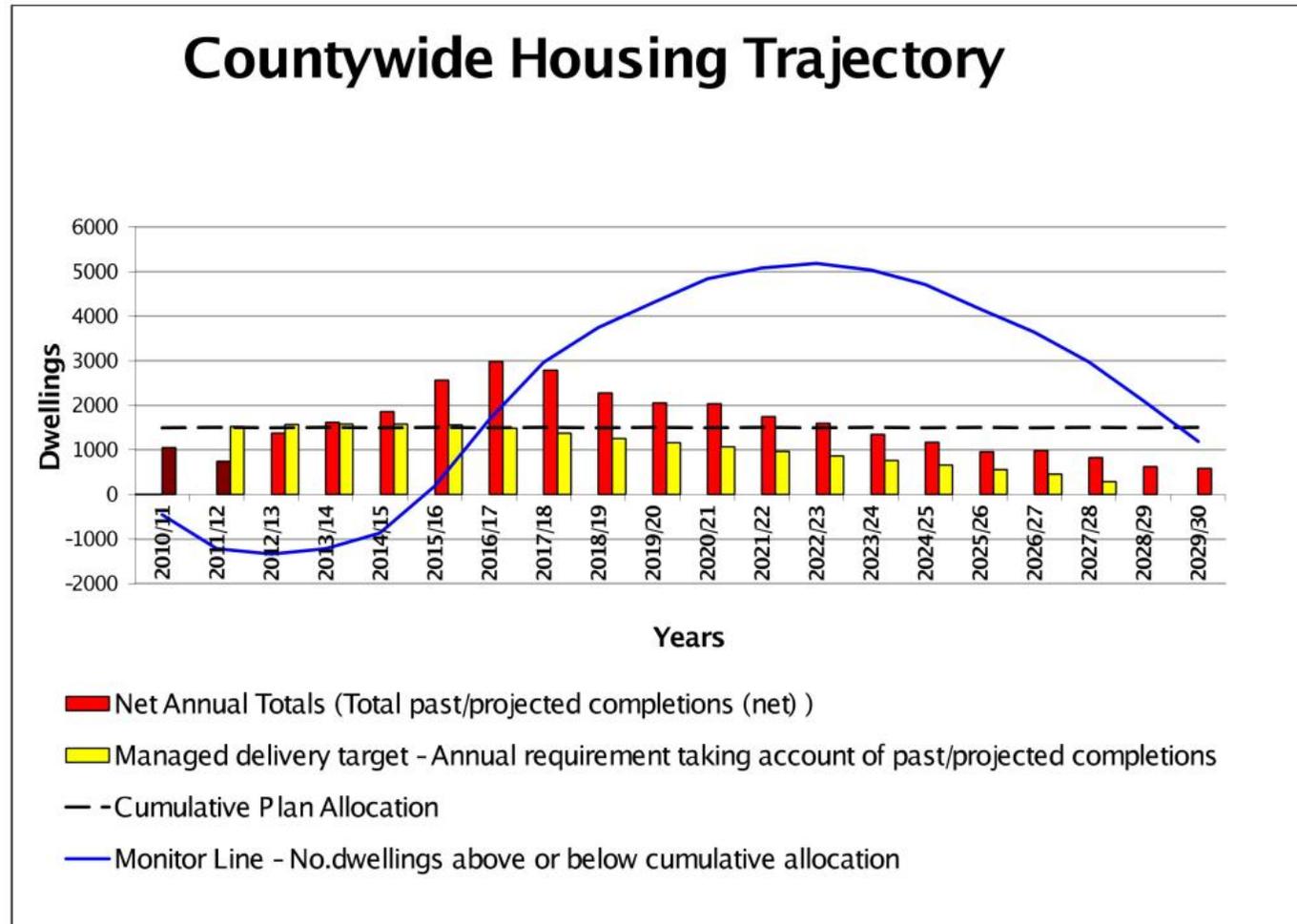
Housing Trajectory

4.32 Trajectories are a planning tool designed to support the plan, monitor and manage approach to housing delivery by monitoring both past and anticipated completions within an area across a period of time. They show whether past completions have fallen short of the number of houses required and will demonstrate how future completions can make up this shortfall. If these shortfalls continue it may indicate that the Plan's approach is not working and therefore indicate whether a review may be needed.

4.33 We have therefore prepared housing trajectory for each Delivery Area (see Appendix A) and a single trajectory for the whole County as shown below. To do this we have estimated the projected build out rates for all existing housing commitment and allocated sites. It is important to emphasise that the housing trajectories are not intended to produce perfect forecasts of the future but do provide as good an understanding as possible of the prospects for delivery.

4.34 The trajectory demonstrates that over the first 2 years of the Plan period actual completions were significantly less than the Plan targets. This is a reflection of the prevailing market conditions experienced since 2008 relating to people's restricted ability to secure mortgages, house builders' inability to access funding at reasonable interest rates, the overall viability of schemes and the reluctance of some landowners to sell land at depressed land values. All these factors have resulted in house building levels declining in many areas across the County. The trajectory indicates that as more favourable conditions return to the market in the later years of the Plan period, housing completions are anticipated to increase significantly, particularly when the new allocated sites begin to deliver housing completions, and resulting in the housing requirement being achieved by 2030.

Figure 3 Countywide Housing Trajectory



Employment Land Requirement

4.35 It is critical that a suitable supply of sites and premises is actively planned for if we are to attract and retain businesses in the future. The County Durham Employment Land Review (ELR) provides the link between the population and job growth identified in the Defining Economic Growth evidence paper and the quantity of employment land that is needed across the County to meet these needs.

4.36 The ELR identifies a current supply of around 812 hectares of employment land. When this is compared to the amount of land which is required to achieve our objective of a employment participation rate of 73%, this is a significant oversupply. This oversupply is particularly high in areas where existing market demand is low and forecast expects it to remain so. Therefore following a review of the existing supply of employment land and potential new employment sites, the ELR recommends that County Durham's portfolio of employment land should be reduced to around 300 hectares. This is considered to be the optimum amount which will meet anticipated quantitative and qualitative needs over the Plan period but which will also deter approaches to develop individual employment allocations for other uses, as a result of an over-supply of land.

Retail Requirement

4.37 In order to establish the future requirement for retail floorspace in County Durham the Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2009) adopted a recognised methodology, drawing upon the results of a household telephone survey to understand existing shopping patterns and how much money was spent on shopping in each of the main retail destinations.

4.38 Having established this baseline position, the future performance of these retail destinations and their key anchor stores, factoring in the

growth in Scenario 4 described above, was modelled. This results of this Study were identified for individual town centres as detailed in Policy 4 (Distribution of Development) and the total Retail Requirement included in this Policy.

4.39 The methodology, data inputs and assumptions are set out in detail in the Retail Study The Retail Study is available online at:^(xiii).

Key Evidence Base

- Defining Economic Growth in the County Durham Plan (2012)
- Durham County Council 2009 based population projections
- CLG 2008 based projected household representation rates
- Employment Land Review (2012)
- Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2009)

You told us that...

Housing Requirement

There was general support for the Housing Requirement being expressed as a minimum target but that it was inappropriate to adopt a 'windfall' allowance in order to reduce the number of housing sites that needed to be allocated. Whilst some respondents considered the requirement was too high, others suggested that it was too low to support economic growth.

xiii <http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/RetailAndTownCentreUsesStudy.pdf>

Employment Land Requirement.

Consultation responses indicated support for increased economic development and the need for employment land in locations that have a strong economic performance.

Retail Need.

Most respondents agreed that new retail facilities should be provided in towns where there are clearly identified deficiencies. Retail development should also be welcomed in other towns where the investment would result in improved choice and bring sustainability benefits.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

As the Housing, Employment and Retail Requirements are based on evidence they were not subject to Sustainability Appraisal at the Policy Directions stage.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

The alternative Scenarios identified in the Defining Economic Growth paper and not chosen were:

- Baseline Scenario - Unambitious and would perpetuate the current high levels of unemployment and worklessness.
- Scenario 1 - Reducing worklessness to 2004 levels - Although this scenario envisages growth it is not sufficiently ambitious to deliver the step change to the County's economy that is required.
- Scenario 2 - Scenario plus 5000 workers and their jobs - Although this scenario envisages growth it is not sufficiently ambitious to deliver the step change to the County's economy

that is required.

- Scenario 3 - Scenario plus 10000 workers and their jobs - Although this scenario envisages growth it is not sufficiently ambitious to deliver the step change to the County's economy that is required.
- Scenario 5 - Employment Land Review - Too ambitious and would require 56200 new jobs and 43400 which would undeliverable.

The NPPF tells us....

Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth (paragraph 17). To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan pro-actively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century (paragraph 19). Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area (paragraph 47).

Local Plans should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and pro-actively encourages sustainable economic growth.
- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to

changes in economic circumstances.

- Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries (paragraph 21).

Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purposes. Land allocations should be reviewed regularly (paragraph 22).

Local Plans should also:

- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that the needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met and are not compromised by limited site availability. LPAs should undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of sites. (paragraph 23)

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The implementation of land use allocations set out in this plan and approval of sustainable development on unallocated sites through the Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Net new houses completed by type, mix and tenure

- Take up of employment land
- Net new employment floorspace completed
- Net new retail floorspace completed

Question 5

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

Distribution of Development

Policy 4

Distribution of Development

To reflect the Spatial Approach the Plan allocates sufficient sites (detailed in Sections 7 and 8) to provide for housing, employment and retail in the following locations taking account of their differing opportunities and constraints:

Table 2 Housing Requirement and Distribution

SETTLEMENT	HOUSING ALLOCATION (HOUSES)	EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATION (HECTARES)	RETAIL ALLOCATION (GROSS SQM)
CENTRAL DURHAM			

SETTLEMENT	HOUSING ALLOCATION (HOUSES)	EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATION (HECTARES)	RETAIL ALLOCATION (GROSS SQM)
Main Town			
Durham City	5120	24.5	6500 (Convenience)
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages			
Brandon/Langley Moor/Meadowfield	550	32.5	
Bowburn	320	29	
Coxhoe	450		
Langley Park	275		
Sacrison	345		
Sherburn			
Ushaw Moor	190		
Remainder of Central Durham	660	4 (123)	
Total for Central Durham	7910	90 (123)	6500 (Convenience)
NORTH DURHAM			
Main Town			
Consett	2780	14	

SETTLEMENT	HOUSING ALLOCATION (HOUSES)	EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATION (HECTARES)	RETAIL ALLOCATION (GROSS SQM)
Chester-le-Street	1300	10 (11.5)	
Stanley/Tanfield Lea	1300	10.5	
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages			
Annfield Plain	260	14	
Pelton/Newfield	500		
Great Lumley	110		
Remainder of North Durham	350	5 (12)	
Total for North Durham	6600	53.5 (23.5)	0
SOUTH DURHAM			
Main Town			
Bishop Auckland	2685	7	
Crook	880	9	4500 (Convenience)
Newton Aycliffe	2000	45 (105)	
Shildon	675	6	
Spennymoor	1695	14.5	8500

SETTLEMENT	HOUSING ALLOCATION (HOUSES)	EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATION (HECTARES)	RETAIL ALLOCATION (GROSS SQM)
			(Convenience) 2000 (Comparison)
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages			
Chilton	285	8	
Ferryhill	315	0.5	1250 (Convenience)
Sedgefield	450	(24)	
Willington	90	7	
Remainder of South Durham	605	4	
Total for South Durham	9680	101 (129)	14250 (Convenience) 2000 (Comparison)
EAST DURHAM			
Main Town			
Peterlee	1820	19.5	7000 (Bulky Goods)

SETTLEMENT	HOUSING ALLOCATION (HOUSES)	EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATION (HECTARES)	RETAIL ALLOCATION (GROSS SQM)
Seaham	1150	1.5 (58.5)	
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages			
Blackhall/Blackhall Rocks			
Easington/Easington Colliery	230		
Horden		1.5	
Murton	350		
Shotton/Shotton Colliery	330	0.5	
Wingate	200		
Remainder of East Durham	620	19	
Total for East Durham	4700	42 (58.5)	7000 (Bulky Goods)
WEST DURHAM			
Main Town			
Barnard Castle	400	6	
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages			

SETTLEMENT	HOUSING ALLOCATION (HOUSES)	EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATION (HECTARES)	RETAIL ALLOCATION (GROSS SQM)
Middleton in Teesdale	30		
Stanhope	10	3	
Wolsingham	180	0.5	
Remainder of West Durham	490	4	
Total for West Durham	1110	13.5	0
TOTAL FOR COUNTY DURHAM			
TOTAL FOR COUNTY DURHAM	30000	300	29750

4.40 In order to deliver the Spatial Approach of the County Durham Plan we need to distribute new development so that it can maximise benefit to the County's economy and also meet the housing and shopping needs of existing and future residents. The preferred distribution of development therefore reflects the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Regeneration Statement and is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This distribution provides the context for housing, employment and retail site allocations detailed elsewhere in the Plan.

4.41 County Durham consists of over 250 communities of differing character and size. These communities all play different roles, have different ambitions and have different relationships with the communities around them. To help understand these roles and relationships we have developed a Settlement Study ^(xiv) which assesses the availability of services and facilities in each settlement to develop a hierarchy. The Settlement Study identifies 12 Main Towns and 23 Smaller Towns and Larger Villages, which are seen as the principal locations for new development to reflect their higher order services, access to public transport and their housing, employment and shopping needs. This Study has also assisted in understanding the relationship between settlements and how they meet social and community needs, where people shop and go for school, work and leisure. All of which helps us plan for their futures.

Housing Approach

4.42 Evidence gathered for the preparation of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012) identifies the need for market, executive and affordable housing. It also shows a close alignment between the Plan's Delivery Areas and actual Housing Market Areas (HMAs). It is however, acknowledged that in reality HMAs cross administrative boundaries and that there are clear relationships between the northern parts of County Durham and Tyne and Wear and the southern County Durham and Tees Valley. Through the Duty to Co-operate we are working with neighbouring local authorities to ensure that throughout the preparation of the Plan that cross-boundary housing delivery issues are addressed. However, because of the logistical and practical difficulties of having housing numbers cross administrative boundaries, for the purposes of the County Durham Plan, they have been allocated to the Delivery Areas/HMAs only within County Durham.

4.43 The principal consideration when distributing the housing requirement was the role and function of the settlement in relation to the

xiv Available to view on the Council's website at: <http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/CountyDurhamSettlementStudyDec2010.pdf>

Plan's Spatial Approach. However other factors were taken into consideration including:

- The distribution of projected household growth (See Appendix B for more detail);
- Market attractiveness;
- Relationship to proposed job growth;
- Consultation responses;
- The location of existing housing commitments;
- Past performance in delivery; and
- The regeneration requirements of communities.

4.44 It should be remembered that some of the housing needed to meet the housing requirement has already been built in the first two years of the Plan period. Furthermore there are sites that are still under construction and others which have planning permission but that have not started on site. These sites are identified in Policy 29 (Existing Housing Commitments). The new sites that we will allocate to enable us to meet the housing requirement are identified in Policy 30 (Housing Land Allocations).

Employment Land Approach

4.45 The Employment Land Review (ELR) identifies a number of Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs) across County Durham which reflect local commercial markets. These markets areas are:

- Durham City (International Market Area)

- A1 Corridor (International Market Area)
- A19 Corridor (Regional Market Area)
- Consett and Stanley (Local Market Area)
- Bishop Auckland (Local Market Area)

4.46 Although the distribution of employment land relates to individual settlements and the Plan's delivery areas, the ELR actually assessed land across the economic market areas and identified surpluses and shortages on that basis. These surpluses and shortages have informed the deallocation, allocation and retention of employment land in the distribution. However for information they are also shown by FEMA in Table 5 below.

Table 3 Employment Land Distribution by Economic Market Area

	Durham City	A1 Corridor	A19 Corridor	Consett area	Bishop Auckland area	Rest of Durham	Total
Total Future Portfolio	44.6ha	122ha	41.7ha	40.9ha	31.3ha	17.8ha	298.2ha ⁽¹⁾

1. Does not add up to 300 due to rounding

4.47 In addition to the sites allocated as part of the distribution of general employment land there also a number of sites allocated for specific employment uses, for example NetPark, that are not available as part of the general portfolio of employment sites. The sites and there specific uses are allocated in Policy 24 (Specific Use Employment Site). All other employment sites are allocated in Policy 23 (General Employment Sites).

Retail Approach

4.48 The retail centres of the County face different challenges over the

Plan period in order for them to remain competitive and vibrant and serve their function within the County's retail hierarchy. Competition from out of town regional centres as well as from online retailing has put significant pressure on our town and local centres. The historic fabric of some centres also means that they can only offer smaller floorplates which are unpopular with most retailers. Some centres also have difficulties with access and car parking. As a result of these issues many of our town and local centres face the need to update and improve. Furthermore it is also important, particularly in rural areas, that existing services are maintained, providing sustainable options for residents and retaining expenditure locally.

4.49 The NPPF requires local authorities to identify where new retail facilities will be focused and where there is a specific requirement for new floorspace. To understand where retail need exists we must use a robust and credible evidence base. The County Durham Retail and Town Centre Study (2009) provides this evidence and identifies where there is a qualitative or quantitative need to plan for new convenience (food), comparison (clothing, CDs, DVDs etc), bulky goods (furniture, DIY goods) or leisure requirements. Additional work was undertaken to identify the further retail requirements that would be needed based on the Plan's housing growth aspirations across the County (Housing Growth Retail Assessment 2010). As the data in the Town Centre Study is now becoming out of date and a number of retail proposals have come forward since its publication we will be updating it to inform the Submission Draft of the Plan.

4.50 Policy 25 (Retail Allocations) allocates the specific sites necessary to meet the need identified in this Policy.

The Distribution

4.51 The paragraphs below describe the housing, employment and retail distribution for each of the Plan's Delivery Areas.

Central Durham

4.52 A key objective of the Plan is to provide a policy context to fulfil Durham City's economic potential as a regional asset whilst also respecting its outstanding environment and setting. Durham City is a major retail centre within the County and this role will be further enhanced through the redevelopment of North Road. Durham City and the surrounding area is viewed as the County's pre-eminent office location and consultation with agents and developers through the ELR identified this area as offering potential for significant future growth. In the past a lack of city centre development sites has been key in constraining development and, unlike many cities, Durham does not have a clearly defined Central Business District. To support the future growth in jobs and its retail function, Durham City is therefore identified as a key location for new housing. The proposed scale of housing growth which equates to 16.5% of the overall housing requirement, reflects the Spatial Approach of the Plan will help increase prosperity across the County. More detail is given in Policy 5 (Durham City).

4.53 The Retail and Town Centre Study found that Durham City centre presently secures only 6.4% (£7.9 million) of main food expenditure arising within the Durham catchment zone. In addition the existing city centre provision does not attract any inflows from surrounding catchment zones. As a result there is an identified need to plan for a new store in the City.

4.54 The Smaller Towns and Larger Villages within Central Durham such as Brandon, Langley Moor and Meadowfield (considered as one settlement for the purposes of the Plan), Langley Park, Coxhoe or Sacriston, have been the focus for successful regeneration initiatives including the renewal of their housing stock. Although primarily housing focused, the regeneration programmes have also helped stimulate local business by retaining families through the provision of a choice of housing. These settlements are also local service centres providing retail, leisure, educational and service facilities and benefiting from good public transport into Durham City. The Spatial Approach and housing distribution seeks to build on this successful regeneration and also for them to play a role

in supporting the economic growth of Durham City.

4.55 The remainder of the Central Durham Delivery Area comprises a number of villages, many of which are popular places to live. To reflect this high market demand and the availability of suitable land in sustainable locations, the amount of new housing in the Remainder of Central Durham has been increased from that proposed in the Policy Directions.

North Durham

4.56 In North Durham, Consett will continue to provide a focus for major housing development, taking advantage of its numerous facilities and services including the new Consett Academy. It continues to be a popular place to live and has a proven track record of past housing delivery including a significant number of existing housing commitments. Given the town's location and public transport links, residents will continue to benefit from good access to employment opportunities within the town itself and elsewhere in the County and Tyne and Wear. The Plan will complement the existing Masterplan for the Town which seeks to regenerate the town centre. Although the Retail and Town Centre Study identified a floorspace requirement for Consett this was for later in the Plan period. We are therefore not proposing retail provision in this Plan but will review the decision depending on the findings of the proposed review of the Town Centre Study.

4.57 Stanley presents opportunities as a focus for regeneration, new housing and local employment growth. New housing will be delivered in a number of sites across the town and support the regeneration of the Town Centre, contributing to the implementation of proposals in the Stanley Town Centre Masterplan. Allocating housing sites will also serve to regenerate key previously developed sites including the site of South Stanley Comprehensive which will be available for development following completion of the North Durham Academy.

4.58 Both Consett and Stanley serve a local employment function. The

area does, however, benefit from a number of good quality, modern office premises and incubator units on estates such as Number One, Greencroft and Villa Real. This provision has been largely public sector led and given the reduced availability of public sector funds development is likely to be challenging.

4.59 Chester-le-Street continues to be a focus for economic growth with strong links to Tyne and Wear. The town is located in the A1(M) corridor, which the ELR identifies as a strong market area where the level of demand is likely to be highest. Chester-le-Street is also identified in the ELR as a key location for warehousing and distribution building on the success and take up of Drum Industrial Estate. The proposed extension to Drum Industrial Estate will ensure that Chester-le-Street continues to benefit from its direct links with the A1(M) and its railway station on the East Coast Mainline. Significant expansion of the town is constrained with flood risk areas to the east along the River Wear, a Site of Special Scientific Interest to the west and the proximity of a number of neighbouring settlements, with the subsequent risk of coalescence. As a result of these constraints the distribution for Chester-le-Street is lower than might be expected from a successful Main Town. To help redress this imbalance and to ensure that the supply of housing within the vicinity of Chester-le-Street is maintained, the neighbouring settlements of Pelton and Newfield have been given a significant housing requirement. It should also be noted that the requirement for Chester-le-Street does include an allowance for the proposed executive housing site at Lambton.

4.60 Although Annfield Plain has its own employment sites and a local centre it is reliant on Stanley for many of its needs. Whilst there is a great deal of available land in Annfield Plain there is limited market demand and a high housing requirement would be difficult to deliver.

4.61 There are a number of villages within the remainder of North Durham which have the potential to develop in a manner suitable to meet their own requirements whilst protecting the landscape character of the

countryside.

South Durham

4.62 Newton Aycliffe is home to Aycliffe Business Park which is an employment site of regional importance. Following the announcement that the Government were to proceed with the Intercity Express Programme Hitachi, a major train manufacturing firm, have confirmed that their preferred site for train manufacture and assembly plant is Amazon Park. This is a major boost to the town's confidence and will secure 500 highly skilled jobs on the site, with the expectation of a significant number of further jobs as the supply chain develops. An inland port facility is also proposed at Newton Park. This investment is of huge importance to County Durham and Newton Aycliffe in particular and defines the role of the town as a key area for future growth. However as Newton Aycliffe is a New Town there are limited opportunities for new housing within the Town. Therefore a major urban extension has been identified to the east of the Town more details of which are given in Policy 11 (Other Strategic Sites).

4.63 Bishop Auckland will continue to be the focus for new housing, building upon the success of recent developments at Auckland Park, St Helen's Auckland and West Auckland. Further housing growth will help to strike a balance with and support existing and new employment opportunities, such as the proposed extension to South Church Enterprise Park, which will meet localised demand for smaller industrial and office premises. Although it is hoped that continuing housing delivery will also attract businesses to the area. Future housing growth will also support the town centre, which has recently benefited from successful public realm interventions although there are concerns over the number of vacancies within the town and the development of nearby out of town shopping. Bishop Auckland has potential to become a key tourist centre building on attractions including Auckland Palace, Binchester Roman Fort, the Town's railway heritage and links to the Dales and Darlington.

4.64 Although the Retail and Town Centre Study identified a floorspace requirement for Bishop Auckland this was for later in the Plan period. We are therefore not proposing retail provision in this Plan but will review the decision depending on the findings of the proposed review of the Town Centre Study. The immediate issue for the town is the provision of larger floorplates in the town centre as a way of retaining trade.

4.65 Durham Gate in Spennymoor is a major new mixed use development which will provide new employment, housing and leisure facilities. The housing requirement for the town seeks to tap into the benefits that this, and other schemes, will bring to the Town. New housing will also encourage the redevelopment of Festival Walk to help restore the viability and vitality of the town centre. However, Spennymoor has a very large number of existing commitments and other, less certain opportunities such as the possible redevelopment of Merrington Lane, which are more than enough to meet this requirement.

4.66 Spennymoor currently retains 72.6% (£32.7 million) of main food arising within its immediate catchment. This is dominated by the existing Asda store which is currently over-trading. A new foodstore within the town centre would enhance competition within Spennymoor and also increase retailer choice for local residents. In terms of non-food shopping Spennymoor presently retains 19.3% (£11.6 million) of expenditure arising in the immediate catchment, this retention figure indicates that the town secures a particularly low market share for high street goods such as clothing. Whilst Spennymoor is unlikely to be able to effectively compete with larger centres on a like for like basis the attraction of national multiples to the town centre will significantly increase current performance, although it may be appropriate to base future performance on more successful independent traders.

4.67 Shildon's history as the birthplace of the railway is celebrated with The National Railway Museum at Locomotion, which attracts over 200,000 visitors a year. Public realm improvements in the town centre have

improved the shopping experience however, the proximity of Bishop Auckland means that retail spend within the Town is lower than anticipated. The housing requirement reflects previous demand and build rates in the Town and the current commitments at Shildon-on-Track and Dale Road.

4.68 Crook is a major service centre for many of the communities of the Durham Dales and is close to Bishop Auckland and Durham City. Development in Crook needs to be carefully managed in order not to exacerbate existing congestion on the A690. Willington is located within a mile of Crook and together they are heavily reliant upon each other for their services and facilities. Thistleflat Industrial Estate in Crook and the nearby Low Willington Industrial Estate will meet the need for employment land over the Plan period.

4.69 There is currently a small Co-op supermarket and a number of small shops in Crook town centre. However a lack of choice and the fact that the Co-op store is predominantly orientated towards top-up shopping means that the town retains a relatively low market share. Although expenditure leakage to neighbouring Bishop Auckland is unavoidable, a foodstore provision in Crook will bring benefits to the town while increasing the opportunities for local shoppers to make linked trips with Crook town centre. It will also encourage increased footfall and secure wider economic and sustainability benefits including 'spin off' trade to sustain existing local independent retail provision.

4.70 Ferryhill and Chilton have been subject to major regeneration interventions particularly around Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station and West Chilton which has involved demolition and housing group repair schemes. Unfortunately this work has not been completed and government funding is no longer in place although the Council does remain committed to the successful rejuvenation of these areas. The proximity of a European designated Special Area of Conservation at Thrislington does impose some limits on the number of new houses in this area. The housing

requirement reflects these opportunities and constraints.

4.71 Ferryhill currently has a limited convenience retail offer with only a small Co-Op store on the Market Place. This primarily caters for top up shopping but evidence indicates that there is potential to retain further food spending within the town. New provision would allow this potential to be met and reduce the need to travel to Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe.

4.72 Sedgefield is an attractive market town and also the location of the successful science, engineering and technology park at NetPark. Sedgefield also has good transport links and is located within easy reach of the A19 the A1(M) and Tees Valley. Sedgefield has recently benefited from the approval of a new supermarket which will help improve the quality and choice of shopping for residents. All of these positive attributes means it is a very strong housing market area and attractive to the housebuilders. The housing requirement reflects this attractiveness but should also ensure that it does not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the village.

4.73 Many of the villages in the remainder of South Durham will benefit from some limited development in order to help sustain local services and facilities and help to extend the range and types of housing available.

East Durham

4.74 Peterlee is a New Town with a strong manufacturing base located in the A19 corridor, which the ELR identifies as the third major market in County Durham. To build on its strong existing links with Sunderland and Hartlepool, part funding has now been secured for a rail halt at nearby Horden. There is however a limited supply of suitable housing sites within the town and it is tightly constrained to the south, east and west. Although there is some risk of coalescence with Easington Village/Colliery to the north there is an opportunity for development. It has also become apparent that the redevelopment of North East Industrial Estate (NEIE) for housing

(as proposed in the Policy Directions) is unlikely to be viable without some gap funding. Linking the development of these two significant sites could provide the mechanism for the successful redevelopment of NEIE and the provision of new high quality housing which the town needs.

4.75 There are also some opportunities in the villages which lie close to the town including in Easington Village, Shotton, Shotton Colliery and Wingate, which as well as meeting some of the housing needs of Peterlee, will also help regenerate the villages themselves. Shotton in particular has proved to be a popular location for new housing helping to deliver a larger variation of type and mix. Similarly Wingate has been the focus for new house building and whilst it does have some local services, like Shotton and Shotton Colliery, it is heavily reliant on Peterlee for jobs and shopping.

4.76 Peterlee presently secures 20.4% (£7.7 million) of available bulky goods expenditure. There is currently a significant loss of expenditure out of the County to other centres (Hartlepool, Sunderland and Metro Centre) but also to the main out-of-centre parks in Durham. Peterlee has the potential to significantly improve its bulky goods market share performance. New bulky goods retailing requires relatively large sites to meet spatial requirements in terms of car parking, retail warehouses and servicing arrangements. A convenience need was also identified within Peterlee, however this will be met by two recently approved foodstores. One at the former College site and the other within the town centre, on land to the rear of Castle Dene although the College decision is currently subject to judicial review.

4.77 The successful and continuing regeneration of Seaham has established the town as a focus for new development, primarily driven by the Enterprise Zone Status. Major future employment opportunities exist at Hawthorn, Spectrum and the proposed Centre for Creative Excellence (Film Studio). The ELR also identified a need to increase the provision of smaller scale office premises that can meet the needs of more localised

occupiers. This will be through a combination of new development as well as the possible sub-division of some of the larger modern premises currently vacant. The housing requirement for Seaham, and nearby Murton, will therefore build on past success, support future job growth and increase the vitality of both centres.

4.78 The remainder of East Durham comprises small ex-coal mining villages which, like many of the towns within East Durham, are trying to reinvent themselves. New housing, which is appropriate in scale, is one way of trying to rejuvenate these villages.

West Durham

4.79 Barnard Castle is an attractive market town with a well developed tourism offer. It's principal employer is however, Glaxo Smith Kline, a major pharmaceutical manufacturer which employs around 1000 people. Barnard Castle also serves as an important centre for Teesdale and the presence of Glaxo Smith Kline in the town could support demand from suppliers or spin off businesses, at Harmire Business Park and land at Shaw Bank. Despite being in the Dales, Barnard Castle is relatively well connected to the rest of the County and North West England via the A688, the A67 and the A68 making it a major visitor and tourist centre. The town centre has many independent shops and serves as a service centre for much of Teesdale. The housing requirement will help support existing and future jobs and ensure the Town's services remain viable.

4.80 Middleton-in-Teesdale, Stanhope and Wolsingham are important service centres for other parts of West Durham and also visitor destinations in their own right. Due to the rural nature of these settlements and the other villages in West Durham, most housing development has historically been delivered on smaller sites (less than 0.4 hectares). This has also made it difficult to identify new housing allocations and this is reflected in the distribution of the housing requirement in these areas. Demand for employment sites and premises is likely to be limited with most businesses smaller and more local in nature. These businesses have a key role in

supporting communities. Furthermore with the future roll out of broadband it is expected that more service type industries and live/work enterprises will be able to operate effectively in these areas.

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Settlement Study (2012)
- County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)
- Defining Economic Growth in County Durham (2012)
- County Durham Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2011)
- County Durham Employment Land Review (2012)
- Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2010)
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan

You told us that...

In response to the Policy Directions consultation in 2011 there was support for an increase in the housing requirement in Newton Aycliffe, Easington and Sedgfield. In other settlements such as Consett, Sacriston and Spennymoor there responses were generally in favour of lowering the requirement. In the majority of other settlements most responses indicated that the housing requirement was about right.

Wherever possible the housing requirement now reflects the responses made. However there are settlements where changes have been made which may not reflect consultation feedback. For

example in Peterlee/Horden despite strong support for the previous allocation we have had to make a significant reduction given the severely limited land supply and the uncertainty over the viability of redeveloping North East Industrial Estate for housing. This is a theme repeated in other parts of East Durham including Murton and Blackhall. In Crook although there was strong support for the existing housing requirement, highways have confirmed that the current capacity issues with the A690, which kept the requirement low in the Policy Directions, would be resolved by the Western Relief Road.

In Shildon there was support for an increase in the requirement but the limited prospects for job growth and the lack of suitable sites meant that this was not possible.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The Sustainability Appraisal recommended that the housing distribution should be undertaken in conjunction with the employment distribution to minimise the need to travel and ensure residential and employment development is well related. This recommendation has been implemented.

In North Durham the employment and housing requirement for Consett was supported, as was those in Stanley and Chester-le-Street. Similarly in East Durham support was given to the requirements for Seaham and Murton. The constraints to growth in Peterlee/Horden were acknowledged. In South Durham the requirements for Shildon were supported. However, it was suggested that further consultation be required in relation to the proposed strategic sites in Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe. In Crook the main issue related to highways issues at Neville's Cross on the A167 and possible mitigation through the Western Relief Road. In West Durham it was suggested that the housing requirement was increased but for the reasons set out in the supporting text this has not been

possible.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

The reasons for not choosing the alternative housing requirements are set out in the supporting text to the Spatial Approach policy and in the supporting text for this policy. As the employment land and retail requirements are based solely on evidence there are no alternative options.

The NPPF tells us...

Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities. Plans should also take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas (paragraph 17).

Local Plans should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and pro-actively encourages sustainable economic growth.
- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high

technology industries. (paragraph 21)

Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purposes. Land allocations should be reviewed regularly.

Local Plans should:

- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that the needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met and are not compromised by limited site availability. LPAs should undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of sites. (paragraph 23)

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The identification and delivery of site allocations set out elsewhere in the Plan and through the Development Management process.

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Net new houses completed by location
- Take up of employment land by location

- Net new employment floorspace completed by location
- Net new retail floorspace completed by location

Question 6

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

Durham City

Policy 5

Durham City

The Spatial Approach identifies Durham City as the primary location for new development in County Durham. The Plan therefore identifies approximately 24.5 hectares of employment land, 5120 houses and 6500sqm of new convenience retail floorspace. The Plan therefore:

- Prioritises the redevelopment of land and buildings around the historic core of the City which support its key role as an employment, housing, retail and tourism centre;
- Respects the special character of the historic centre and World Heritage Site;
- Supports the vitality and viability of the City Centre;
- Helps realise the potential of the City for tourism;

- Identifies Aykley Heads as a Strategic Employment Site, predominately for office development alongside a mix of other uses including housing;
- Identifies Sniperley Park, North of Arnison, and Sherburn Road as Strategic Housing Sites;
- Identifies North of Arnison as the location for convenience retail floorspace; and
- Provides for the delivery of the Western Relief Road early in the Plan period and the Northern Relief Road later in the Plan period to relieve congestion and enhance the employment, tourist and shopping potential of the City.

4.81 Durham City is steeped in history and heritage, home to the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site and Durham University, one of the country's leading Universities attracting some of the highest quality students in the UK and the world. These key assets with a strong, though constrained, spatial focus based upon the Cathedral and Castle on the Peninsula comprise a key component of the City's identity and distinctiveness and it essential that the World Heritage Site is maintained and enhanced.

4.82 Development and growth in Durham City has been limited over the past 20 years as regeneration of industrial towns and villages around the City has taken priority. Although the Durham City area has many strengths and has performed well on a number of economic performance indicators, it does have some issues that need to be addressed. Whilst Durham City performs significantly better than other areas of County Durham, the fact that it was in the bottom half of the national competitive rankings in 2008 and has an over-reliance on public sector jobs with 45%

of all jobs in the city in this sector, illustrates the City's relative under performance. Additionally there is a significant reduction in the city's population out of term time when the students return home.

4.83 Before the recession, the percentage of County Durham's residents of working age in full time employment had been rising and was very close to the national average, since 2008 however this has fallen back due to the reduced levels of private and public investment. As a result increasing the rate from the current 66% to 73% is a key Objective of the Plan. Achievement of this Objective will require growth to replace and exceed the level of jobs lost alongside a reversal of the high proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits. This will be particularly challenging given the impacts of the public sector contraction and the difficulties of replacing these jobs with private sector employment.

4.84 Durham City offers major opportunities to leverage in private sector investment and support the growth in employment numbers needed, complemented by growth in the County's other economic market areas. The City has a population of approximately 42,000, larger than any other town in the County and provides job opportunities for a regional labour market. Its location close to the main north-south axes of communication through the north east and between the Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley conurbations makes it ideally located as a commercial centre, with over 1 million people of working age living within 45 minutes drive of the city centre. The Employment Land Review has also shown that Durham City is an attractive site for business and one of the few locations in the North East that can attract high quality, high growth industries.

4.85 Durham City is already an important employment centre with a substantial number of employees working in the city itself, in addition to significant office and industrial premises in and around the city centre. However, considering the geographical area it covers and the growth in the regional service sector, County Durham has a surprisingly limited office market. The City lacks a defined, modern central business quarter,

which would be attractive to occupiers, being located in a historic city with excellent transport links to Newcastle, Edinburgh and London . A new business quarter would be a pre-eminent office location and able to attract both national and international occupiers as well as having a positive impact to the vitality of the city centre retail offer. We are therefore proposing the redevelopment of Aykley Heads to provide a Central Business quarter with up to 70,000 sqm of floorspace and up to 6000 gross new jobs which will not only increase the economic potential for the City but will have significant economic benefits for the wider County. More detail is given in Policy 6 (Aykley Heads).

4.86 Other opportunities exist on the former Ice Rink site and Milburngate House offering substantial potential to bring forward more high value employment into Durham City which will benefit County Durham residents and regional commuters. In turn these developments will also spur on other developments in Durham City such as the opportunity that North Road presents.

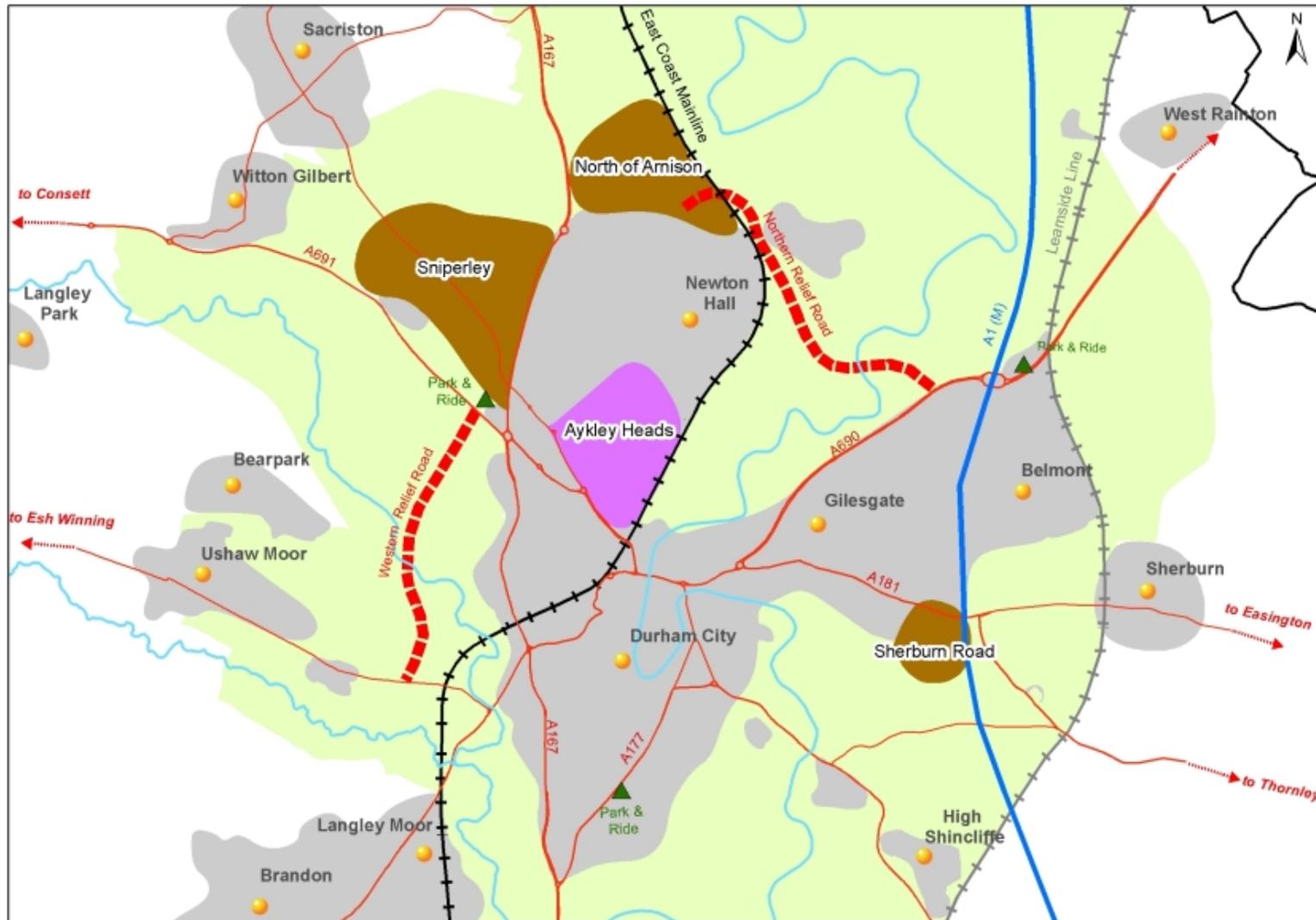
4.87 The City needs a critical mass of employment, population and visitors to build on opportunities and become a city of regional, national and international significance. A core business quarter at Aykley Heads, a housing offer that complements economic growth, a visitor offer that encourages visitors to stay longer, together with the associated infrastructure needed to support this growth, is therefore central to our approach. Following an assessment of the landscape capacity, the evolution of the City and most importantly the housing and economic potential of the area we are therefore proposing the development of 5120 homes. Some of these can be accommodated in housing allocations within the City but we are also proposing three strategic housing sites which will accommodate around 4000 new homes, that will provide the opportunity to create new communities, building on the existing infrastructure, environment and quality, for which the City is renowned. The sites will also support new schools and local facilities including the development of high quality landscaping and environment. More detail is given in Policy

7 (Durham City Strategic Housing Sites).

4.88 County Durham has a track record of delivering transport solutions including modest congestion charging, three park and rides, and Transit 15 which is improving connectivity within County Durham. However the transport modelling we have undertaken shows that the existing road network in Durham City is nearing capacity. Natural traffic growth across the Plan period would make this situation significantly worse. Public transport and other improvements would partially alleviate the congestion problems but it is clear that a major infrastructure solution is required. Therefore to address existing congestion and air quality issues and to facilitate the development proposed for Durham City we are proposing two new relief roads.

4.89 The provision of a Northern Relief Road will provide an alternative route from the A1 corridor to the north and west of the City Centre, and a measure of relief to the already congested section of the A690 crossing the River Wear at Milburngate. It will also improve links between North West County Durham and the A1. The provision of a Western Relief Road will provide an alternative route from the A690 and the A691 on the west of Durham and relieve the congested A167 whilst also providing relief to the junction at Neville's Cross which currently encounters significant delay in the peak hour periods. It must be noted that we see the roads as only part of the solution and they will be developed in conjunction with significant investment in public transport, park and ride, cycleways and pedestrian links. More detail on the Relief Roads is given in Policy 8 (Western Relief Road) and Policy 9 (Northern Relief Road).

Map 3 Key Diagram



4.90 In addition to the new roads and other transport improvements, Durham City is also located close to the Leamside Railway Line. This line is seen as an important component in the longer-term development of transport links in the area. When developed it will deliver greater accessibility to communities within the catchment and provide a viable (and more sustainable) alternative to the A1(M) for transporting people and freight. The route of the Leamside Line will be safeguarded by Policy 48 (Provision of new Transport Infrastructure).

4.91 Durham Cathedral and University are established cultural centres with world class international reputations which have supported the focus on culture and heritage not only in the City itself but also the rest of the County. The County Durham visitor economy draws upon these assets however there is capacity to build on them to attract more visitors to spend time and stay in our areas and to boost the profile of our cultural offer across the County. Although the County's visitor economy has been growing steadily in recent years and supports around 10% of our workforce, there is some way to go to match the performance of comparable visitor destinations. Fulfilling the City's potential as a destination of national and international significance will encourage visitors to spend more time in the City and the County, increase the economic impact of the visitor economy in our area and almost double the number of jobs currently supported.

4.92 One example of how we do this is an exhibition of some of Britain's most significant manuscripts and books alongside stunningly beautiful artifacts from Anglo-Saxon England including specifically the Lindisfarne Gospels. The Gospels are on loan from the British Library in the summer of 2013 and will be displayed on Durham's UNESCO World Heritage Site attracting thousands of visitors into Durham City. These cultural events have widened the opportunities for local people and visitors by complementing the existing offer with new possibilities to experience, participate in, use and enjoy the City.

Key Evidence Base

The extensive evidence base amassed supports the approach we have taken:

- County Durham Regeneration Statement
- Employment Land Review
- Transport Modelling
- Regional Housing Aspirations Study (RHAS)
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Feedback Report - County Durham Plan Update for Durham City Residents (2011)

You told us that...

Responses received on the spatial approach for Central Durham outlined both support and concerns in regards to the approach. Support has been expressed for growth in Durham City stating that housing growth and investment in supporting infrastructure should be supported, that employment growth was welcome and that more employment land should be allocated in the City. Concerns centred on the impacts of development in the Green Belt, including: encroachment into the countryside and impact upon landscape character, including the setting of the World Heritage Site and the historic city; increases in traffic congestion and pressure upon existing facilities and services; and impact upon habitats.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us...

Proposals for development will need to be tied into an overall growth strategy (e.g. housing, employment, retail, green infrastructure etc) for the sub-County delivery area of Central Durham and demonstrate how they fit with the overall focus of growth and the economic strategy for the County. Taking this holistic view, housing distribution policy and allocations should be drafted in association with the employment distribution policy and allocations to minimise the need to travel and ensure residential and employment development is well related. While there might be potential to reduce the employment, housing and infrastructure allocations to Durham City in order to minimise the loss of Green Belt around Durham City and reduce the pressure that concentration of development would put upon the City, this needs to be viewed against the economic case for the City.

The NPPF tells us...

To help achieve economic growth, LPAs should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and pro-actively encourages sustainable growth and which meets the development needs of business and supports an economy fit for the 21st century. Patterns of growth should be actively managed to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Despite sustained efforts to attract inward investment and to support the creation of new jobs and businesses, multiple deprivation persists in parts of the County and the gap in economic performance between County Durham and the regional and national economies has widened during the last decade. Durham City is an asset for the County, however, the limited scale and offer of the city as an employment and population centre prevents it from playing a much bigger role in

the County's economy. The city needs a critical mass of employment, population and visitors to build on its strengths and become a city of regional, national and international significance. By investing in opportunity across the County and capitalising on Durham City as a driver for growth we will aim to facilitate employment growth and boost economic performance which will in turn help tackle deprivation and drive forward the economic regeneration of the County.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The Policy will be monitored through:

- The Annual Monitoring Report and the County Durham Economic Partnership Performance Framework

Question 7

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

Aykley Heads

Policy 6

Aykley Heads

In order to provide a high quality employment location to deliver the new jobs Durham City and County Durham need, land at Aykley Heads, as shown on the proposals map, is allocated as a Strategic Employment Site. The development of this site will have regard to the provision and timing of the infrastructure necessary to support it, including improvements to the highway network immediately adjoining the site and the Western and Northern Relief Roads.

The development of the site will reflect the principles of development as set out in the Aykley Heads Supplementary Planning Document that accompanies this Plan and summarised below:

Employment

- a. Deliver 70,000m² of new high quality, flexible office (use class B1) floorspace to attract national and international employers.

Services

- a. To ensure the commercial attractiveness of the site, supporting facilities will be permitted on the site providing they do not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the City Centre. Uses which may be appropriate include:
 - A3 (restaurant, snack bar, café);

- D1 and D2 (health facilities, creche, gym); or
- A1 (convenience retail, sandwich bar).

Sustainable Design

- a. Deliver attractive, high quality design incorporating sustainable development principles and adopting sustainable construction methods in accordance with Policy 1 (Sustainable Development) and Policy 17(Sustainable Design in the Built Environment);
- b. Enhance the entrance to the site from Durham Railway Station and provide good quality pedestrian and cycle links from the station into the site; and
- c. Create a new high quality gateway entrance fronting onto the A691/B6532.

Transport

- a. Provide sufficient parking that is attractive to major investors and prestige businesses, while also encouraging the use of Park and Ride schemes and other forms of sustainable transport; and
- b. Bus, pedestrian and cycle routes must be incorporated within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will also be required to ensure that reliance on the private car is reduced and to mitigate the impact of increased traffic in accordance with Policy 47(Sustainable Travel).

Green Infrastructure

- a. Incorporate an interconnected network of good-quality, multi functional green infrastructure including an adequate supply of different types of open space, in accordance with Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure). An appropriate and enhanced landscape structure with clearly defined boundaries will also be developed;
- b. Set the new office development within a strong landscape framework which capitalises on the site's natural landscape features, provides integration with the surrounding landscape, captures and enhances wildlife potential and embraces environmental standards;
- c. Provide a new city park by enhancing the land at the east of the site as an integral part of the site's development. This parkland will allow the site to retain its openness and will be provided with the DLI museum creating a gateway, with the parkland extending up to Newton Hall. This area will also provide an enhanced network of surfaced multi user routes, tree planting and habitat creation creating a parkland garden. Incorporate a new open-air space for public events; and
- d. Provide enhanced green routes running through the new park to provide attractive and safe routes linking this area to the northern entrance of Durham Railway Station and Wharton Park and residential areas to the north of the site.

4.93 Our vision and objectives identify a need to develop a business location of strategic importance within Durham City. This will deliver high quality, primarily private sector jobs and also help address the lack of of

a clearly defined central business district within the City. Aykley Heads, with its proximity to Durham Railway Station and the East Coast Mainline and its excellent road links to the A1(M) and A167, is the ideal location for this new strategic employment site.

4.94 Detailed work on the development capacity of the Aykley Heads is included in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that accompanies the Plan and shows that the site has the potential to accommodate 6000 jobs and re-balance the nature of the existing jobs on the site^(xv), increasing the percentage that are private rather than public sector.

4.95 Aykley Heads currently provides an area of informal parkland that is well used particularly with dog walkers. As an integral part of the redevelopment of the site, there is an opportunity to significantly improve this area by providing a high quality more formalised parkland. On the remainder of the site the existing mature green infrastructure and landscaping will be incorporated into the new office development and maintained and enhanced. The public access into and around Aykley Heads will be retained and improved, creating more attractive gateways into the site particularly from the railway station and Wharton Park. The park could also provide a potential site for the relocation of the existing sports pitches currently on the site if their replacement is required^(xvi).

4.96 Within the Aykley Heads site a planning application for 230 homes on the existing Police Headquarters has recently been approved. The replacement Headquarters on the land opposite the existing building was also approved. Both of these developments will complement the proposals for the rest of the site.

xv There are currently 2700 people working on Aykley Heads, the vast majority at the Police HQ and Durham County Council. This is likely to decrease significantly over time due to job cuts and relocations.

xvi This will be determined by the Council's approach to playing pitch hubs being developed following the recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy (2012)

Key Evidence Base

- Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment Scoping Report (2010)
- Phase 2 of the Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment (2010)
- Phase 3 of the Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment (2012)
- County Durham Plan Update for Durham City Residents (2011)
- Feedback Report - County Durham Plan Update for Durham City Residents (2011)
- Draft Aykley Heads Supplementary Planning Document (2012)
- Strategic Employment Sites Evidence Paper (2012)

You told us...

There was widespread acknowledgement that the development of Aykley Heads will improve the economy of the City and the County. However some respondents did have concerns over landscape impacts, loss of valued wildlife habitat and open space and the risk of worsening present traffic congestion around the A691/B6532 roundabout. Therefore support would be even more significant provided these concerns were addressed through the mitigation included in the masterplan for the site. There was also some concern over the loss of Green Belt although there was some acknowledgement that the original Green Belt boundary had been drawn too tightly.

The Sustainability Appraisal told us that...

The development of Aykley Heads needs to be tied into an overall growth strategy which includes housing, employment, retail, green and social infrastructure for Central Durham. Potential impacts on highways and key areas of sensitivity on-site were highlighted in regards to development of this strategic employment site with a number of mitigating actions that have been included in the policy and accompanying SPD:

- Transport Assessment and Travel Plans to be completed alongside the proposed development masterplan for the site to mitigate the potential increase in traffic levels;
- Further assessments, surveys and traffic modelling to be carried out, to an appropriate level of detail, to improve the evidence base for the site and inform any potential site allocation/masterplan;
- Adequate provision and suitable mitigation can be incorporated within any concept design for the new site in regards to potential protected species on site;
- The development should contain adequate and good-quality public open space and other types of green infrastructure; and
- Assess the potential for renewable energy to be incorporated.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

A number of other sites in and around Durham City were suggested through the consultation process as potential strategic employment sites (Mount Oswald, Meadowfield, Durham Science Park, Milburngate House, former Ice Rink, Sherburn Grange). In many instances these were not of a size to be considered strategic and

none had the locational advantages of Aykley Heads. More detail is provided in the Strategic Employment Sites evidence paper.

The NPPF states that...

To help achieve economic growth, Local Planning Authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and pro-actively encourages sustainable growth and which meets the development needs of business and supports an economy fit for the 21st century. Patterns of growth should be actively managed to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable (paragraph 17).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Take up rates of employment land/floorspace on the site

Question 8

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

Durham City Strategic Housing Sites

Policy 7

Durham City Strategic Housing Sites

In order to meet the development needs of Durham City and to encourage economic growth in County Durham, land at Sniperley Park, to the North of the Arnison Centre and at Sherburn Road, as shown on the proposals map, are allocated for development. The phasing of development on these sites will have regard to the provision and timing of the infrastructure necessary to support them and in particular the Western and Northern Relief Roads.

The development of each of these sites will reflect the principles of development as set out in the Sniperley Park, North of Arnison and Sherburn Road Supplementary Planning Documents that accompany this Plan and are summarised below:

Housing

- a. The three sites will incorporate an appropriate mix of house types and tenures to reflect housing need and market considerations and including housing for older people and affordable housing in accordance with Policy 31 (Addressing Housing Need). Development will comprise of approximately:
 - i. 2200 houses on Sniperley Park (with a further 300 phased beyond the Plan period);
 - ii. 1225 houses on North of Arnison; and
 - iii. 450 houses on Sherburn Road.

Services

- a. A new neighbourhood centre will be provided on Sniperley Park to include at least a primary school, health centre, community building and local retail provision;
- b. A site of approximately 3.5 hectares on the North of Arnison site will be identified for the provision of a new supermarket, including parking, servicing and a petrol filling station to meet current and future convenience shopping needs in accordance with Policy 25 (Retail Allocations); and
- c. On North of Arnison and Sherburn Road community buildings will either be provided on site or a contribution to the improvement of off-site provision will be required in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Policy 64 (Developer Contributions).

Sustainable Design

- a. The sites will deliver attractive, high quality design incorporating sustainable development principles and adopting sustainable construction methods in accordance with Policy 1 (Sustainable Development) and Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Built Environment);
- b. Development on each site will preserve, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment in accordance with Policy 44 (Historic Environment);
- c. Developers on all sites will be required to work with the Council and partners to explore opportunities for district heating networks particularly on Sniperley Park given its proximity to Lanchester

Road Hospital;

- d. The density of housing across the sites will vary in relation to the proximity of facilities and bus routes in accordance with Policy 35 (Density of Residential Development);
- e. Existing buildings on, or near to, North of Arnison including Finchale Training Centre, Hagg House and Red House Farm must be integrated within the new development. Development adjoining Chester Low Road will have regard to its semi-rural character;
- f. On Sniperley Farm the design of development near to Sniperley Hall and Farm and the adjoining parkland will have regard to their character and setting;
- g. Treat any potential views of the World Heritage Site appropriately; and
- h. The design of Sherburn Road will provide a positive gateway for Durham City particularly from the A1(M) and will not detract from the character of the Old Durham Beck and Old Durham as a result of no development being built lower than the 80m contour line.

Transport

- a. All sites will incorporate bus, pedestrian and cycle routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan for each site will also be required to ensure that reliance on the private car is reduced and to mitigate the impact of increased traffic in accordance with Policy 47 (Promoting Sustainable Travel);

- b. Sniperley Park will include attractive links to the existing Park and Ride facility to maximise its use by residents;
- c. Access to North of Arnison will have regard to, and not prejudice, the proposed route of the Northern Relief Road;
- d. In order to achieve sustainable and cohesive communities, the development at Sniperley Park must be integrated with existing development to the south and east of the A167; North of Arnison must be integrated with existing development to the south of Rotary Way; and Sherburn Road must be integrated with existing development to the north of the A181, by enhanced connectivity and overcoming existing barriers to movement; and
- e. Provide an enhanced recreational route from and adjoining Sherburn Road into Durham City Centre.

Green Infrastructure

- a. The sites will incorporate an interconnected network of good-quality, multi functional green infrastructure including an adequate supply of different types of open space, in accordance with Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure). An appropriate and enhanced landscape structure with clearly defined boundaries will also be developed;
- b. On Sniperley Park, the existing Folly Plantation will be retained within the development. Mitigation measures will be required to protect its ecosystem and preserve linkages with other nearby habitats and the wider countryside;
- c. On North of Arnison the mature trees, hedgerows and cluster

of ponds to the south of Red House Farm and Hagg House Farm will be enhanced and incorporated within the development; and

- d. Protect and enhance the woodland along the boundary of Sherburn Road with the A1(M).

4.97 In order to deliver the Spatial Approach of the plan and the specific requirements of Policy 5(Durham City) it is necessary to identify three strategic sites, which include housing, retail and associated uses. Following an extensive site selection process which included three stages of a Green Belt Assessment^(xvii) sites at Sniperley Park, North of Arnison and Sherburn Road were considered to provide the most suitable locations. We believe these sites will provide the most benefit to the economy and can be developed to the high standards necessary to make them attractive and sustainable places to live. The detailed assessment work we have undertaken also ensures that these sites will have the least impact on the natural and built environment of the City and its surroundings.

Sniperley Park

4.98 Sniperley Park is situated to the north west of Durham City, immediately to the east of Framwellgate Moor and Pity Me and to the south of Sacriston. The site's eastern boundary follows the A167 Durham Road. New College, Durham is sited adjacent at the southern end of the site with residential development extending northwards. Sniperley Hall with its walled gardens and parkland and Lanchester Road Hospital are located adjacent to the western boundary. Sniperley Park and Ride is located immediately to the south of the site at the junction of the A167 and the A691.

4.99 The development of Sniperley Park will deliver 2,500 new homes

xvii Stage 1,2 and 3 Green Belt Assessments available on the Council's website at <http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/>

along with associated retail, services and facilities contributing to meeting housing needs and creating a viable, vibrant and self-sustaining mixed community. It will also promote innovative approaches to sustainable design which reflect current best practice to deliver a sustainable development supported by appropriate supporting utilities and infrastructure.

4.100 A strong landscape framework and green infrastructure network will be provided to capitalise on the site's natural features and ensure integration with the surrounding landscape. The wildlife potential of the site will be enhanced and development will embrace environmental standards to provide an attractive living environment, including opportunities for recreation. Enhanced opportunities for sustainable access to the City Centre and surrounding areas for public transport, walking and cycling, will be created.

North of Arnison

4.101 The North of Arnison site is located immediately to the north of Durham City. It is bounded by the A167 highway to the west, Rotary Way to the south, Chester Low Road and the East Coast main rail line to the east and field boundaries to the north. The A167 and East Coast rail line provide clear definition to the western and eastern boundaries. The nearest residential neighbourhoods are Pity Me and Newton Grange, which lie immediately to the south west and south east respectively.

4.102 Beyond Rotary Way to the south of the site is the Arnison Centre, a mixed commercial location but principally focused on retail, including both food and non-food shopping outlets. To the east, beyond Chester Low Road, is Finchale Abbey Training Centre.

4.103 The North of Arnison site will be an integrated sustainable extension to Durham City and will include a new and enhanced landscape structure tying it into the broader landscape. It will also have clearly defined boundaries that respect and respond to the Green Belt beyond.

More visible parts of the site will be effectively screened by established tree planting to reduce the overall urbanising effect.

4.104 The site will be an exemplar of design quality and sustainable development, characterised by extensive, attractive and useful, green infrastructure, build quality and the use of best practice techniques to reduce energy consumption. The North of Arnison site will also be well connected to facilities and existing neighbourhoods to the south and be easily accessible, especially by non-car modes, to Durham City Centre and other employment locations.

4.105 The site will provide the social infrastructure necessary to fully meet its community's needs and to promote a healthy community, either by provision on site or if appropriate and accessible, within nearby neighbourhoods.

4.106 The development will specifically meet identified convenience shopping needs, both existing and as a consequence of the development of this and other sites, whilst maintaining the vitality and viability of established centres.

Sherburn Road

4.107 The site is located on the eastern edge of Durham City in the Gilesgate area. The A181 Sherburn Road forms the northern boundary of the site. This road serves as a significant artery for the City accessing the eastern villages and beyond to the Tees Valley and the A19. Although the A1(M) forms the eastern boundary of the site it is not directly accessible, the nearest point of access being Junction 63 some 2km to the north.

4.108 The strategic site at Sherburn Road will help provide a range and mix of sites for the development industry. It is likely that the housing offer on this site will differ from that at Sniperley Park and North of Arnison because of the lower value of the site and the regeneration benefits it can

deliver for the adjoining area which is currently relatively deprived.

4.109 The site forms part of the plateau of high land which includes most of Gilesgate and Belmont. To the south the land falls steeply to the River Wear. Further away to the east and south east the land rises steeply to form the Magnesian Limestone Escarpment.

4.110 Sherburn Road will create a sustainable urban extension which maximises pedestrian links to Durham City and the River Wear and provides a range of housing opportunities for local people. The site will be one of the first visible signs of Durham City when travelling northwards on the A1(M) and should therefore present an attractive gateway to the City. The site also lies in the backdrop of the World Heritage Site in some views from the west although it is largely screened by existing housing.

4.111 In order to protect the character of Old Durham Beck and Old Durham, no housing will be built below the 80m contour. The remainder of the site on the southern boundary will then be landscaped and integrated with the other green infrastructure on the site to enhance residents enjoyment and the value for wildlife.

4.112 Any development should incorporate Bent House Lane. There may also be the opportunity to incorporate a small area of vacant land to the west of the Lane. This land is not designated Green Belt and has been allocated for housing in the past.

Key Evidence Base

- Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment Scoping Report (2010)
- Phase 2 of the Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment (2010)
- Phase 3 of the Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment (2012)

- County Durham Plan Update for Durham City Residents (2011)
- Feedback Report - County Durham Plan Update for Durham City Residents (2011)
- Sniperley Park, North of Arnison and Sherburn Road Draft Supplementary Planning Documents (2012)

What you told us...

At the Issues and Options stage some respondents expressed a belief that growth in Durham City should be supported, and several were keen to see housing developed in the Durham Green Belt. There was however some concern over the impact of development including; encroachment into the countryside; impact upon landscape character; impact on the setting of the World Heritage Site and the historic city; increases in traffic congestion; increased pressure on existing facilities and services; and impact upon habitats.

The Sustainability Appraisal told us that...

Sniperley Park:

- Sustainable location close to the city centre and therefore to employment, education, facilities, services, and transport links (including the Park and Ride) to other locations. The site is also in close proximity to retail, schools and other local services in Framwellgate Moor. The site would support proposals to develop a new business district in the north of Durham City (Ayckley Heads). The site does not form part of the backdrop to the World Heritage Site, and is not part of the visual environment of the historic core.
- The benefits of the location may be lost if the severance effects

of the A167 are not adequately addressed. Significant loss of open space, agricultural and greenfield land. Development is likely to increase traffic and congestion levels. Some wildlife habitats could be affected.

North of Arnison:

- Sustainable location close to the city centre and therefore to employment, education, facilities, services, and transport links to other locations. The site is also in close proximity to retail, schools and other local services. The site would support proposals to develop a new business district in the north of Durham City (Aykley Heads). The site does not form part of the backdrop to the World Heritage Site, and is not part of the visual environment of the historic core.
- The benefits of the location may be lost if the severance effects of the Rotary Way are not adequately addressed. Significant loss of open space, agricultural and greenfield land. Development is likely to increase traffic and congestion levels. Some wildlife habitats could be affected.

Sherburn Road:

- Sustainable location close to the city centre and therefore to employment, education, facilities, services, and transport links to other locations. The site is also in close proximity to retail, schools and other local services particularly at Durham City Retail Park and Dragonville. The site is relatively close to Durham City with a pleasant off-road walking/cycling route to the City via Old Durham. The site is relatively free of

environmental constraints.

- Significant loss of open space, agricultural and greenfield land. Development is likely to increase traffic and congestion levels. May be difficult to screen the site from the A1(M). The site lies in the backdrop to the WHS in some views from the west although largely screened by existing housing in the Sherburn Road area.

In general terms the SA found that the policy did not have enough regard to connectivity issues, particularly Sniperley park across the A167 or the relationship of the sites with the historic environment. Suggested wording changes were suggested to address these issues which have been accepted and incorporated into the Policy as written.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Sherburn Grange was not considered to be a suitable strategic site for the following reasons:

- The A1(M) causes significant severance issues
- The quantum of development that the site could accommodate would result in a significant increase in traffic particularly on the congestion hotspots, at Dragon Lane and the A690/A181 roundabout (Gilesgate Approach)
- Development on this site could have an effect upon sensitive environmental assets, including Sherburnhouse Beck and the local wildlife site at Sherburnhouse Hospital
- Coalescence with Sherburn Village

The Issues and Options of the Plan originally proposed that Merryoaks and Mount Oswald could be developed together allowing a new roundabout or similar junction to be constructed on the A167. However it has become clear that the Mount Oswald site will be developed as a site in its own right. As a result Merryoaks was not considered to be of sufficient size to be a strategic site. It was therefore included in the housing site allocations process.

Further detail of the selection of the strategic Green Belt sites can be found in Phase 3 of the Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment.

The NPPF states that...

When setting boundaries, local authorities should ensure consistency with the Local Plan's strategy; not include land which it is unnecessary to keep open; where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land for long-term development needs, which should not be allocated at the present time; satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not have to be altered at the end of the Plan period; and define boundaries using physical, permanent features.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Number of houses completed on each Strategic Site
- Amount of retail floorspace completed on North of Arnison

Question 9

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

Western and Northern Relief Roads

4.113 Traffic on the roads in and around Durham City should flow in a way that will satisfy the expectation of local residents, commuters, bus companies, emergencies services, employers and visitors. This should still be the case following the future growth envisaged by the Plan. It also particularly important that future investors in the City are not put off because of congestion on the road network.

4.114 Therefore to ensure the City's transport infrastructure can successfully accommodate the new jobs, housing and shopping over the next 20 years, transport modelling ^(xviii) has been undertaken to assess current levels of congestion and produce a future transport strategy for the City. This built on existing modelling undertaken in 2006/07 to support a bid for funding from the Transport Innovation Fund.

4.115 Baseline data from the modelling shows that some of the City's roads are currently heavily congested. There are 60,000 vehicles per day crossing Milburngate Bridge and the Milburngate junction is operating at 125% of its capacity. Furthermore, 30% of those vehicles do not stop in the City or use its facilities and the volume of traffic has a degenerative impact on congestion and air quality in the centre of the City. The gateways to the City are particularly busy and the data has identified the following congestion hot spots around the City Centre:

- Milburngate Bridge suffers from congestion at most times of the day

and has resulted in an air quality issue in Durham City Centre;

- Western and Northern Approaches to the City - Sutton Street and Framwellgate Peth;
- Finchale Road outbound at Framwellgate Moor;
- Sniperley A691 and A167 is the main route from Consett in the North to Darlington in the south. The build up of traffic on this route can lead to significant delays at peak time, which impacts on access to the nearby Park and Ride;
- Nevilles Cross and Crossgate Peth often experience significant build ups of traffic which often stretch back as far as Brandon/Meadowfield impacting on these villages; and
- Leazes Roundabout and A181 Gilesgate Bank.

4.116 In addition to the traffic hot spots, the Durham City network faces an additional constraint in that one traffic accident on the A167 or the A690 through the City Centre can gridlock the entire highway network around the City Centre.

4.117 If the City's roads do not improve the overall impression to potential investors and visitors will be one of a poorly managed area with unreliable transport links.

Transport Innovation Fund

4.118 The Council carried out its Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) work in 2006/7 to assess a number of options to improve the traffic flow through and around the City. The work modelled traffic levels in the City and the impact of the following transport options:

1. Congestion Charging: Two notional charging options were considered – a charge on Milburngate Bridge and an area wide charge;
2. Work Place Charge: This option would introduce pay and display parking into areas of existing employment related parking. Ten car parking locations were assessed, where those sites have free staff and visitor parking. This option also included two additional Park and Ride sites;
3. Bus Fare Subsidy: This option built upon the additional Park and Ride and Bus priority measures included in the Work Place Charging option. Three bus fare subsidy scenarios were assessed, free fares and two fare schemes with discounted fares for short trips; or
4. A combination of the three options above.

4.119 The modelling work demonstrated that a congestion charge and bus subsidies were potentially the most effective in reducing traffic. It would however, have the potentially damaging effect of directing the discretionary trips to other centres and that bus subsidies would be too expensive for bus operators to implement or for the Council to subsidise. The TIF work demonstrated that workplace charging would have little impact on traffic levels. It also found that opportunities for large scale change from private to public transport would be limited.

Relief Roads

4.120 As part of the modelling work done for the 2006/07 TIF work, the Council also modelled the impacts of increased traffic management and the Northern Relief Road. The modelling demonstrated that the relief road option when compared with the other softer measures was the best way to reduce the volume of traffic in the City Centre as well as having the biggest time saving benefits. The relief road option was the only way to reduce traffic levels in a cost effective manner. The private car is the

dominant mode of transport within Durham City. Evidence from bus occupancy surveys shows that around 9,500 passengers enter the City via buses between 7am and 7pm, compared to 49,000 highway trips.

4.121 All measures or alternatives looked at as part of the TIF work demonstrated that traffic levels West of the City on the A167 would increase. Due to this evidence, the Western Relief Road was introduced as an alternative option of managing traffic in Durham. The traffic modelling in 2012 was specifically undertaken for the Plan to assess the impact of the proposed Western and Northern Relief Roads and whether their introduction can manage future congestion in the light of proposed growth in the City. This modelling included a baseline scenario known as 'Reference Case 2030' which models future growth without including the proposals for the plan. Once this baseline model was completed, the next step is to compare the reference case to 'Local Plan Growth 2030' including sensitivity testing around the new housing, employment sites, sustainable travel and relief roads.

4.122 The Local Growth 2030 sensitivity testing includes an optimistic assumption of a 10% reduction in car trips, based on County Durham implementing similar initiatives and techniques used in Darlington's Sustainable Towns Project. This option was also modelled separately (without the relief roads) as a possible alternative to the relief roads. The modelling demonstrated that a reduction in car trips as a result of sustainable techniques would only reduce traffic in line with other soft measures (modelled in the TIF work) and fails to mitigate the increase in traffic.

4.123 The Council are currently proposing significant investment in a Traffic Management and Control project that coordinates the operation and introduces new traffic signals through the City Centre to allow a smoother progression of vehicles through the network. It will include 'intelligent' traffic signals that are sensitive to queueing traffic. It will also

increase the reliability of public transport by giving priority to buses and by improving the flow of traffic it should contribute to improving the air quality in the centre of the City. Whilst this will address short term measures to better manage the current levels of traffic in the City centre, the Council still need to consider ways to reduce traffic levels in the longer term.

4.124 An Air Quality Management Area has recently been designated in the city centre as Nitrogen Dioxide levels exceed statutory limits. This is an additional reason to ensure that congestion in the City Centre is addressed.

4.125 The summary report in the recent traffic modelling states that 'Adopting the County Durham Plan without a coherent plan for managing travel demands and mitigating local network constraints will only further impede movement and connectivity within, to and through Durham, potentially undermining the Plan's strategic outcomes'.^(xix)

Western Relief Road

Policy 8

Western Relief Road

Land is allocated for the construction of the Western Relief Road in Durham City located to the West of the A167 that will connect the A691 at Sniperley Park and Ride roundabout at its northern end with the B6302 Broom Lane at its southern end.

Within the corridor of interest for the Western Relief Road, as shown on the proposals map, development will only be permitted if it does not prejudice the implementation of the scheme.

4.126 The County Council has for many years considered that a western relief road was necessary. This highway improvement was accepted by an independent Inspector as part of the examination of the County Durham Structure Plan in 1979. Subsequently the County Council then supported the Department of Transport proposal in 1993 for a dual carriageway that ran from Sniperley to the Cock o the North roundabout. This proposal also went to a public inquiry where the inspector supported the scheme before central government funding cuts rendered the proposal untenable.

4.127 The proposed Western Relief Road is shorter in length than the 1993 scheme but still creates a viable alternative route for traffic seeking to travel from the south west of Durham City to the north and vice-versa.

4.128 The modelling^(xx) demonstrated that the Western Relief Road in Durham City will relieve congestion on the A167 from Sniperley to Nevilles Cross and at Nevilles Cross junction. There will be significant reductions in traffic flow on the A167 (in excess of 200 vehicles per hour) and a similar reduction in traffic using the A690, east of Broom Lane and towards the City Centre.

4.129 The Relief Road should also reduce incidences of 'rat-running' in villages like Bearpark as there is less incentive to avoid the main junctions if traffic queues have reduced. There will however, be increased pressure on some of the local roads that will link to the new Western Relief Road such as Trout Lane and Broom Lane. These areas will need to be carefully managed by improving the local road network. One option being considered is leaving Tollgate Road open which connects Bearpark with the A167 via a roundabout on the Relief Road.

4.130 The modelling shows that the Western Relief Road is needed in the short term to address congestion and is therefore proposed for the

early part of the Plan period. If development occurs to the expected timescales the it is expected to be completed by 2021. The Northern Relief Road is not required until much of the new housing has been delivered and is therefore proposed toward the end of the Plan period.

4.131 Initial assessment implies that an amount of housing can be built on the proposed housing sites in the North West of the City before the Western Relief Road is operational. This assumption needs to be modelled further and the findings of this modelling will be incorporated in the final draft of the Plan.

Proposed Route of the Western Relief Road

4.132 Work has been undertaken to investigate the possible routes for the Western Relief Road^(xxi). This work seeks to identify the routes which will minimise the impacts of the roads on ecology, archaeology and landscape. It also gives us initial options for the design of the roads and an estimate of the costs.

4.133 The route of the road will run from the A690 at Stonebridge with a roundabout on the B6302. The route then runs northwards crossing the Lanchester Valley Walk before crossing the River Browney and Toll House Road, which will remain open. The route continues in a northerly direction following the existing landform linking to the existing roundabout on the A691 at Sniperley Park. The proposed map of the Western Relief Road can be viewed in Appendix B of the Local Plan.

Key Evidence Base

xx Durham Local Development Framework (LDF) Option Appraisal Final report January 2012

xxi AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Northern Route <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=8233>

- TIF Transport Modelling - TIF (2006/7)
- Durham Local Development Framework (LDF) Option Appraisal Final report January 2012
- AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Northern Route (2011)
- AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Western Route (2011)

You told us that...

Although there were a significant number of objections and concerns raised regarding the routes, there were also a considerable proportion of respondents who supported either one or both of the relief roads as Strategic Transport Routes.

It was felt that the route would offer significant benefits for existing and future residents and businesses, and would assist the economic development of Durham City. They would help to alleviate existing traffic congestion, particularly if the Aykley Heads site was developed.

Concerns raised were around wildlife and habitat destruction, infill development, exacerbation of speeding and road safety issues in surrounding urban areas, cost and funding of the proposals, insufficient evidence of 'acute congestion' or that some peak time road congestion is a major deterrent to new business in Durham and that new roads would only encourage increased car usage.

Alternative modes of transport identified in response to these options are covered in Section 9.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

In 2011, our SA team told us that congestion needs to be tackled and by not providing a relief road or any other measure we are not addressing the solution. The routes should be safeguarded but a range of other options must be fully tested as part of an integrated transport strategy. Further modelling will need to be taken to establish the impact of housing and business growth options on congested routes to determine the actual need for the relief roads. In response to the SA comments, detailed modelling was done to establish the impacts of housing and business growth options in 2011/12 traffic modelling work.

With regard to the Western Relief Road, the SA tells us that there are social and economic positive effects including alternative and better access around the City alleviating congestion as well as contributing to the delivery of new housing in the City. Furthermore, the delivery of the Western Relief Road provides further opportunities for economic growth across key sites increasing the employment, tourist and shopping potential of the City. The road will also alleviate the air quality issues in the City Centre.

Negative impacts include potential damage to wildlife both during construction and when the road is in use. Mitigation should include badger fencing, the establishment and enhancement of ecological corridors and the retention of mature trees and existing vegetation wherever possible. Part of the Western Relief Road is within the flood zone and therefore appropriate mitigation such as SUDS must be included.

The key SA recommendations were concerned with mitigation of the impact of the new road. These measures will be incorporated into the planning and construction of the scheme at the appropriate time and the appropriate sustainable transport solutions will inform the masterplanning of the Strategic Housing sites.

Alternative Options considered but not selected...

As part of the of the 2006/7 TIF modelling work, the Council modelled various alternative transport options for Durham City including congestion charging, work place parking charges, extra park and ride sites and bus fare subsidies. It concluded that all of the proposed solutions would result in more congestion on the west side of Durham City. Sustainable transport techniques were included in the 2011/12 modelling work, but a minimal impact on reducing future traffic levels.

The NPPF says...

Local planning authorities should identify and protect where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. (paragraph 41).

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location. (paragraph 90).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Construction of the Western Relief Road by 2021
- Improvements to Air Quality

Question 10

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

Northern Relief Road

Policy 9

Northern Relief Road

Land is allocated for the construction of the Northern Relief Road in Durham City to connect the Red House roundabout at its Western end with the A690 as its eastern end near Junction 62 of the A1M.

Within the corridor of interest for the Northern Relief Road, as shown on the proposals map, development will only be permitted if it does not prejudice the implementation of the scheme.

4.134 The Northern Relief Road has also been a long standing proposal to improve the road network around Durham City. The principle was established by the Inspector of the 1979 County Durham Structure Plan which stated that a Northern link road 'will improve the link between Consett and the A1 (M) at Carrville and together with a Western Bypass, reduce traffic congestion through the City Centre'. The road was also safeguarded in the Durham City 2004 Local Plan where the Inspector referenced the Structure Plan as justification for its inclusion. The recent modelling work has demonstrated that the principal justification for this road remains and in fact the amount of traffic since that time has increased significantly.

4.135 The Northern Relief Road would have strategic impacts on connectivity and traffic flows across the Durham network principally because it opens up an alternative crossing of the River Wear. Currently all traffic through Durham City converges onto Milburngate Bridge. The Northern Relief Road would enable east-west movements through the City that do not intend to stop to re-route and avoid Milburngate Bridge^(xxii)

4.136 It would also improve links between North West County Durham and the A1, providing potential regeneration benefits for this area. As well as the strategic improvements in connectivity, the road will also strengthen links between the housing, retail and employment centres of the City such as between the Arnison Centre and Belmont Industrial Estate.

4.137 The interim assessment of both 2021 and 2030 housing growth indicate that the Northern Relief Road would be required by 2030, should housing growth proceed as planned.

Proposed Route of the Northern Relief Road

4.138 Work has been undertaken to investigate the possible routes for the Northern Relief Road^(xxiii). The route is proposed to run from Red House Roundabout under the East Coast Mainline swinging south past Low Newton Farm, crossing the River Wear over a new bridge linking to a new roundabout junction on the east side of the A690. The proposed map of the Northern Relief Road can be viewed in Appendix B of the Local Plan.

Key Evidence Base

- TIF Transport Modelling - TIF (2006/7)

- Durham Local Development Framework (LDF) Option Appraisal Final report (January 2012)
- AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Northern Route (2011)
- AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Western Route (2011)

You told us that...

Although there were a significant number of objections and concerns raised regarding the routes, there were also a considerable proportion of respondents who supported either one or both of the relief roads as Strategic Transport Routes.

It was felt that the route would offer significant benefits for existing and future residents and businesses, and would assist the economic development of Durham City. They would help to alleviate existing traffic congestion, particularly if the Aykley Heads site was developed.

Concerns raised were around wildlife and habitat destruction, infill development, exacerbation of speeding and road safety issues in surrounding urban areas, cost and funding of the proposals, insufficient evidence of 'acute congestion' or that some peak time road congestion is a major deterrent to new business in Durham and that new roads would only encourage increased car usage.

Alternative modes of transport identified in response to these options are covered in Section 9.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

xxii Durham Local Development Framework (LDF) Option Appraisal Final report January 2012

xxiii AECOM Durham Relief Road Study: Northern Route <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=8233>

In 2011, our SA team told us that congestion needs to be tackled and by not providing a relief road or any other measure we are not addressing the solution. The routes should be safeguarded but a range of other options must be fully tested as part of an integrated transport strategy. Further modelling will need to be taken to establish the impact of housing and business growth options on congested routes to determine the actual need for the relief roads. In response to the SA comments, detailed modelling was done to establish the impacts of housing and business growth options in 2011/12 traffic modelling work.

With regard to the Northern Relief Road, the SA tells us that there are positive economic impacts such as reducing congestion from the City Centre, access to the A1 (M) and supporting Durham City economic growth. The positive social effects include better access to employment and education and the viability of new housing. The negative social impacts include potential safety issues due to increased congestion and road use in Framwellgate Moor and Newton Hall. There will also be increased levels of noise generated by increased traffic, combined with the ECML and new housing.

The positive environmental included alleviating the air quality issues in the City Centre. The negative environmental impacts included the severance of a number of public rights of way, the dissection of a Local Nature Reserve and potentially impacts on BAP priority habitats. Mitigation will require appropriate planting to provide buffers to screen for noise and protect important views including some that include the World Heritage Site. Mitigation should also include the protection and creation of habitats, including crossing points for BAP species such as Badger fencing.

The key SA recommendations were concerned with mitigation of the impact of the new road. These measures will be incorporated into the planning and construction of the scheme at the appropriate time

and the appropriate sustainable transport solutions will inform the masterplanning of the Strategic Housing sites.

Alternative Options considered but not selected...

As part of the of the 2006/7 TIF modelling work, the Council modelled various alternative transport options for Durham City including congestion charging, work place parking charges, extra park and ride sites and bus fare subsidies. It concluded that all of the proposed solutions would result in more congestion on the west side of Durham City. Sustainable transport techniques were included in the 2011/12 modelling work, but a minimal impact on reducing future traffic levels.

The NPPF says...

Local planning authorities should identify and protect where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. (paragraph 41).

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location. (paragraph 90).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Construction of the Northern Relief Road by 2030
- Improvements to Air Quality

Question 11

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

Durham City Delivery

Overarching Strategy

4.139 In order to realise the Plan's Spatial Approach and the necessary development identified for Durham City we need a strategy for delivery. The strategy for Durham City takes account of the requirement to phase delivery into a cohesive and financially viable package which simultaneously seeks to strengthen the economic, housing and service base and takes account of key milestones and dependencies.

4.140 In addition to the specific sites identified in Policy 5 (Durham City) there are a number of other sites within the City that relate to the delivery strategy. The redevelopment of these sites, including the former Ice Rink site, Milburngate House and North Road will serve to generate interest and market confidence. There is also a potential development site at Elvet Waterside but further work is needed to identify a solution to potential flooding issues.

4.141 The rationale for delivery has two principal elements, firstly demand, and secondly the uplift in land values. It is envisaged that as housing development has been constrained in the City over the past 20

years, to assist the regeneration of neighbouring villages, demand for new housing will be very high. This is evidenced by existing developer interest and the options they have in place with landowners.

4.142 It is also clear that whilst current economic circumstances make delivery of the employment elements of the Plan less certain, the redevelopment of the Ice Rink and interest in Milburngate House show the appetite the private sector has to invest in Durham City, even on challenging, brownfield sites. It therefore provides a strong indication that given its location, quality and accessibility, the Aykley Heads site can be delivered in the medium term (it should be noted that the redevelopment of the Police HQ will be in advance of this timescale).

4.143 In terms of uplift, the increase in land values that will result from removing land from the Green Belt and allocating it for development will be considerable. Durham City has some of the highest land values in the region, it is therefore important to ensure that a significant proportion of this uplift pays for, or at least makes a major contribution to, the infrastructure which is necessary to deliver the Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan accompanying the Plan identifies the works that are required and the draft charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy shows the financial contributions that will be required from all sites including those in Durham City.

4.144 The timing of delivery impacts on cash flow and this needs to be looked at in more detail, however early indications identify a number of possible solutions which include private sector financing, a public/private partnership or public borrowing. This is the basis of a financial model which the Council has developed to determine the deliverability of the strategy.

Risks

4.145 Delivery of substantial development activity in the City is constrained by two overarching issues, flood risk and the capacity of the

highways network.

4.146 Flood risk within the City Centre is a significant cost constraint for any new development taking place on affected sites. The cost of delivering on-site solutions has previously undermined the commercial viability of sites. These solutions may involve raising the floor level of buildings which may then conflict with planning policy in terms of the inherent need to protect Durham's unique heritage and World Heritage site status. This may also be compounded by the impending end of the current Statement of Principles on the provision of flood insurance. The preferred solution for Durham is to deliver an off-site flood storage area upstream, which would take Durham city centre out of flood risk zones 2 and 3, and in doing so, remove significant cost uncertainty from individual development proposals.

4.147 The provision of the flood storage area is not a statutory requirement, and therefore the Environment Agency (EA) is only committed to providing 50% of the upfront capital costs associated with the scheme. Once the scheme is complete, the EA will be responsible for maintaining the flood storage area via a Deed of Grant. Detailed modelling work is on-going to inform the size of the storage area required. Initial estimates suggest that total costs may equate to £21m, with a match-funding contribution of around £10.5m required. In terms of timescales, the scheme will be designed during 2012/13 and could be on site by 2013/14.

4.148 The alternative approach would be to mitigate certain areas of the City, on a site by site basis, which would allow a phased development not dependant on the significant costs required for the Citywide solution. This is would be a reasonable approach for Milburngate House and related areas but would leave Elvet still requiring significant investment prior to development.

4.149 Alongside flood risk, the capacity of the existing highway network is a major constraint within the City as it currently experiences congestion and delay especially in the peak hour periods. As discussed previously

the traffic modelling identifies a need for two relief roads during the Plan period to solve existing problems of congestion and to mitigate the impact of the proposed new development.

Relief Roads

4.150 The traffic modelling indicates that the Western Relief Road is needed in the short term but that some housing on the strategic housing allocations is acceptable prior to the construction of the road. Therefore progressing the road will be an early priority to ensure future development is not constrained as well as providing certainty to developers.

4.151 The Northern Relief Road is not currently required until near the end of the Plan period although this will be monitored and the timing may change as a result of future traffic modelling.

Aykley Heads

4.152 Aykley Heads has been identified as the preferred Strategic Employment Site to accommodate large scale high quality office development. While it is expected that the current difficult business conditions and its subsequent impact on occupier demand will continue for some time, consideration of some comparable examples has helped form a realistic view about the level of take-up that could be supported at Aykley Heads should a comprehensive office based master plan be implemented. This also informs the assumptions of the financial model.

4.153 A number of different scenarios have been assessed including the base case scenario which assumes the delivery of a new building on Aykley Heads for the Police to the south of their existing headquarters and Durham County Council occupying a building on the site. These assumptions have been factored into the considerations regarding the financial implications to the public sector of bringing forward the identified strategic infrastructure interventions and development programme.

4.154 In considering the redevelopment of Aykley Heads, the likely build out rate for new office development has been considered based on development in comparable locations and the level of occupier enquiries. This has resulted in a projected delivery rate of 4650sqm every two years which would equate to a successful conversion rate of just less than 10% of the total Durham City office enquiries of 43500 sqm recorded over the 2008 and 2009 period Aykley Heads Property Market Assessment, GVA, April 2010.

Housing

4.155 Policy 4 (Distribution of Development) identifies a requirement for 5,120 homes in Durham City. These will be delivered within the City and the three Strategic Housing Allocations at Sniperley Park, North of Arnison and Sherburn Road. The delivery of approximately 1000 homes can be built prior to the implementation of the Western Relief Road which could provide up to an initial £25m (CIL based on approx. £25k per property). This calculation assumes a CIL rate of 200/m² and an average floor area per dwelling of 100/m². This significantly reduces the need for borrowing and therefore the risks associated with the financing of this road. This figure for new housing will however, be tested by further traffic modelling before it is included in the final Plan.

4.156 It is envisaged that due to the size of the development areas, the sites will be developed by consortiums of builders, each providing differing products on locations within the scheme at the same time working to an overall masterplan.

4.157 Infrastructure such as schools, play areas, services and community facilities will be developed as part of legal conditions attached to the planning permission with a combination of S106 and CIL used to ensure delivery.

Financial Framework

4.158 To bring forward these projects, which form the overall programme of development activity envisaged for Durham City, we must consider the potential funding implications. The context to this is shaped by the wider macro-economic conditions in the UK economy, and specifically the significant cutbacks in public sector expenditure following the 2011 Central Government Spending Review, which has dramatically curtailed public sector funding for infrastructure and regeneration projects. While this looks set to continue for the foreseeable future, there are still a number of potential funding sources and mechanisms available which provide an opportunity to support delivery.

4.159 A financial model has been developed to test out different scenarios for the phasing and development of key development sites which, will inform the development of a financial framework to support delivery. Elements of the financial framework include future council tax income from the additional homes over the Plan period, the business rates uplift from the new businesses that will be attracted into Durham City and the ability to retain additional income and use it as part of a finance model such as Tax Increment Financing. Additionally there are private sector development contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy which will support the delivery of infrastructure requirements in the City.

4.160 The Council will also use our own resources and assets to leverage investment and funding opportunities such as the Regional Growth Fund, the Growing Places Fund and European Structural Funds. We will also consider drawing on our prudential borrowing capabilities to secure the funds needed to build the relief roads. However, demonstrating security of repayment and the timing of this remains the key consideration. The acceptance of development being delivered in advance of the Western Relief Road being completed will clearly help to reduce our financial exposure by generating a planning gain or other tariff contribution upfront, which will then reduce the amount of loan required.

Student Accommodation

Policy 10

Student Accommodation

A site at Mount Oswald, Durham City, as shown on the proposals map is identified as suitable for purpose-built student accommodation as part of a wider housing allocation.

Proposals for student accommodation will be permitted provided the development:

- a. Does not conflict with other relevant policies within the Plan and in particular Policy 1 (Sustainable Development), Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Built Environment) and 18 (Local Amenity).

4.161 Durham University is the third oldest University in England and one of the world's leading universities of academic excellence. It is also a large university in relation to the size of Durham City and as result students make up nearly 30% of the term time population of the City, contributing greatly to the economy and vibrancy of the City. This however also causes some issues for local businesses who see their trade fall dramatically outside term time.

4.162 The University is an intrinsic part of the City, bringing a range of jobs, students and researchers benefiting the economy of the County as a whole. Students living outside the purpose built accommodation tend to house share in the private market sector estimated at 8-10% of all houses within the City. This varies a great deal among neighbourhoods and affects the availability of larger family homes in the general housing market.

4.163 The majority of these student lets have been created without the need for planning approval. The Government has now introduced regulations, which give local authorities the option of using planning controls (specifically Article 4 Directions) which can require changes of use to houses in multiple occupation to require planning permission (this is currently permitted development). We are currently undertaking evidence gathering and consultation to determine whether the use of these increased planning powers would be appropriate. The Council will be making a decision on this later this year. If an Article 4 is introduced it would be a stand alone planning tool outside the scope of the County Durham Plan.

4.164 The pressure on the private rented student sector has been relieved to some extent in the recent past with the opening of 1,200 additional purpose built bed spaces at new student halls of residence at Howland's Farm (Ustinov College) and on Green Lane. The University currently has some plans for expansion of student numbers, the majority likely to be post-graduate. The allocation of the Mount Oswald Golf Course for mixed use development will also provide up to 1,000 student beds to address the growth in student numbers. It is understood that the developers have been in discussions with the University and given its proximity to the University this is an ideal location for student accommodation.

4.165 The student accommodation of approximately 1,000 beds must be sensitively blended into the wider proposal (see Policy 30) ensuring that it is purpose-built, designed and managed in a way that attracts students to take it up.

Key Evidence Base

- Durham County Council, Consultation on Houses in Multiple

Occupation in Durham City (2012)

- Durham County Council and Building Research Establishment (BRE), Focus Group Feedback Report (2011)

You told us that...

At the Issues and Options stage respondents agreed that the issue of student accommodation needs to be addressed. Some respondents believed that the policies should restrict the proportion of Houses in Multiple Occupation and that we should work closely with the University to provide concentrated blocks of student accommodation.

The responses to the wider consultation on the introduction of additional licensing and/or planning rules (Article 4 Direction) for housing in Durham are still being considered and these will inform the Submission Draft Plan.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The SA recommends that a combination of Options B and C, addressing the issues using Development Management policies and working with the University to provide additional concentrated blocks of student accommodation.

Restricting the numbers of houses/flats for student accommodation in the City would address student domination in certain areas. This together with the exploration of additional concentrated blocks of student accommodation would provide a solution for the extra student accommodation required.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Option A: Accept that students need accommodation in Durham City

and allow the housing market to dictate the numbers and location of student housing led to 'studentification' and some of the current issues that are being experienced particularly in the City Centre.

The NPPF says...

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. A wide choice of high quality homes are to be delivered and there is a need to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. Need to plan for a mix of housing based on current trends (paragraph?).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process.

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy:

- Applications for change of use to Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Number of student beds provided

Question 12

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

Other Strategic Sites

Policy 11

Other Strategic Sites

In order to meet the housing requirement and distribution set out in Policy 3 (Quantity of New Development) and Policy 4 (Distribution of Development) the following sites, as shown on the proposals map, have been allocated as Strategic Housing sites:

Table 4 Strategic Housing Sites

Settlement	Site Name & Allocations Ref	Site Area (Ha)	Estimated Yield	Deliverability Timescale
Central Durham				
No strategic sites identified				
North Durham				
No strategic sites identified				
South Durham				
Bishop Auckland	Auckland Park HA85	21	500	Short to Medium
	Woodhouses Farm HA87	24.5	520	Medium to Long

Settlement	Site Name & Allocations Ref	Site Area (Ha)	Estimated Yield	Deliverability Timescale
Crook	Land to the rear of High West Road HA91	27.3	580	Short to Medium
Newton Aycliffe	Low Copelaw HA99	90.1	950	Medium to Long
East Durham				
Peterlee	North East Industrial Estate HA36	18	500	Medium to Long
	Low Hills HA35	33	730	Short to Medium
West Durham				
No strategic sites identified				

Housing

- a. All sites will incorporate an appropriate mix of house types and tenures to reflect housing need and market considerations and should include housing for older people and affordable housing in accordance with Policy 30 (Addressing Housing Need).

Services

- b. A new neighbourhood centre will be provided as part of the

comprehensive development at Low Copelaw. This will include at least a primary school and local retail provision.

Sustainable Design

- c. The sites will deliver attractive, high quality design incorporating sustainable development principles and adopting sustainable construction methods in accordance with Policy 1 (Sustainable Development) and Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Built Environment); and,
- d. The density of housing across the sites will vary in relation to the proximity of facilities and bus routes in accordance with Policy 35 (Density of Residential Development).

Transport

- e. All sites will incorporate bus, pedestrian and cycle routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities. A Transport Management Plan for each site will also be required to ensure that reliance on the private car is reduced and to mitigate the impact of increased traffic in accordance with Policy 47 (Promoting Sustainable Travel).

Green Infrastructure

- f. The sites will incorporate an interconnected network of good-quality, multi functional green infrastructure including an adequate supply of different types of open space, in accordance with Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure). An appropriate and enhanced landscape structure with clearly defined boundaries will also be developed.

Regeneration

- g. The development of Low Hills, Peterlee will be expected to provide funding to enable the redevelopment of North East Industrial Estate.

4.166 In order to assist in the delivery of Policy 4 (Distribution of Development) the approach of the Plan is to allocate strategic sites in instances where they are considered critical to the delivery of the Plan's distribution strategy. These sites are needed to ensure that the future role of each settlements is achievable.

4.167 In Bishop Auckland, two strategic sites are necessary to meet the housing needs of the town, and without them it would not be possible to meet the housing allocation for Bishop Auckland. Auckland Park is located to the east of Bishop Auckland and will deliver around 500 new homes, whilst Woodhouses Farm is situated to the west of the town and will provide for around 700 new houses. Both sites will be developed as sustainable extensions to maximise accessibility to the town centre and achieve public transport penetration. Both sites will require improvements to bus services in particular to aid access to secondary schools and colleges. Additional pedestrian crossings across the A688 may be necessary in respect of Auckland Park to aid access to services within Bishop Auckland and mitigation may be required to reduce the noise impacts from the railway line. Both sites will need to be screened by perimeter planting and the design and form of the housing development shall respect landscape features. Recreation and open space facilities will be provided on both sites.

4.168 Crook has been allocated 800 homes up to 2030 and the development of Rear of High West Road is crucial to achieving to this figure being delivered. The building of new homes provides the opportunity for additional benefits including affordable homes and community facilities

and also provides a greater population to support the retail offer of the town. A sustainable urban extension to the north west of Crook is earmarked to deliver 600 new homes. The site is contained on its boundaries to the east and south by existing housing development in Crook, and the site is considered to be the most appropriate given its location and proximity to the town centre, its size and topography. To mitigate the site's visual impact landscape planting to the eastern edge of the site will be required.

4.169 Low Copelaw, Newton Aycliffe represents a major development opportunity to deliver significant housing development within Newton Aycliffe. It will be released once sites within the settlement are built out. Housing development in this location would be located close to the existing built up area of Newton Aycliffe and to the town centre. Some improvements to the local road network and a new junction onto the A167 will be required to replace the existing access. The new junction would be located opposite the existing Central Avenue junction and would involve a redesign of the junction and new traffic signals. Traffic management measures to promote sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling will create sustainable access to the town centre and Aycliffe Business Park located less than 1.5 miles to the south. A strong landscape framework and green infrastructure network will be provided to capitalise on the site's natural features and ensure integration with the surrounding landscape. Landscaping is to be provided around the periphery of the site, particularly along its eastern and southern edge. To increase the sustainability of the site, a Local Centre will be required to consist of a primary school, some retail provision and possibly community facilities.

4.170 Two sites have been allocated in Peterlee without which the housing target for the town cannot be met. North East Industrial Estate (NEIE) is an existing industrial estate which has been identified by the County Durham Employment Land Review as suitable for alternative use. A number of units within the estate are already vacant and it has no long term future for employment. Previous developer interest in the site ended

with the fall in the housing market. It is therefore very unlikely that this site will come forward as a stand alone proposal for the foreseeable future. However the site at Low Hills provides an opportunity to provide a cross subsidy to kick start the development of NEIE and to also meet the need within Peterlee for larger, higher quality housing. It is expected that the housing on NEIE will be generally smaller and address a different market. The precise mechanism that will be used to ensure the cross subsidy will be determined as the Plan progresses.

4.171 Site plans for each strategic site are included in Appendix C to the Plan. Supplementary Planning Documents for each site will be prepared for the submission draft of the Plan.

Key Evidence Base

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

You told us that...

Earlier consultation on the Policy Directions provided an opportunity to comment on potential strategic housing allocations in Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe, Stanley and Peterlee.

Bishop Auckland

Comments received identified concerns and reservations with designating either Woodhouses Farm or Auckland Park as a strategic allocation. Issues of concern included increase in traffic, loss of wildlife habitat and visual impact. A higher volume of objections were made to the Auckland Park site. Support for the designation of both strategic sites was received by consultants acting on behalf of both landowners and house builders. An alternative land allocation was suggested by agents acting on behalf of the landowners of land to the North of Auckland Park.

Newton Aycliffe

The majority of the comments received opposed the designation of Cobblers Hall as a strategic site. Issues identified as a concern included traffic and road infrastructure, impact on Middridge village and capacity of local schools to absorb the development. More support was given to releasing land at Aycliffe Young Person's centre once sites within the settlement were developed first in a phased manner. It was noted that this site was better placed for travel to Aycliffe Business Park but that improvements to connect the site with the town would be necessary.

Stanley

Views expressed to the two potential strategic allocations at Stanley indicated a slight preference for the Shield Row site. Whilst it is still proposed to allocate this site, the number of new homes likely to be delivered on the site means that it is no longer considered to be of strategic importance. The other potential strategic site at Holly Hill has not been taken forward on account that large parts of this site are within flood zone 3a and the Environment Agency have confirmed that flooding issues may be difficult to mitigate. In addition to this, the site was considered to be severed from main town of Stanley by A693 so if developed there would need to be adequate pedestrian crossings provided.

Peterlee

Several brief comments received to the Policy Directions paper queried the need for a strategic allocation within Peterlee. As a result of the consultation, an alternative site was put forward for consideration. This is land located at Low Hills.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

There are no other suitable alternative sites in Peterlee so have taken a different approach and located housing in nearby smaller settlements.

Bishop Auckland

The SA recommended improvements to bus services to aid access to secondary schools / colleges, employment sites and retail facilities. Landscape / visual impact would need to be addressed by appropriate mitigation and site layout.

Crook

The SA identified that there are no secondary schools or colleges within the settlement and also a limited retail offer so new provision may need to be considered based on increased population/need (a retail site for Crook has been identified at Queen Street). Furthermore, additional investment to bus services may be required as provision is only adequate at present, and linkages with other main centres in particular could be improved.

Newton Aycliffe

The SA recommended that additional investment be directed to improve bus service(s) in the area and improve linkages to the town centre. Some adverse residual landscape and visual impact could be mitigated by substantial structural landscaping to open perimeters and retention of mature vegetation where appropriate.

Seaham

The SA concluded that the allocation of housing between Seaham and Murton would seem to be a sensible approach to future housing growth for the area. Consideration of the potential impact of increased housing in the eastern part of North and East Durham on coastal

SACs and SPAs will be required. Increases in the population accessing the SAC and SPA areas will be a key consideration.

Stanley

The SA highlighted that the Shield Row site is severed from main town of Stanley by A693/A6076 so need to ensure that pedestrian crossings are adequate for all development to the east of this road. This part of Stanley already exceeds headroom in terms of waste water constraints, so investment in sewage treatment infrastructure would be required prior to development so phasing of development is key.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Other strategic sites were considered in Newton Aycliffe, Seaham and Crook, however these selected sites were felt to be the most sustainable based on accessibility to services, facilities, employment opportunities and ability to reconcile the landscape impact. Full details of the methodology used and the assessment of alternative sites is available in the supporting evidence paper relating to 'Strategic Housing' available on the Council's website.

The NPPF tells us...

- To boost significantly the supply of housing, LPAs should identify key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over plan period (paragraph 47).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Development take up of the allocated sites

Question 13

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

Executive Housing

Policy 12

Executive Housing

In order to meet an identified need for executive housing and to encourage economic growth in County Durham, land at Lambton Park Estate, as shown on the proposals map, is allocated for development.

Within this location, the development of housing will be permitted providing that the scheme:

- a. Is of a very low density of no more than 6 dwellings per hectare;
- b. Provides for generous private grounds (at least 0.1 ha per dwelling). Future intensification of plots will not be permitted;
- c. Consists solely of large units of at least 275sqm of floorspace;

and

- d. Is of a high quality of design and specification.

Housing which does not accord with all of the criteria above may be permitted providing it enhances the quality of the overall scheme and has clear urban design justification.

The development of the site will reflect the principles of development as set out in the Lambton Park Estate Supplementary Planning Document that accompanies this Plan.

In order to secure Lambton Park Estate for future generations, the developer of the executive housing will, through a Section 106 Agreement, or other suitable financial mechanism, be required to contribute funds to enable the restoration and maintenance of the Estate in accordance with the Heritage and Access Management Plan.

4.172 The aim of this Policy is to meet the identified need for executive housing by identifying a single site capable of delivering at least 300-400 houses. The policy does not, however, preclude further executive housing sites coming forward provided they conform with relevant policies in the Plan.

4.173 For the purposes of this Plan, the term 'executive' housing refers to detached housing of high quality design and materials, set in its own grounds at a density of no more than 6 dwellings per hectare. It should be noted, however, that some executive housing does not fit this description. In some high value locations, higher density properties may be included within this definition and there is potential for some of these

to be included in the site identified if they contribute to the overall quality of the scheme.

4.174 The County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies a shortage of 'executive' housing of sufficient quality to attract high earners who can create jobs and invest in the County. In addition the 2005 Regional Housing Aspirations Study stated that, as County Durham falls between the two City Regions and has a number of attractive market towns and villages, it could play a significant role in providing this essential housing offer for the region. Executive housing provision will also have a role in helping meet the County's wider economic growth objectives.

Lambton Park Estate

4.175 Lambton Park Estate was chosen following an assessment of a number of sites submitted to the Council following a 'call for sites'^(xxiv). It is believed that this site will be the most attractive to both developers of executive housing and those entrepreneurs and highly skilled people that will contribute to the County's economy.

4.176 An area of 95ha within the Lambton Park Estate has been identified as being suitable for 300 to 400 executive homes. The Estate is an extremely attractive location with the River Wear running through the heart of it, providing the setting for numerous listed buildings and structures. Lambton Castle (Grade II* Listed) lies at the heart of the Estate and overlooks the River Wear. The Castle is however in deteriorating condition and English Heritage have identified that the Castle's retaining wall is unstable. Similarly, two other structures are now identified on the English Heritage at Risk Register. As well as the wider economic benefits development of the site will also contribute to funding the preservation of key heritage assets and securing their long term future, supplementing future revenue streams that can be generated from the Estate itself.

xxiv County Durham Executive Housing Study (2012)

4.177 The Estate currently has a small number of peripheral public rights of way and public access is significantly restricted. Development of executive housing within the grounds will also provide the opportunity to open up areas of the Estate for long term public access to enable an appreciation of its heritage and landscape value. It is felt that this provides an opportunity to develop a tourist destination, potentially of regional importance.

4.178 The site is situated within the Green Belt, however given the identified need for executive housing, the heritage significance of the Estate and the clear need for intervention to establish a sustainable future and the public benefit that can be delivered through enhanced public access, there are exceptional circumstances that justify development within the Estate. The site provides a prestige and unique location and this coupled with the heritage and community benefits the development of the site could offer, provides the justification for its allocation. Furthermore the area allocated for executive housing is situated on a plateau that is not visible in the wider landscape or from the rest of the Estate and was previously used as a Lion Park, where much of the previous infrastructure is still in place.

4.179 Alongside the executive housing allocation, an area of land has been identified for an employment site linked to the executive housing. The site is allocated through Policy 24 (Specific Use Employment Sites) and will be for use by residents of the Lambton Park Estate in the first instance.

4.180 The delivery of executive housing in this location will be required to deliver funds, through a Section 106 Agreement, or other suitable financial mechanism, to bring about the public benefits of restoring the grounds and buildings of Lambton Park Estate. A significant amount of funding is required to ensure the ongoing restoration and management of the Estate therefore a clear link is needed between the delivery of the housing and the future of the wider Estate. A Heritage and Access

Management Plan will also be required to be submitted and approved by the Council as part of the first phase of any development at the Estate.

4.181 A full Masterplan needs to be prepared for this allocation and the first steps in this process can be seen in the draft Lambton Park Supplementary Planning Document, which accompanies this document.

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)
- North East Regional Housing Aspirations Study (2005)
- County Durham Executive Housing Study (2012)

You told us that...

During consultation on this issue, a majority of respondents considered that at least 1% of new dwellings should be 'Executive Housing'. A majority of respondents stated that executive housing should be dispersed in different areas of the County. However the Council believe that a critical mass is required if the quality of environment that will attract high earners and entrepreneurs is to be achieved.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The distribution of executive housing should be dispersed with additional executive housing in a large number of locations meeting sustainability criteria.

The site at Lambton is the only site that has been identified through the site allocations process. This site met the specific criteria in the

search process and provides the opportunity to deliver a unique site that will also provide the opportunity to bring about improvements to the historic estate. The policy will not preclude other executive housing schemes coming forward elsewhere in the County through planning applications. These will be assessed on their merits in accordance with other policies within the plan.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

The Issues and Options report suggested that 290 houses will be executive which would represent 1% of the total housing requirement. The preferred option figure is now 300-400 which is 1% of the 30,000 housing requirement. The figure also reflects the land constraints around Chester-le-Street.

The proposed approach provides a policy certainty to delivering executive housing within these locations. Lambton Park Estate has been identified as being the most appropriate location. Full details of the methodology used and the assessment of alternative sites is available in the supporting evidence paper 'Executive Housing' available on the Council's website.

The NPPF tells us...

Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (paragraph 50).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of

this Policy:

- Executive houses completed at Lambton
- Businesses created/relocated to County Durham by residents of Lambton

Question 14

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

Green Belt

Policy 13

Green Belt

Within the Green Belt, as shown on the proposals map, the construction of new buildings will be regarded as inappropriate and will not be permitted. Exceptions to this are:

- a. Buildings necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
- b. Essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with with the purposes of including land within it;
- c. Limited and proportionate extensions or alterations to a building;

- d. Replacement of an existing building for the same use and of the same size as the one it replaces;
- e. Limited infilling in villages for affordable housing in accordance with Policy 31(Addressing Housing Need);
- f. Limited infilling or redevelopment of existing major developed sites; and
- g. Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Other forms of development which may be appropriate in the Green Belt, providing they preserve the openness and do not conflict with its purpose include:

- h. Mineral extraction;
- i. Engineering operations;
- j. Transport Infrastructure;
- k. The re-use or conversion of an existing building which is permanent and of substantial construction; and
- l. Development brought through a Community Right to Build Order.
- m. Renewable energy projects will only be permitted where very special circumstances are demonstrated.

Waste development within the Green Belt will not be permitted unless it would preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Development at

existing sites will only be permitted where it would not affect visual amenity or delay reclamation and where it where it would not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. The re-use, alteration, extension or replacement of an existing building as part of a waste development in the Green Belt will only be permitted where this would not result in disproportionate additions and where replacement buildings are in the same use and not materially larger.

4.182 Green Belts have been designated to safeguard land and prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Their essential characteristic is their permanence and they give land long term protection and certainty from unsuitable development. Unsuitable development can include the sprawl of large built up areas caused by consistent, inappropriate development on the edge of settlements. This can lead to encroachment into the open countryside, while threatening the coalescence of settlements and also impacting on the form and character of settlements, and the area as a whole. Green Belts can also assist in the urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Indeed this was a significant factor in the setting of the current boundary which was drawn extremely tightly around the City to assist in the regeneration of the surrounding communities, with the aid of public funding. As stated previously this funding is no longer available and therefore necessitates a new approach. Within the boundaries of the Green Belt surrounding Durham City there are also some areas that are vital to the character and setting of the World Heritage Site and special quality of the historic city, encompassing the high quality landscape and undulating topography of the land.

4.183 The Durham Green Belt reaches to the north and west of Chester-le-Street along the north of the A693, encircles Urpeth and Ouston and then eastwards towards the Tyne and Wear City Region. The Green Belt then extends southwards from Chester-le-Street, east of Kimblesworth, south of Witton Gilbert, east of Bearpark, and southwards to Croxdale

and then north-eastwards to Sherburn and West Rainton to encircle Durham City. In the east of the County the Green Belt complements that of Tyne and Wear to check the unrestricted sprawl of Seaham and Ryhope in Sunderland.

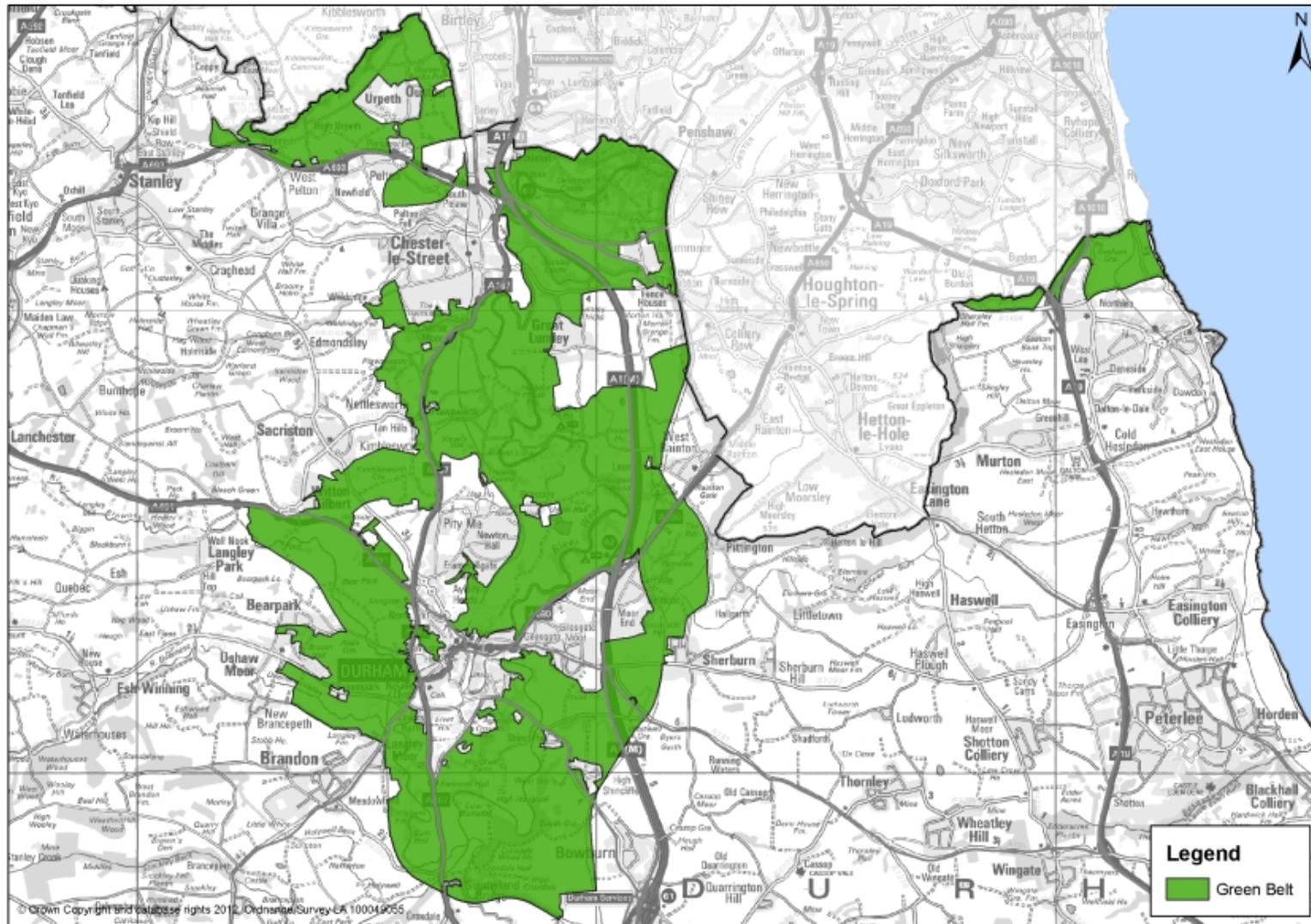
Strategic Green Belt Alterations

4.184 Most of the Green Belt as defined in the City of Durham Plan (2004) will continue to be protected as such. However, in this Plan, Green Belt boundaries have been changed in selected locations around the City of Durham. This is necessary to deliver Objective 2 of the County Durham Plan and its Spatial Approach and fulfil Durham City's economic potential as a regional economic asset for the benefit of the whole County.

4.185 The areas which will no longer be defined as Green Belt are those locations in the vicinity of Durham where development would have the least environmental impacts, where development is practically feasible, and where development would be most likely to lead to the creation of sustainable communities. They were selected after a two-stage analysis. Firstly, a short list of potentially suitable sites was compiled via the identification of areas of least constraint (areas with the least significant features of ecological, historic or landscape value, or topographical factors such as flood risk). Secondly, a more detailed assessment of the shortlisted sites was carried out so that preferred options could be identified^(xxv). The sites chosen are discussed in more detail in Policy 7 (Durham City Strategic Housing Sites).

xxv Durham City Green Belt Assessments (2010, 2012)

Map 4 Green Belt



4.186 In accordance with the Spatial Approach, it is also proposed that land at Aykley Heads is removed from the Green Belt to enable the delivery of the Strategic Employment Allocation (see Policy 6 (Aykley Heads)). Land at Lambton Park Estate is also removed from the Green Belt for an executive housing allocation (see Policy 12(Executive Housing)). As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) suggests that local transport infrastructure is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, the routes of the Northern and Western Relief Roads will not be removed from the Green Belt.

Non-Strategic Green Belt Alterations

4.187 NPPF indicates that Green Belt boundaries should only be designated or altered through the preparation of a Local Plan. This is therefore an opportunity to amend boundaries where there are proposed allocations or where there are existing anomalies. We have therefore assessed all representations received requesting that the existing Green Belt boundary be altered. The detail of the methodology used and the outcome of each request are available in our Non-Strategic Green Belt Modification evidence paper accompanying this document. Those sites where we are proposing an alteration to the Green Belt are listed below:

- Drum Industrial Estate, Chester-le-Street (Specific Use Employment Allocation);
- Land North of Conyers Avenue, Chester-le-Street (Housing Allocation);
- Land at Picktree Lane, Rickleton, Chester-le-Street (Housing Allocation);
- Land to the South of Sniperley Park and Ride, Durham (Housing Allocation);
- Land East of Onslow Terrace, Langley Moor;

- Land at Fenton Well Lane, Great Lumley;
- Sidegate House, Sidegate, Durham; and
- Fernhill, Newcastle Road, Durham.

Key Evidence Base

- Non-Strategic Green Belt Modifications (2012)
- North West Durham Green Belt Study (2011)

You told us that...

There was some concern over the impacts of development in the Green Belt, including: encroachment into the countryside and impact upon landscape character, including the setting of the World Heritage Site and the historic city; increases in traffic congestion and pressure upon existing facilities and services; and impact upon habitats. Particular concern was expressed about the impact of potential development at Whitesmocks which is no longer being considered as a potential Green Belt deletion site. Some respondents suggested that the required amount of housing would be better accommodated in the villages around Durham, or in other parts of the County. Others queried whether the predicted increase in household numbers was realistic. Some respondents, however, expressed a belief that growth in Durham City should be supported, and several were keen to see their own land in the area developed.

The Sustainability Appraisal told us that...

While there might be potential to reduce the allocation to Durham

City in order to minimise the loss of Green Belt around Durham City and reduce the pressure that concentration of development would put upon the Green Belt, this should be assessed against the economic case for the City. Sustainability appraisal for each of the suggested Green Belt deletion sites commented on their relative suitability for development, which accorded with the main findings of the stage 2 Green Belt Assessment; it also suggested a series of mitigation measures to reduce the environmental impact of development.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

The detail of the selection of the strategic Green Belt sites can be found in the three phases of the Durham City Green Belt Site Assessment. The detail of the consideration of each request for a non-strategic alteration to the Green Belt boundary is included in the Non-Strategic Green Belt Modification evidence paper.

The NPPF states that...

Inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Local planning authorities should respect the permanence of the Green Belt. When setting boundaries, they should ensure consistency with the Local Plan's strategy; not include land which it is unnecessary to keep open; where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land for long-term development needs, which should not be allocated at the present time; satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not have to be altered at the end of the Plan period; and define boundaries using physical, permanent features.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

Question 15

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

Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

Policy 14

Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

Limited Infilling at Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided:

- a. It has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing or permitted development;
- b. It does not exceed the height of existing or permitted buildings; and
- c. It does not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

The complete or partial redevelopment of major developed sites in the Green Belt will be permitted provided that:

- d. It has no greater, and where possible has less, impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and

the purposes of including land in it;

- e. It contributes to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts;
- f. Does not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
- g. It does not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings.

4.188 The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate but there are exceptions, which include permitting limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use. In this context, a number of longstanding uses already exist in the Green Belt: Finchale Training College, East Durham and Houghall Community College, Lanchester Road Hospital, Sherburn Hospital, Frankland Prison and Remand Centre, Durham High School, the former Stonebridge Dairy site, Ustinov College and a number of sewage treatment works.

4.189 The former Stonebridge Dairy site currently has planning permission for a business park but it has not been delivered. It is proposed that the site is therefore allocated for housing (see Policy 30 (Housing Land Allocation)), given the site is previously developed and its infilling would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the former dairy buildings.

4.190 Although national policy no longer refers specifically to Major Developed Sites, the concept of applying Green Belt policy more flexibly for previously developed sites in the Green Belt is necessary in County Durham due to the existence of longstanding uses. It is not the intention of the Green Belt to prejudice existing uses that brings jobs and prosperity.

Furthermore, the complete or partial redevelopment of such sites may offer the opportunity for environmental improvements without adding to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

4.191 This Policy will be used when considering proposals relating to previously developed sites and the defined Major Developed Sites. Proposals affecting other previously developed sites will be assessed against the overarching Green Belt Policy.

4.192 The major increase in the 'developed proportion' referred to in this Policy should be interpreted so that development does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. The footprint of the Major Developed Sites indicated on the Proposals Map represents the limits of existing and foreseeable developments, excluding temporary/insubstantial buildings, peripheral car parking and peripheral housing development.

Key Evidence Base

- Non-Strategic Green Belt Modifications (DCC 2012)
- North West Durham Green Belt Study (DCC 2011)

You told us that...

Although not directly related to this issue, views have been expressed relating to the impacts of development in the Green Belt, including: encroachment into the countryside and impact upon landscape character, including the setting of the World Heritage Site and the historic city; increases in traffic congestion and pressure upon existing facilities and services; and impact upon habitats. As this Policy deals with sites that are already developed the impact on the Green Belt will be kept to a minimum.

The Sustainability Appraisal told us that...

The Sustainability Appraisal at previous stages of the plan preparation has not directly addressed this issue.

The NPPF states that...

The construction of new buildings in Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate but there are exceptions, which include permitting limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process.

Question 16

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

Neighbourhood Plans

Policy 15

Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure

The Council will work with town and parish councils and neighbourhood forums to develop, approve and adopt Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, in accordance with the Regulations.

Additionally, the Council will help forums to identify local infrastructure requirements and projects that can be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy, in consultation with the appropriate Council Area Action Partnership.

Neighbourhood Plans must reflect the spatial approach and strategic policies of the County Durham Plan but may identify further sites and allocations, including housing allocations of less than 1.5 hectares or less than 0.75 hectares in West Durham, that accord with the Spatial Approach and strategic policies of the Plan.

4.193 The Localism Act (2011) introduced Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. The Government recently published regulations^(xxvi) which set out how each of these should be prepared. The Council have subsequently developed a protocol to set out how we will help support their delivery:

- Identifying and agreeing suitable areas to be covered;
- Considering the scope and content;

xxvi The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

- Supporting the preparation of appropriate evidence;
- Consider the need for Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment;
- Helping arrange the Examination in Public; and
- Organising a local referendum and adoption.

4.194 Local communities now have the opportunity to prepare their own Neighbourhood Plan to complement the County Durham Plan. Neighbourhood Plans enable a Town or Parish Council or where none exists, a Neighbourhood Forum to develop a plan for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can include bespoke planning policies appropriate to their area and a finer grain of land use allocations than can be achieved in the County Durham Plan. The Council will work with local communities that wish to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and would encourage discussion of the breadth and scope of their plans at the earliest opportunity.

4.195 The allocations within this Plan ensure that there is sufficient land across the towns and larger villages of County Durham to deliver, as a minimum, a 10 year supply of housing land that is available for development. However, we acknowledge that some communities may wish to identify additional sites for development to achieve their regeneration objectives. The approach we have taken in the Plan ensures sufficient flexibility to enable this to happen. National guidance also makes it clear that Neighbourhood Plans should accord with the strategic policies of the Plan (identified in Appendix D) and in the interest of clarity this Policy sets an upper size limit of 1.5 Hectares for housing allocations in a Neighbourhood Plan as it is our view that sites larger than this are of sufficient significance that they should be identified in the Local Plan. Given the more rural nature of West Durham and the lack of larger sites a lower threshold of 0.75 hectares is considered appropriate.

4.196 In adopting Neighbourhood Plans, as well as expecting consistency with the Local Plan, we will also expect them to be supported by robust evidence, be deliverable and supported by a majority of the community.

4.197 Neighbourhood Plans may generate a need for local infrastructure. We will support communities to identify these requirements and specific projects that can be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL is expected to generate significant income from new development and 5% of the total will be available to support some these local projects. However it is likely that the total cost of these projects will far exceed the level of resources available. We will therefore establish local arrangements, including the 14 Action Area Partnerships, to identify priority projects on an annual basis. For more detail see Policy 63 (Developer Contributions).

Key Evidence Base

- The Localism Act (2011)
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012)
- Neighbourhood Planning Council Procedures (2012)
- Draft Charging Schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (2012)
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2012)

You told us that...

As neighbourhood planning was only introduced in last year's Localism Bill there has been no previous consultation on this policy.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

This policy is likely to incur positive economic and social effects especially considering that the proposed development will be based on local need. Nonetheless the effectiveness of it will depend on how Neighbourhood Plan areas and their proposals are determined and to what extent they reflect Local Plan strategic policies. If Neighbourhood Plans are implemented in full-accordance with the Spatial Approach and strategic policies it is likely to have a positive environmental effect. Specific recommended changes to the wording of the policy and supporting text have been incorporated.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

As this policy is more about procedure the only real alternative would be to not set a threshold for allocations in Neighbourhood Plans. We believe that this approach would have resulted in an increased risk of Neighbourhood Plans identifying sites which would have been of sufficient size to undermine the objectives of the County Durham Plan.

The NPPF tells us...

Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less

development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies (paragraph 184).

Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation (paragraph 185).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Spatial Policy Team

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted

Question 17

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

5 General Development Principles

5.1 Policy 1 of the Plan sets out the criteria by which development proposals will be assessed in order to ensure they contribute to a sustainable future for County Durham. There are a range of further issues and general principles which set the tone for all new development which will be delivered through the Plan. These cover sustainable design, green infrastructure, amenity, and renewable energy and will be apply to all new development, wherever appropriate, to ensure that sustainable and high quality development is able to come forward to support the objectives of the Plan.

Development on Unallocated Sites

Policy 16

Development on Unallocated Sites

All new development^(xxvii) on sites that are not allocated in the County Durham Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan, will be permitted provided the development:

- a. Is appropriate in scale, design, and, location to the character and function of the settlement;
- b. There is not an unacceptable impact on the landscape;
- c. Helps to consolidate the built form of the settlement;
- d. Helps support or improve the sustainability of the area;
- e. Does not result in the merging or coalescence of settlements;

- f. Does not result in the loss of an 'asset of community value' without having been through the correct procedure;
- g. Is compatible with adjacent sites and land uses, ensuring adequate standards of amenity for existing and future occupiers;
- h. Includes satisfactory arrangements for disposing foul and surface water discharge;
- i. Includes appropriate provision for vehicle access and parking;
- j. Includes satisfactory arrangements for re-mediating contamination and ensuring the site and any existing buildings are stable; and
- k. Is in accord with the Sustainable Development Principles and all other policies of the Plan.

5.2 In addition to the development of sites allocated in the Plan, opportunities exist for additional development where it is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement in which it is located. Such opportunities will mainly comprise of residential development on previously developed land, as well as conversions and the redevelopment of existing buildings. The Policy also covers proposals for live / work units, specialist accommodation, small scale retailing and employment uses not covered by policies elsewhere in the Plan.

5.3 This Policy seeks to promote and secure appropriate standards for development and to ensure adverse impacts are minimised. Development should in the first instance be directed to previously developed sites in sustainable locations that are well served by public transport.

xxvii Including retail, office and industrial uses with floorspace of less than 1,000sqm

5.4 The Council wants to ensure that new development does not detract from the existing form and character of settlements. In determining whether a site is appropriate for new development the impact on adjacent buildings and the surrounding area and the current use of the site will be taken into account. Where buildings already exist on the site their retention will be favoured when they make a positive contribution to the area or have intrinsic value.

5.5 In the case of conversions and replacement dwellings proposals should not significantly increase the size or impact of the original building where this would have an adverse affect on the character of the surrounding area or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Similarly, the sub-division and intensification of dwellings (i.e. houses in multiple occupation) this should not result in concentrations of such dwellings to the detriment of the range and variety of the local housing stock.

5.6 Under the Localism Act, where a proposal seeks to covert an existing community facility (e.g. shops, public houses, cultural buildings, etc) this will have to conform with the *Community Right to Bid* procedure. This means that communities can nominate important local buildings and facilities for inclusion on a central list held by the Council. A six month moratorium is imposed on proposals that would affect such 'assets of community value' giving the community the opportunity to develop a proposal and raise the required capital to bid for the facility or site when it comes onto the open market at the end of the moratorium period.

5.7 Where proposals would result in the loss of a community facility which is the last remaining facility of that type, and would not involve a sale (and would not trigger the *Community Right to Bid* procedure), will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer viable. Applicants must advertise the premises to give the community as a going concern in the press, online and onsite, and it should have been advertised four times within the six months over an even space of time.

Key Evidence Base

- Localism Act (2011)

You told us that...

We have not consulted specifically on this issue in previous versions of the Plan. This Policy includes objectives that are similarly expressed in other Policies and general objectives of the Plan and it is considered that there are no fundamental conflicts with what has been recorded via responses on these related matters.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Awaiting Sustainability Appraisal comments.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

The NPPF tells us that...

To apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development when assessing and determining development proposals that are not allocated in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including making it easier for jobs to be created in towns and villages, achieving net gains for bio-diversity, achieving better design and better places as well as widening the choice of high quality homes.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Usefulness in appeal situations.

Question 18

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

Sustainable Design in the Built Environment

Policy 17

Sustainable Design in the Built Environment

A high standard of sustainable design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to aim for zero carbon emission standards and create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Applications for major ^(xxviii) new housing development must be accompanied by a full Code for Sustainable Homes assessment and appropriate information to demonstrate how proposals will make a positive contribution to the character and sustainability of County Durham. A relevant supporting Code for Sustainable Homes assessment may be required for other development which raises particular planning or sustainable issues. Applications will be expected to refer to the Building for Life standards and criteria. Development proposals will be permitted where they:

Buildings

- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating and reinforcing local distinctive sustainable communities;
- Deliver a coherently structured, integrated and sustainable built form that clearly defines public and private space;
- Respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational treatment, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting;
- Maximise opportunities for sustainable construction techniques and minimise emissions in construction and use by minimising energy (through orientation and solar optimisation), using energy efficiently and by using renewable and low carbon energy (following the Energy Hierarchy);
- Ensure all major development ^(xxix) connects to an existing or approved district heating scheme, where viable opportunities

xxviii Major development is defined as comprising 10 or more dwellings or 1,000 sqm of employment floorspace, or 2,500 sqm of retail floorspace (see GPDO (2006, as amended), and NPPF

xxix All new development over 10 dwellings or 1000 sqm of non-residential floorspace, or 2,500 sqm of retail floorspace

exist. Where opportunities have been identified for the construction of a new district heating network, developers will be required to work with the Council and partners in order to deliver the network;

- f. Achieve the relevant national Code for Sustainable Homes compliance standard for residential development, and BREEAM compliance standard for commercial development, or any successor, (excluding energy / CO₂ elements), as a minimum, for all major development^(xxx) unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the application demonstrates the requirement would not be technically or financially viable;
- g. From 2016, contribute positively to the provision of a County Durham 'Allowable Solutions Fund';
- h. Utilise renewable and low carbon technologies as the main heating source in all new development in off gas areas, where connection to the gas network is unviable;
- i. Contribute to the resilience of buildings and communities in the face of climate change impacts;
- j. Safeguard the residential amenity of existing and future occupiers in new development;
- k. Promote diversity and choice through the delivery of a balanced mix of compatible buildings, tenures and uses;
- l. Create buildings and spaces that are adaptable to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions;

and

- m. Use high standards of local and sustainable building materials, finishes and landscaping including the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate.

Places and spaces

- n. Promote accessibility and permeability by creating places that connect with each other and with existing networks and are easy to move through. Ensure that the public realm, including new roads and other rights of way, are safe, attractive and distinctively designed, thereby ensuring priority and safe, convenient and attractive access for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and for disabled people;
- o. Ensure that new development is legible through the provision of recognisable and understandable places, routes, intersections and points of reference, by design and the use of varied surface finishes;
- p. Are sympathetic to and conserve historic buildings and historic landscapes;
- q. Include sensitively designed adverts, signage and street furniture which are appropriate and sympathetic to their local setting by means of scale, design, lighting and materials;
- r. Ensure space is multifunctional and where appropriate includes provision for SuDS, shading and leisure activities. The use of green and brown roofs will be encouraged;

xxx All new development over 10 dwellings or 1,000 sqm of non-residential floorspace, or 2,500 sqm of retail floorspace

- s. Incorporate biodiversity as set out in Policy 41 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure);
- t. Deliver places and spaces that promote health and well being for existing and future users; and
- n. Incorporate design measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or anti social behaviour.

5.8 This policy aims to ensure that all new development in County Durham achieves high standards of sustainable design. The policy sets out criteria for the assessment of design quality in new development and sets standards against the established national assessment methodology in the 'Code for Sustainable Homes', 'BREEAM'^(xxxii) and 'Building for Life'.

Sustainability

5.9 The built environment accounts for over half of the UK's CO₂ emissions, through both construction and use. It is essential to meet both national and local targets that new development does not overly increase this burden. Development must therefore target zero emission standards through energy efficiency and use of renewable and low carbon energy technologies. It is also vital to plan buildings and communities that are resilient to potential climate change impacts. Development must be designed to withstand future rather than current weather trends as flooding events and heat waves will become a much more regular occurrence.

5.10 Development proposals within County Durham should aim to mitigate carbon dioxide emissions with the aim of achieving zero emission

standards. New development must demonstrate how the location of the development meets sustainability criteria including:

- Access to services
- Access to employment opportunities
- Impact upon the natural environment

5.11 In line with Policy 1 (Sustainable Development), planning applications for major developments^(xxxii) must be accompanied by a sustainability statement that demonstrates the environmental impacts and benefits of the proposal. Ensuring that sustainability is embedded into new development from the outset is essential; energy efficiency and solar optimisation will be an essential element of the overall design of new developments. Major developments are also required to connect to an existing or approved district heating scheme, where viable opportunities exist. In these cases, developers will be required to work with the Council and other partners.

5.12 The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is the national standard voluntary assessment tool for residential schemes in the UK. In County Durham it is expected that all major development (10 or more dwellings) applications will produce a full design stage and post construction stage CSH assessment. Energy and CO₂ emissions would be set at building regulation levels, however performance and reporting should be provided against the wider range of sustainability criteria as per the CSH standards levels. This means that the following code levels must be met during the specified periods:

- Code Level 3: 2010 - 2013

xxxi Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method

xxxii Major development is defined as comprising 10 or more dwellings or 1,000 sqm of employment floorspace (see GPDO 2006, as amended)

- Code Level 4: 2013 - 2016
- Code Level 6: 2016

5.13 Applications for non-domestic development will be encouraged to comply with national criteria including BREEAM standards, as follows:

- Very Good: 2010 - 2016
- Excellent: 2016

5.14 Renewable energy technologies will be encouraged on-site. Where opportunities for viable installations have been identified, it is expected that such installations would go forward as part of the development. Developments in off-gas areas usually use oil or LPG as their main heating fuel which is both expensive and carbon intensive. New development in these areas will therefore be expected to utilise renewable and low carbon technologies as the main heating source. Further information on how development can adhere to all the points listed above will be provided in a Sustainable Design in the Built Environment Supplementary Planning Document which will be published in draft in 2013.

Design

5.15 New development in County Durham will be expected to be of high sustainable design quality that respects the context of the area and its distinctiveness and enhances the character and appearance of the area. In addition to the specific considerations that apply to the historic environment, developments should respect the fundamental principles of good urban design and sustainability. Developments should respond appropriately to the site and its surroundings, create a sense of place, be easy to understand and move through, be capable of adaptation for alternative uses where relevant, and help to create an attractive public

realm. Development needs to be carefully planned to ensure that valuable features and characteristics are protected and enhanced.

5.16 Careful consideration of the site's topography can enhance design of a new development in a number of ways including the creation or enhancement of views into or within a site, creating attractive skylines through the use of building heights, ensuring appropriate drainage arrangements, the retention of established planting and trees which can visually enhance a development. This will ensure an appropriate relationship with the wider landscape, both visually and in terms of activity and the creation of wildlife corridors. The Design and Access Statement that accompanies a planning application should demonstrate how development proposals contribute to the criteria set out within this policy. High quality development should be achieved through a robust and collaborative design process from inception to completion on the ground. The design process should go beyond the development construction phase and should also ensure suitable management arrangements and maintenance regimes are put in place.

5.17 Building for Life (BfL) is a nationally recognised methodology for assessing the design quality of residential development. Whilst conformity with specified standards is not the sole guide to a decision the BfL methodology offers a systematic way of demonstrating that the criteria in this policy have been addressed. Therefore proposals for major development with a residential component should demonstrate through supporting documentation how the development would deliver high quality design with reference to the BfL criteria. As a guide, development should aim to achieve the standards set out in the table below:

Table 5 Guide to preferred standards

	To 2012	To 2013-15	2016 onwards
All major developments of 10+ dwellings	Building for Life Good standard (overall score 14/20)	Building for Life Good standard (overall score 15/20)	Building for Life Very Good standard (overall score 16/20)

5.18 Creating an accessible and permeable public realm, connecting places and spaces, will help to ensure that many daily needs can be met within walking and cycling distance. The layout, form and mix of development should support walking, cycling and public transport provision. Opportunities should be taken to create or reinforce a logical and legible hierarchy of routes, intersections and public spaces, the design of which will vary depending on movement, activities and uses supported. Built form should be used to assist in this regard, with the inclusion of focal buildings and features where appropriate to act as visual points of reference.

5.19 A high quality built environment should consider the amenity of both existing and future development. Consideration should be given to matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space. Development should also take account of local climatic conditions.

5.20 Density is interlinked with design and it is essential that imaginative design solutions are encouraged to achieve higher density levels where appropriate in accordance with Policy 35 (Density of Residential Development), although the density of development should rightly be a product of a robust site assessment which responds positively to County Durham's high environmental qualities.

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- Planning for Low Carbon in County Durham (2009)
- Technical Paper 3: Design and Local Distinctiveness (2009)
- Technical Paper 13: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

(2010)

You told us that...

Planning policy should avoid duplicating building regulations in setting minimum standards for energy and carbon emissions in new buildings. The majority of respondents agreed with the approach taken, although some questioned the costs of setting higher local standards.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

No alternative options were put forward for this policy, and therefore no Sustainability Appraisal options were discussed.

At Issues and Options stage, wording changes were suggested regarding the inclusion of Code for Sustainable Homes assessment; renewable or low carbon energy technologies being operational before any new or converted buildings are occupied; standards; creating adaptable buildings, spaces and communities; accessibility and prioritising non-car modes; parking provision; heritage assets; and incorporating biodiversity.

Response to SA Recommendations...

Majority of recommendations accepted and policy amended. Parking standards will be set out in the Accessibility Guidelines, therefore this change is not accepted. Likewise, incorporated renewable or low carbon energy technologies must be operational before any new or converted buildings are occupied will be a requirement of condition on any planning permission, and is therefore not accepted. There is no need to duplicate standards in policy and the suggested wording on adaptability is aspirational rather than policy wording, and therefore these changes are also not accepted. The changes regarding Code for Sustainable Homes assessment are covered by our changes to

policy 1 Sustainable Development. Relating well to and conserving designated and non-designated heritage assets is covered by Policy 44 Historic Environment.

Alternative Options considered but not selected...

No alternative options were put forward.

Further detail will be set out in the Sustainable Design in the Built Environment Supplementary Planning Document which will be published in draft in 2013.

The NPPF tells us...

Planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, take account of the different roles and character of different areas and support the transition to a low carbon future. Good design is a key part of sustainable development and the Government attaches great importance to it.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor effectiveness of the Policy:

- Major new development achieving CSH levels

- Major new development achieving BREEAM standards
- Major new development achieving Building for Life standards

Question 19

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

Local Amenity

Policy 18

Local Amenity

In order to protect the amenity of people living and working in the vicinity of a proposed development, permission will not be granted for development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on amenity, by way of noise, overlooking, privacy, vibration, odour, dust, fumes/emissions, light pollution and loss of light, and visual intrusion.

5.21 Planning has an important role to play in making sure that new development does not have, and is not at risk from, adverse environmental effects. Ensuring a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings is a core planning principle of the NPPF. New and existing development should not contribute to, or be put at risk from, pollution or other sources of nuisance or intrusion which could adversely affect amenity. This Policy outlines the considerations to be

taken into account in determining planning applications to ensure that amenity is protected, from a wide range of potential environmental impacts.

5.22 Noise pollution issues can occur either from development that creates a noise producing source close to sensitive receptors (such as industrial or transport development), or from development of noise sensitive properties that are situated close to noise producing sources (such as housing, schools, or health facilities close to sources of noise such as industrial processes or transport routes). It will be necessary to determine the impact of noise producing sources on prevailing ambient background levels and achievement of the World Health Organisation's recommended maximum noise levels in residential areas. The planning process also needs to consider whether any resulting noise from new development could constitute a statutory nuisance under Part 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The impact from potential noise producing sources is dependent on the type and scale of the development proposed. This, in turn, will govern the type of noise assessment that will be necessary. For example, for proposals for wind turbines the impact of noise needs to be assessed at the nearest sensitive receptors at representative wind speeds. Supplementary Planning Documents will set out in more detail the criteria and methodology for carrying out noise assessments in relation to particular types of development. The following methods of mitigation should be considered to control noise.

- a. Separation by distance;
- b. External and internal layout and orientation of the development e.g. the layout of rooms in identified noise sensitive properties.
- c. Restriction of permitted hours of operation;
- d. Reduction of noise at source e.g. the use of quieter specification

plant or machinery; and

- e. Reduction in the transmission of noise from source to the receiver (through provision of sound insulation, or the use of enclosures or barriers).

5.23 Further advice on protecting and improving local amenity in new development will be set out through Supplementary Planning Documents.

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

You told us that...

No options were previously put forward to address this issue.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

No alternative options were put forward for this issue.

At Preferred Options stage, no further changes were recommended.

Response to Sustainability Appraisal Recommendations...

No further changes recommended acknowledged.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

No alternative options were put forward for this issue.

The NPPF tells us...

The Plan needs to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing

and future occupants of land and building as a core planning principle. It also requires that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by preventing new and existing development from being put at unacceptable risk from, or contributing to, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution. It outlines the considerations to be taken into account in determining planning applications for both noise sensitive developments (such as housing and schools) and for those activities that generate noise from different sources.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Development granted contrary to advice

Question 20

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

Air Quality and Light Pollution

Policy 19

Air Quality and Light Pollution

Air Quality

Planning applications for development which have the potential to lead to a significant deterioration in air quality should be accompanied by an assessment of the likely impact of the development on air quality and sensitive receptor habitats/species. In areas of poor air quality, proposals for development which may be sensitive to air pollution will be required to demonstrate appropriate mitigating design solutions to reduce the adverse impacts to acceptable levels.

Residential development proposals within areas that are currently exposed to air quality concentrations above the National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) objectives should take into account the need to reduce exposure by the following design mitigation hierarchy:

- a. Separation by distance;
- b. External Layout;
- c. Internal Layout; and
- d. Suitable Ventilation

Light Pollution

All development will be expected to minimise light pollution. Planning applications for development with the potential to result in significant

light pollution should be accompanied by an assessment of the likely impact to show that the lighting scheme is the minimum necessary for functional or security purposes and that it minimises potential pollution from glare and spillage. Particular attention will be paid to schemes in the North Pennines AONB, in or close to open countryside, close to residential properties, or to areas or features important for nature conservation. Proposals for new lighting on existing developments or to illuminate existing facilities, where permission is required, will be subject to the same considerations.

5.24 Policy 18 (Local Amenity) deals with the potential impacts of development on the amenity of people. There are other potential environmental impacts which also need to be addressed, principally in relation to air quality and light. Where there is significant risk of damage to the environment, Planning and pollution controls will take into account the need to prevent or limit harm, even where there is no definite scientific knowledge, following the 'precautionary principle'.

5.25 The National Air Quality Strategy introduced a system of local air quality management. Local Authorities are required to carry-out periodic reviews of air quality and to assess current and likely future air quality against the air quality standards. Air quality standards for Nitrogen Dioxide have been exceeded close to busy roads and junctions within and around Durham City centre. The Council has therefore designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the Highgate, Gilesgate and Dragon Lane areas of Durham City. There are other areas of Durham City and areas of Chester-le-Street where the Air Quality Objective for nitrogen dioxide may be exceeded and these are currently being assessed. An Action Plan will be produced with the aim of reducing pollution levels and improving the standard of air quality, setting out measures to improve the standard of air quality through a variety of means including land use planning. The designation of particular parts of the County as AQMAs indicates the severity of air pollution in these areas. Airborne pollutants

will therefore need to be minimised in these areas, to ensure that development proposals do not prejudice the implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan to reduce the specified pollutants. Air Quality Assessments accompanying planning applications should be based on the Councils 'Air Quality and Land Use Planning Guidance note' and should indicate impact both with and without mitigating measures. The Guidance also covers the type of planning applications for which an air quality assessment will be required together with the format and relevant methodology. Major planning and development schemes within an AQMA and surrounding areas will need to be assessed to determine any impact on air quality and showing any ameliorating design measures.

5.26 In addition to reducing impacts on human health, development should not result in the deterioration of protected habitats and species. These include: Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) jointly included in EU wide network of protected areas called "Natura 2000" sites. Many such sites within County Durham are exceeding critical thresholds in respect of certain air pollutants, particularly SO₂ and NO_x. These include:

- Castle Eden Dene SAC;
- Thrislington SAC;
- North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC;
- Moor House Upper Teesdale SAC;
- North Pennine Moors SAC; and
- North Pennine Moors SPA.

5.27 As a result, major development proposals that are likely to increase air pollution in the vicinity of a Natura 2000 site, either directly or indirectly,

through example, an increase in vehicular traffic, may also need to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment in order to determine the likely impacts on the qualifying sites and habitats of the site(s) in question.

5.28 Light pollution is artificial light that is allowed to illuminate on areas that are not intended to be lit. The intrusion of overly bright or poorly directed lights can cause glare, wasted energy, have impacts on nature conservation, and affect people's right to enjoy their property. It can also severely affect our view of the night sky. The NPPF is clear that planning policies should limit the impact from light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation, primarily through promoting and requiring good quality design. The possibility of whether light from the development might constitute a statutory nuisance under Part 3 of the Environmental Protection Act should also be considered.

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- The National Air Quality Strategy
- Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)

You told us that...

No previous options were put forward for this policy. This has been identified as an omission.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

No alternative options were put forward for this policy, and therefore no Sustainability Appraisal options were discussed.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Omitting a policy on the potential impacts of pollution on the environment. It was considered that the Plan needs to address the impacts of pollution on both people and the environment.

The NPPF tells us...

The Plan should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by preventing new and existing development from being put at unacceptable risk from, or contributing to, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of pollution (paragraphs 110,124 & 125).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Development granted contrary to advice

Question 21

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

Green Infrastructure

Policy 20

Green Infrastructure

Development will be expected to conserve, and where required improve and extend, the County's green infrastructure network. Development proposals will be permitted where they support the following standards of open space provision:

For each 1,000 people, there should be 5.2ha of public open space for every 1,000 residents, comprising:

- a. 1ha parks and gardens;
- b. 1ha amenity open space;
- c. 1ha sports grounds (of which 0.7ha should be sports pitches and 0.3ha paths, verges, etc.);
- d. 1ha semi-natural open space;
- e. 1ha allotments; and
- f. 0.2ha equipped children's or young people's play space.

Where new development would be likely to lead to additional recreational pressure on a Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Ramsar site, green infrastructure provision should be prioritised towards the creation of new, or the improvement of existing, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), designed to divert potential users away from protected sites.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing public open space will only be permitted where:

- g. The open space does not have a significant recreational, cultural, community, ecological, landscape or townscape value;
- h. It would not lead to, or exacerbate, a deficiency in open space provision according to the standards set out above and according to the findings of the Durham County Open Space Needs Assessment; and/or
- i. A compensatory amount of open space of an equivalent quality can be provided in the local area.

Development will be expected to maintain and improve the permeability of the built environment and access to the countryside for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Proposals that would result in the loss of, or deterioration in the quality of, existing public rights of way (PROWs) will not be permitted unless equivalent alternative provision is made. Where diversions are required, new routes should be direct, convenient and attractive, and should not increase recreational pressure on internationally-protected wildlife sites.

Developer contributions for green infrastructure in new development

New housing development will be required to entail the provision of sufficient green infrastructure to meet the County open space quantity standards, calculated according to the expected number of new residents. Developers may provide green infrastructure within new development by:

- j. Providing the required amount of new green infrastructure on

the development site; or

- k. Providing some green infrastructure on the site, and making up the requirement by providing new, or improving existing, green infrastructure near to the site through planning obligations

Where all or part of the required green infrastructure is provided via planning obligations, the costs payable will be calculated by determining the likely cost to the local authority of providing the required area of open space, less the amount provided in kind by the developer.

Where new open spaces are provided, the Council will expect the developer to maintain them for a period of 12 months following practical completion. Following this, the Council will be prepared to adopt the land, providing it meets the expected standard. A commuted sum for maintenance, calculated on the basis of typical maintenance costs per square metre for a 25 year period, will be payable. Alternatively, the developer may make arrangements for the land to be maintained by a body other than the Council.

Quality of green infrastructure in new development

Green infrastructure in new development should be shown on layout plans from the start of the planning process and should demonstrate connectivity, multifunctionality, high quality of place, and appropriateness to context with regard to landscape, townscape and ecology.

Major housing or mixed-use developments ^(xxxiii) will be required to incorporate a network of multifunctional routes for cyclists and pedestrians which connect to the wider access and rights of way

network. These should use trees and other green infrastructure to improve their attractiveness and amenity.

Major housing or mixed-use developments will be required to plan positively for biodiversity. All such developments should create new Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP) habitats or encourage DBAP species, commensurate with their size. Any landscaping scheme will be required to incorporate native species which can make a contribution towards the local ecological networks and local DBAP habitats.

Where development entails the creation of new streets, street trees (trees on verges or pavements) will be required on each new street, unless this can be shown to be impracticable.

New green infrastructure should be planned with reference to relevant Durham County Council guidance and strategies including the Playing Pitch Strategy, the Green Infrastructure Strategy, and any local Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan.

Playing Pitches

Existing playing fields will be safeguarded, with consideration only given to disposal when a secured pitch stock can be demonstrated, or alternative high quality provision can be generated by the loss of pitches.

The development of new multi pitch / multi sport 'hub' sites which can provide facilities for a range of training, development and performance sports will be supported. Where appropriate hub sites should embrace artificial turf pitches (ATP) technology for training and formal fixtures, floodlit multi use games courts, grass pitches and adequate changing facilities.

xxxiii Major development is defined as that including 10 or more dwellings or 1000m2 or employment floorspace (see GPDO, 2006, as amended)

5.29 Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces and corridors that exists within and between towns and villages. As well as public open space, it includes wildlife sites, river corridors, coastlines, mountains, moorland, woodland and agricultural land.

5.30 Green infrastructure fulfils a number of important functions:

- Access and recreation – public open spaces, common land and open access land, and the public rights of way network provide a free recreational resource
- Agriculture – farmland provides food and energy crops, and hosts an entire industry
- Biodiversity and geodiversity – habitats, large and small, within towns and countryside, protect and support our natural heritage
- Economic development – green infrastructure improves the image of towns and cities, making them more attractive places to live, work and invest. Its impact on health improves the productivity of people and of regions
- Energy – the natural environment provides an energy resource in terms of biomass, hydro-electric and wind power
- Health and wellbeing – well-planned green infrastructure promotes and facilitates healthy lifestyles. It improves urban environments, with a demonstrable impact upon mental and physical health
- Landscape – green infrastructure is a crucial element in defining the character of the countryside
- Townscape – open spaces, street trees and other GI are a crucial element in defining the character of urban areas

- Water supply, drainage and flood control – green infrastructure helps to manage water flow and quality by holding it in times of high rainfall and release it slowly, reducing the likelihood of flood and drought
- Climate change mitigation – all green plants and trees which photosynthesise absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which would otherwise add to global warming. As windbreaks, shades and flood management mechanisms they reduce the impacts of climate change on the local environment

5.31 The benefits of green infrastructure can be maximised by careful strategic planning. It should demonstrate the following qualities:

- Multifunctionality: supplying a range of benefits at once;
- Connectivity: providing links for people and wildlife within the development and to the wider network, including rights of way, parks and other facilities, and the countryside;
- High quality of place: being well-designed, safe, and fit for purpose;
- Resilience: ability to withstand and mitigate the impacts of climate change and of the pressure of use;
- Appropriateness to context: mirroring or complementing green infrastructure in the local townscape where possible, including private gardens; and
- Applicability at different scales: delivering GI services at neighbourhood, local and countywide levels.

5.32 The Council has produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy which explains how we will protect, enhance and create green infrastructure

across the County during the Plan period. This Policy incorporates its main planning-related recommendations.

5.33 This Policy aims to:

- Protect, maintain and extend existing green infrastructure in such a way as to maximise its contribution to the benefits listed above;
- Support the creation of a countywide network of multifunctional green infrastructure; and
- Require new housing and other developments to incorporate green infrastructure as part of their design and layout.

5.34 For the purposes of this policy, public open space is dealt with as a major subset of green infrastructure.

5.35 As well as affording protection to existing pitches, consideration will be given to the ways of funding potential new developments and provision improvements. It will be made clear at the pre-application stage when developers will be required to provide facilities on site, where developer contributions or works in kind will be secured for new infrastructure and/or for the improvement to existing infrastructure. In some instances where there are no deficiencies in an area it may be more appropriate to fund the enhancement of existing pitches.

5.36 The concept of hub sites will be developed, as they provide multi-sport and multi-activity opportunities and are a more efficient use of resources and maintenance. Many sites throughout the County currently fulfil the function of a hub site, and formalising and prioritising investment at these sites will be a priority. Current resources are inadequate to maintain the current level of pitches in parks, and a better use of limited resources will arise from investment and management in more sustainable sites, junior pitches becoming incorporated within hub site configuration.

At present the precise location of each hub site is not yet decided, as it will be determined following further consultation with governing bodies, league secretaries and individual clubs.

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Open Space Needs Assessment (2010)
- County Durham Playing Pitch Strategy
- Durham Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy and Local Implementation Plan

You told us that...

The Council should work with other local authorities and partner organisations, particularly on cross-boundary projects. We should develop green infrastructure on a landscape scale, supporting landscape-scale projects and promoting and directing habitat creation within defined landscape character areas.

The Council should recognise the value of ecosystem services. The County Durham Plan should show how the GI Strategy will be delivered, particularly with regard to the delivery of appropriate green spaces against defined standards. Planning applications where GI might be affected should be determined on their own merits, considering costs and benefits. However, compensatory habitat creation should be required.

Biodiversity should be dealt with under a separate policy. The planning process should deliver a net gain for biodiversity in terms of BAP priority habitats. There are limits to multifunctionality: where new

habitats are created, other uses may not be appropriate.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us...

Green infrastructure should be included within the list of community infrastructure to be funded via developer contributions.

The NPPF tells us...

Local planning authorities should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity and green infrastructure. They should aim to achieve places containing clear and legible pedestrian routes and high-quality open space. Policies should be based on up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities, and opportunities for new provision. LPAs should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, and should not permit development on existing open space except where it is surplus to requirements, or will be replaced by equivalent or superior facilities (paragraphs 99, 109 & 114).

Alternative Options considered but not selected

There were no realistic alternatives to the selected option; two suggestions which were made but rejected were:

- Not having a GI policy and relying on policies designed to protect public open space: This option was rejected because considering multifunctional GI rather than public open space alone allows us to maximise the benefits of new and existing GI assets by creating interlinked, multifunctional networks.
- Having a GI policy which subsumes biodiversity, landscape, flood management and other environmental considerations: This option was rejected because each of the topics listed above is sufficiently important to require its own detailed policy.

Supplementary guidance is also being produced.

Implementation and Monitoring

Locally-specific Green Infrastructure Implementation Plans are being prepared across the County. They will identify, at a local level, which are the most important elements of GI, and priorities for new and improved GI, taking into account major development proposals. Within implementation plans, priority will be given to projects in several types of location:

- The urban fringe around towns and villages where there is a need to create a more attractive setting for these communities and manage pressures on the countryside including pressure for new development, public access, recreation and agriculture.
- Areas within which there is an existing green infrastructure resource which can be extended and interlinked to support landscape-scale ecosystems and networks.
- Areas covered by significant landscape designations in County Durham, including the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Heritage Coast and the Magnesian Limestone Escarpment.
- New strategic housing and employment sites where new or improved green infrastructure can be created as part of the development.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- Community Infrastructure Levy raised in the locality

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Amount of developer contributions used to support green infrastructure
- Public open spaces and Rights of Way lost, improved and created
- Proportion of the County in which OSNA recommended standards of open space provision are met
- Number of parks eligible for Green Flag award
- SUDS developed

Question 22

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

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Policy 21

Renewable Energy Development

Renewable energy development will be supported in order to achieve

targets for new electricity generating capacity and CO2 reduction. In determining planning applications for such projects significant weight will be given to the achievement of wider environmental and economic benefits.

Development proposals for the generation of renewable energy will be granted unless:

- a. There would be significant harm to the visual appearance and character of the area;
- b. There would be significant harm to the amenity of local residents in accordance with Policy 18 (Local Amenity);
- c. There would be significant harm to the ecology of the area, in particular important international, national and local wildlife sites; or
- d. There would be significant adverse impacts on airport radar and telecommunications systems.

Proposals should include details of associated developments including access roads, transmission lines, pylons and other ancillary buildings. Planning applications will also need to include a satisfactory scheme to restore the site to a quality of at least its original condition once operations have ceased.

5.37 The development of renewable sources of energy can make a valuable contribution to tackling the rate of climate change and enable us to live in a more sustainable manner. County Durham has opportunities for renewable energy, but the exploitation of these must be carefully weighed against the need to protect our unique natural environment and heritage.

5.38 The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap 2011 ('the Roadmap') outlines the UK Government's commitment to increasing the use of renewable energy. The document identifies that the UK has the potential to meet its 2020 target of 15 % of UK energy consumption from renewable resources, and deliver an operational capacity of 29 GigaWatts (GW) of renewable energy by this same year.

5.39 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan guides the UK towards realising its renewable energy target. The document notes the contribution that onshore wind is making to the generation of electricity within the UK, however, it acknowledges that a greater number of renewable energy projects are required. In order to meet the overall 15% target, 30% of electricity should be generated from renewable sources.

5.40 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's commitment to facilitating the development of renewable energy sources but recognises that this must be consistent with protecting the local as well as global environment. In particular, care should be taken in assessing proposals for renewable energy projects in sensitive, designated areas, such as the AONB and areas of nature conservation, archaeological or historic importance.

5.41 Currently there is 176MW of renewable electricity operational or approved in County Durham. This will meet around 62% of County Durham's household electricity consumption or 24% of the County's overall electricity consumption. County Durham's 2010 target of 82MW of installed capacity has been exceeded by a substantial margin and the aspiration to double that target by 2020 has already been achieved. In County Durham, the most likely renewable energy installations will be solar panels, the installation of Biomass generators, or the erection of wind turbines.

5.42 However, in recognition of the particular and specific impacts raised by proposals for wind turbines, new proposals for wind energy development will be considered separately, under Policy 22 (Wind Turbine

Development).

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- Planning for Low Carbon in County Durham (2009)
- Towards a Strategy for Low Carbon Energy for County Durham (May 2011)
- County Durham Climate Change Strategy (2012)
- The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)
- The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (2011)
- Technical Paper No.13: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (2009)

You told us that...

Towards a Strategy for Low Carbon Energy for County Durham consulted upon a strategy for the County by Delivery Area. The Issues and Options also consulted upon Renewable Energy Targets for Electricity and Heat and also Development Criteria for Strategic Renewable Energy. The majority of respondents supported the strategies for the Delivery Areas and the approach to targets.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

We should adopt a combination approach, which is essentially the criteria-based approach taken. This acknowledges the limited

opportunities in certain areas of the County for continued wind development and develops an approach for assessing all technologies.

Alternative Options not chosen

Originally, it was proposed that a target be set for renewable heat and electricity, and this was consulted upon at Issues and Options and within the document Towards a Strategy for Low Carbon Energy for County Durham. General consensus was that the 20% renewable electricity by 2020 target was not sufficiently ambitious and that a 30% target by 2020 (with 12% renewable heat) was already established through the UK Renewable Energy Strategy. The Council's Climate Change Strategy^(xxxiv) target to reduce CO₂ of a 40% carbon emissions reduction by 2020 is to be used as the overarching target for the Local Plan.

The NPPF tells us...

One of the core planning principles is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourage the use of renewable resources such as renewable energy development. Local planning authorities should not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and applications should be approved if their impacts are, or can be made, acceptable.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Renewable energy development in the County, by technology
- Developments approved contrary to advice

Question 23

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

Wind Energy

Policy 22

Wind Turbine Development

Planning permission will be granted for the development of wind turbines, unless:

- a. There would be significant harm, individually or cumulatively, to the amenity of occupiers of residential properties or residential areas, due to noise, traffic, or visual intrusion (in accordance with Policy 18 (Local Amenity));

xxxiv County Durham Climate Change Strategy, 2012

- b. Any proposed wind turbines would be located within a minimum separation distance of 6 times the turbine height of a residential property or community facility;
- c. Any proposed wind turbine would be located within a minimum separation distance of 10 times the turbine's rotor blade diameter of a dwelling house, work place or community facility susceptible to shadow flicker;
- d. There would be significant harm individually or cumulatively to important species or habitats;
- e. There would be a significant adverse visual impact individually or cumulatively on character of the landscape;
- f. There would be a significant adverse impact on airport radar systems;
- g. There would be a significant adverse impact on TV Reception, communications Links or telecommunications systems;
- h. There would be a significant impact on the World Heritage Site, or other designated Heritage Asset or their settings; or
- i. Any proposed wind turbines are located within topple distance of a public highway or if its blades would over-sweep a public right of way.

If turbines are to be sited in locations which contravene the above standards; the developer will be required to demonstrate that the impacts would be acceptable.

Wind Turbine Development affecting the North Pennines Area

of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

There will be a presumption against commercial scale wind farm development in the North Pennines AONB. Developments involving more than one turbine, or turbines with a hub height of over 25m, will not be permitted.

Small scale wind development within the AONB will be permitted provided that its impacts on the environment are acceptable and its installed capacity is commensurate with the needs of the property or business. Development outside of the AONB which has a substantial impact on interior views within the AONB, or important views of the AONB, will not be permitted. Development affecting the Yorkshire Dales National Park will be subject to the same considerations.

5.43 In establishing the potential for commercial scale wind energy and the potential future contribution to renewable energy targets from this sector, the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) identified 'broad areas of least constraint' which offered the greatest potential to accommodate new wind energy development. In County Durham these areas were:

- North Durham Upland Coalfield;
- South Durham Upland Coalfield;
- East Durham Limestone Area; and
- Tees Plain

5.44 RSS identified the capacity of each of these areas as being 20 to 25 turbines, but this was not based on any technical assessment. Therefore, the development capacity of each of these 'broad areas of

least constraint' was analysed in a series of studies across North East England, undertaken by consultants ARUP, on behalf of the North East Assembly. In County Durham, assessments were carried out during 2009. These detailed assessments built upon the outputs of previous reports and considered the landscape capacity and visual issues of the four areas. The studies included a technical and environmental constraints review, and a landscape, visual and cumulative analysis. In particular, they highlighted the potential for any modification to the assessed capacity for onshore wind for the areas developed in the RSS. Although non-statutory, the reports are informative to decision making, and are especially useful for those areas which relate to more than one local authority area, such as the Tees Plain. In overall terms, the studies indicated that opportunities for further significant wind energy development in the County are limited.

5.45 Considerable new capacity for wind energy has been developed in County Durham over the last ten years. At March 2012, over 129 MWe of installed capacity was operational or permitted. This equates to around 305 GWh per annum (assuming a 27% load factor). In addition, almost 109MWe is at planning or pre-planning stage, giving an overall capacity for all operational, permitted or planned schemes of around 238MWe installed.

5.46 Given that the Broad Areas of Least Constraint were identified on the basis of a minimum wind speed mapped against a range of environmental constraints, it is perhaps not surprising that the vast majority of permitted wind energy developments in the County have taken place within those areas identified in RSS as 'broad areas of least constraint'.

5.47 Significantly, since the landscape capacity studies were completed, further commercial wind energy has been approved in the study areas. Two schemes (4 turbines) have been approved in East Durham and an additional 2 turbines has been approved in North West Durham. In the Tees Plain, three further schemes (15 turbines) have been approved (all in Hartlepool / Stockton / Darlington), taking the approved number of

turbines up to the capacity identified in the landscape capacity studies for this area. As a result of the development that has come forward in the areas identified in RSS as 'broad areas of least constraint', these areas can no longer be considered to be unconstrained and therefore it is not considered appropriate to continue to identify these areas as broad areas of least constraint in the Local Plan.

5.48 Landscape capacity, together with radar constraints in the south of the County to some extent, will act as a substantial constraint to further commercial wind energy development in County Durham.

5.49 A number of other issues also influence the location of wind turbine developments and the acceptability of planning application proposals. Key issues to be considered include: TV Reception; Communication Links; Residential Amenity by way of Visual Impact, Noise Impact, and Shadow Flicker; Biodiversity, Ecology and Ornithology; Highways; Heritage; Aviation; Public Rights of Way; Landscape and Visual Impacts; and Impacts on designated Landscapes such as the North Pennines AONB.

5.50 Although there are clearly some barriers to large scale wind turbine development in County Durham, evidence shows that wind energy still has the potential to come forward on a smaller and more limited scale, wherever opportunities can be identified which can be accommodated without unacceptable landscape or other environmental impacts.

Key Evidence Base

- Planning for Low Carbon in County Durham (2009)
- Wind farm Development and Landscape Capacity: North and South Durham Coalfield (2009)
- East Durham Limestone and Tees Plain (2009)

- Towards a Strategy for Low Carbon Energy for County Durham (2011)
- UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)
- Planning and Climate Change Practice Guidance
- Technical Paper No.13: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (2009)

You told us that...

We should accept that opportunities for significant further wind energy development in County Durham are limited, and rely on other renewable energy technologies to meet future targets. Towards a Strategy for Low Carbon Energy for County Durham consulted upon a strategy for the County by Delivery Area. The Issues and Options also consulted upon Development Criteria for Strategic Renewable Energy, recognising that further opportunities for wind energy development in the broad areas identified in RSS are limited and that development outside these areas will need to be addressed by Development Management policies.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

A combination approach should be adopted, ensuring potential negative impacts are mitigated and criteria developed are more sustainable. Question 62 of the Issues and Options consulted upon Development Criteria for Strategic Renewable Energy.

At Preferred Options stage no further changes were recommended.

Response to SA Recommendations

No further changes recommended acknowledged.

Alternative Options not chosen

The Towards a Strategy for Low Carbon Energy for County Durham document consulted upon whether we should re-confirm the Broad Areas of Least Constraint (from Regional Spatial Strategy Policy 41). The approach chosen aims to provide the necessary certainty for both developers and communities, given the limited capacity remaining in many areas.

The NPPF tells us...

The planning system has an environmental role in helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy. It plays a key role in delivering renewable and low carbon energy and its infrastructure. Local Planning Authorities should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Wind turbine development granted contrary to advice

Question 24

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

6 A Prosperous Economy

6.1 The overarching priority of the Council is to improve the economic performance of County Durham. The County's economy has changed significantly over the last 30 years and we have had significant success in tackling the environmental legacies left by traditional industries, but we are still faced with deep-rooted deprivation in certain communities. The fundamental challenge is to ensure people who are out of work have access to job opportunities. In order to do so, this strategy will facilitate opportunities for businesses to stay, move to, start-up and grow within the County.

6.2 The County has the basis of a competitive offer in attracting and retaining world-class businesses such as Hitachi and those on, and linked to, NETPark. The County's high quality environment, good accessibility to major infrastructure, improving access to education, higher education facilities, top 5 university, and reputation for flexible, motivated and competitive workforce are also attractive to new, high quality developments such as Durham Gate.

6.3 The County and region have a strong engineering and manufacturing heritage and the sector is a key driver of our economy. We need to ensure that there are sites and premises available in the most accessible and well-populated locations to accommodate engineering and manufacturing plants, supply chains, and logistics activities which enable the transport of goods to national and global markets. Large employers also need access to educational institutions to help develop their workforce capabilities as well as using technology to improve the quality, quantity, and profitability of their products. We also need to ensure smaller businesses and entrepreneurs that form part of regional and national supply chains and manufacture unique products for export are supported across the County.

6.4 Our business services sector has much potential to grow, albeit from a small base^(xxxv). Although larger employers are likely to be concentrated in more urban and accessible locations in the County, improving broadband technology will enable small businesses to serve customers from almost any location, including the more remote areas in the west and deprived communities in the east of the County. There is also much potential for new business opportunities in the health sector in relation to the ageing profile of the County's population.

6.5 All areas of the County also have the potential to develop their visitor offer to attract more short-stay and long-stay visitors from within region and from national and international locations. Boosting visitor numbers and the amount of money and time they spend in the County will lead to a number of commercial and business opportunities as well as supporting investment in the County's natural and historic tourism assets and town centres. This can be achieved by improving the infrastructure required and ensuring we take a more coordinated approach to promoting attractions across the County.

6.6 As the County's economy grows, so too will the confidence of investors and consumers which will lead to the growth of other sectors including retail, construction and utilities. The new strategic employment location at Aykley Heads, the development of linkages between businesses on NETPark and those in other parts of the County, and regeneration projects will support this transition. Growth in other parts of the North East and UK will also lead to new economic opportunities within County Durham, so the County needs to be flexible in the way it accommodates changing business needs and emerging sectors and adapts to opportunities in neighbouring areas. The region's ports, airports, road and rail networks support a range of businesses in the County so it is in our interest for some of them to be improved.

6.7 The majority of the County's employers and workforce are based

xxxv In 2009, business services activities represented just 6% of County Durham's economic output (Gross Value Added), compared to 10% in North East England and 12% in the UK.

in our largest towns so their vitality and vibrancy is critical to our economy. However, national surveys ^(xxxvi) suggest some of our towns are at risk of long-term decline. Businesses and residents in the County have also expressed concern at the poor state of many of our town centres and industrial areas which have failed to keep pace with significant economic, technological, social, and environmental changes in the last two decades. However, they also recognise that these places have the potential to operate more effectively and contribute more to economic growth. In this respect, we will ensure sites are available and planning mechanisms are in place which attract investment to our town centres, business districts and industrial estates. These will require improvements to broadband coverage, the quality and choice of housing, built and natural assets, and educational attainment to be maintained; the economy should not be seen in isolation.

6.8 The following policies will build on the County's existing strengths and address some of its limitations by identifying a range and choice of employment allocations to attract and retain business. They also seek to protect and enhance our town centres and allow the development of the County's tourism potential.

General Employment Sites

Policy 23

General Employment Sites

Employment Allocations

Undeveloped land and plots at the following existing employment sites and at proposed extensions to these existing employment sites, as shown on the proposals map, are allocated for B1 (Business), B2

(General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution).

Table 6 Employment Land Allocations by Delivery Area

Central Durham	Site Area (hectares, net)
Durham Science Park (Durham City)	3.94
Abbeywoods Industrial Estate (Durham City)	0.79
Former Ice Rink	0.58
Meadowfield Industrial Estate	31.33
Langley Moor Industrial Estate	1.17
Bowburn South Industrial Estate	1.61
Belmont Industrial Estate (Durham City)	11.50
South of Bowburn Road (Durham Green)	27.57
Esh Winning Industrial Estate	4.00
Total	82.49
North Durham	Site Area (hectares, net)
Villa Real Business Park (Consett)	1.35
Berry Edge Industrial Estate (Consett)	0.43
Greencroft Industrial Estate (Annfield Plain)	13.91
Number One Industrial Estate (Consett)	0.47

xxxvi Javelin Group (2012) Battlefield Britain: Survivors and casualties in the fight for the high street

Leadgate Industrial Estate	2.19
Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate (South)	5.18
Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate (North)	5.40
Hobson Industrial Estate	2.53
Hownsgill Industrial Estate (Consett)	9.41
Bowes Business Park (Lambton Park)	0.17
Stella Gill Industrial Estate (Chester-le-Street)	5.30
Westline Industrial Estate	2.05
Lumley Sixth Pit	0.32
Drum Industrial Estate (Chester-le-Street)	4.65
Total	53.36
South Durham	Site Area (hectares, net)
All Saints Industrial Estate (Shildon)	6.15
Thistleflat Industrial Estate (Crook)	8.97
South Church Enterprise Park (Bishop Auckland)	7.18
Low Willington Industrial Estate	6.95
Randolph Coke Works (Evenwood)	2.05
Aycliffe Business Park (South) (Prestige)	27.91
Aycliffe Business Park (North)	16.68
Green Lane (Spennymoor)	14.35

Chilton Industrial Estate	8.08
Dean and Chapter Industrial Estate (Ferryhill)	0.23
Fishburn Industrial Estate	1.59
Total	100.14
East Durham	Site Area (hectares, net)
Peterlee South West Industrial Estate	5.11
Peterlee North West Industrial Estate	14.41
Land at Hawthorn	18.85
Foxcover Industrial Estate (Seaham)	1.40
Sea View Industrial Estate (Horden)	1.60
Shotton Colliery Industrial Estate	0.36
Total	41.73
West Durham	Site Area (hectares, net)
Harmire Industrial Park (and Extension) (Barnard Castle)	1.78
Dans Castle Industrial Estate (Tow Law)	0.96
Land East of Blairs (Stanhope)	2.87
Wolsingham Industrial Estate	0.59
Stainton Grove Industrial Estate (Barnard Castle)	0.15
Land at Tow Law (Inkerman)	1.24
Land at Shaw Bank (Barnard Castle)	4.25

Eastgate	2.00
Total	13.84
County Durham Total	291.56⁽¹⁾

1. Please note this list does not include Aykley Heads

Development of Employment Sites for Other Uses

Development for non employment uses ^(xxxvii) on employment allocations or existing protected employment sites (as identified in Table 9) will not be permitted unless:

- a. The land or building is no longer physically suitable for employment uses and there is no realistic prospect of re-use or redevelopment for such uses;
- a. There is documented evidence of unsuccessful active marketing for employment use with at least one recognised commercial agent at local market rent levels, over a continuous period of at least 18 months;
- b. The non-employment use cannot be accommodated on an alternative sites within the market area;
- c. The non-employment use would be ancillary to the main employment use of the site; and
- d. The non-employment use represents a use which can directly support the functioning of the site for employment purposes and does not prejudice the future development and extension of existing uses.

Any new development for employment purposes on employment allocations or existing protected employment sites must comply with the criteria set out in Policy 1 (Sustainable Development), Policy 18 (Local Amenity) and other relevant policies within the Plan and any existing jobs located on the site must be suitably relocated.

Other Existing General Employment Sites

For those existing employment sites not identified within Table 9, planning permission will be granted for non-employment uses where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that redevelopment of the site would be consistent with other relevant policies in the Plan and any existing jobs located on the site are suitably relocated.

6.9 The ELR has assessed all employment sites across the County against a range of criteria. These assessments give an indication of the relative strengths and limitations of these sites and has informed the site allocations detailed above. Many of these are undeveloped plots on existing industrial estates. It is important that a variety of sites are safeguarded for employment purposes to achieve a balanced and sustainable local economy and to provide opportunities for sustainable economic growth. Therefore non-employment uses will be resisted unless they meet the criteria detailed within this policy.

6.10 The allocations in this policy are for general employment use, light/heavy industry/warehousing, within the B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) use classes. These sites will meet the County's employment land requirements to 2030 as set out in Policy 3 (Quantity of New Development).

6.11 This Policy also seeks to secure and retain the existing premises and units identified in Table 9 for employment use. These areas have

xxxvii Development for non employment uses is uses other than Business (B1), General Industrial Use (B2) or Storage and Distribution (B8)

been identified as the most appropriate employment locations by the Employment Land Review (ELR) and will be safeguarded from potential redevelopment or change of use to a non-employment use. Planning applications for such uses will be assessed against the criteria in this Policy.

6.12 Site plans for each Employment Allocation are included in Appendix E.

Protected Employment Sites

6.13 The ELR identified a number of existing employment sites that are currently in use (either in full or in part) that are not considered necessary to protect. This is due to various factors such as high vacancy rates, low demand and in some instances large areas of the site that have already been lost to alternative uses such as housing, often due to low demand. In line with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, their redevelopment for other uses will be permitted where the proposed scheme is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Plan. However there were a number of other employment sites which the ELR found to be of sufficient quality that they should be protected for employment use. These are listed in Table 9 below.

6.14 Site plans for each Protected Employment Site are included in Appendix F.

Table 7 Protected Employment Sites by Delivery Area

Central Durham	
Aykley Heads (Durham City)	Durham Science Park (Durham City)
Abbey Road (Durham City)	Abbey Woods (Durham City)
Meadowfield Industrial Estate	Sacrison Co-operative Units

Central Durham	
Langley Park Industrial Estate (South)	Langley Moor Industrial Estate
Langley Park Industrial Estate (North)	Dragonville (Durham City)
Bearpark Industrial Estate	Sherburn Village Industrial Estate
Sherburn Hill Industrial Estate	Belmont (Durham City)
Bowburn Industrial Estate (North)	Bowburn Industrial Estate (South)
Tursdale Industrial Estate	Esh Winning Industrial Estate
North Durham	
Villa Real (Consett)	Berry Edge (Consett)
Greencroft	Number One Industrial Estate (Consett)
Leadgate Industrial Estate	Tanfield Lea (South)
Tanfield Lea (North)	Morrison Service (Annfield Plain)
Hobson Industrial Estate	Morrison Busty (South) (Annfield Plain)
Morrison Busty (North) (Annfield Plain)	Crookhall Industrial Estate (Consett)
Delves Lane (North)	Bradley Workshops (Consett)
Howngill (Consett)	Watling Street (Consett)
Hamsterley Industrial Estate	Park Road (Consett)
Park Road Industrial Estate (North) (Consett)	Castleside Industrial Estate (Consett)
Harelaw Industrial Estate	Westline Industrial Estate
Lumley Sixth Pit	Stella Gill Industrial Estate (Chester-le-Street)
Drum Industrial Estate	The Turnpark

Central Durham	
Craghead Industrial Estate (Stanley)	
South Durham	
All Saints (Shildon)	Thistleflat Industrial Estate (Crook)
South Church Enterprise Park (Bishop Auckland)	High Hope Street (Crook)
Hackworth (Shildon)	Low Willington Industrial Estate
George Reynolds Industrial Estate (Shildon)	Romanway Industrial Estate (Bishop Auckland)
Furnace Industrial Estate (Shildon)	Shildon Industrial Estate
West Auckland Industrial Estate	Laurel Way Industrial Estate (Bishop Auckland)
Greenfield Industrial Estate (Bishop Auckland)	Coundon Industrial Estate (West)
Dunelm Industrial Estate (Willington)	NetPark (Sedgefield)
Aycliffe Business Park (South)	Aycliffe Business Park (North)
Green Lane (Spennymoor)	Chilton Industrial Estate
Dean and Chapter Industrial Estate (Ferryhill)	Sedgefield Station
Tudhoe Industrial Estate	Evenwood Industrial Estate
Salters Lane Industrial Estate (Sedgefield)	
East Durham	
Peterlee South West Industrial Estate	Peterlee North West Industrial Estate
Brackenhill Business Park (Peterlee)	Whitehouse Business Park (Peterlee)

Central Durham	
Foxcover Industrial Estate (Seaham)	Seaham Grange
Spectrum Business Park (Seaham)	Cold Hesledon Industrial Estate
Thornley Station	Wingate Grange Industrial Estate
Sea View (Horden)	Shotton Colliery Industrial Estate
Kingfisher Industrial Estate (Seaham)	Blackhall Industrial Estate
Peterlee (North East)	
West Durham	
Wolsingham Industrial Estate	Harmire Industrial Park (Barnard Castle)
Dan's Castle Industrial Estate (Tow Law)	Bond Isle (Stanhope)
Stainton Grove (Barnard Castle)	Broadwood (Frosterley)
Mickleton Industrial Units (Middleton-in-Teesdale)	Staindrop County Highways Depot (East)

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Employment Land Review (2012)

You told us that...

Consultation responses indicated support for increased economic development in locations that have strong economic performance. New development should be concentrated in accessible locations within proximity to the East Coast Mainline and the A1(M). Employment land should also be allocated in areas where housing growth is planned.

Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

To ensure that the housing distribution policy and allocations are drafted in association with the employment distribution policy and allocations to minimise the need to travel and ensure residential and employment development is well related.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

The choice of employment allocations and protection of existing employment sites has been based on a robust assessment of employment land, employment sites and the level of demand across the County. Therefore no alternatives were considered.

The NPPF tells us...

To help achieve economic growth, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should plan pro-actively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century (paragraph 20).

Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocation should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative use of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regards to the market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities (paragraph 22).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Take up rate of employment land within these sites
- Planning applications either approved or refused on protected or non protected employment sites

Question 25

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

Specific Use Employment Site

Policy 24

Specific Use Employment Sites

In order to meet an identified need for specific types of employment development, seven Specific Use Employment Sites have been identified in the following locations, as shown on the proposals map, for the following uses:

Amazon Park, Newton Aycliffe

A site of 52.2ha of land south of Heighington Lane, Newton Aycliffe is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses only associated with the manufacture and assembly of trains and their supply chain.

NetPark, Sedgefield

A site of 24.22ha of land north of NetPark, Sedgefield is allocated for B1 uses, specifically for Research and Development purposes only.

In addition an area of 26.32ha to the north of the NetPark allocation is safeguarded for future expansion land beyond the end of the Plan period.

Tursdale, Bowburn

A site of 122.72ha of land at Tursdale, Bowburn is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses only associated with the development of a rail freight facility and related activity.

Newton Park, Newton Aycliffe

A site of 53ha of land at Newton Park, Newton Aycliffe is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses only associated with the development of a rail freight facility and related activity.

South of Drum, Chester-le-Street

A site of 11.5ha of land at South of Drum Industrial Estate, Chester-le-Street is allocated only for B8 storage and distribution.

South of Seaham

A site of 58.5ha of land at South of Seaham is allocated only for the development of a film studio and associated uses.

Lambton Park Estate, Chester-le-Street

A site of 10.87ha of land within Lambton Park Estate, Chester-le-Street is allocated for B1 (Business). The site will only be for use by residents of the Lambton Park Estate executive housing development.

6.15 The Employment Land Review (ELR) recommends that a number of sites should be allocated for a specific type of employment use and be considered as part of the general portfolio of employment land. This is on the basis that they serve, or offer the potential to serve, a unique function within the County Durham economy, and as such should not be used for general employment purposes that could be accommodated elsewhere. These sites offer the potential to attract sectors or end users that have distinctive requirements with respect to the scale, location or particular attributes of a site.

6.16 Newton Aycliffe Industrial Estate is one of the largest estates in County Durham. Land exists to the south and west of the estate for further expansion. This site has been identified as the preferred location for a train manufacture and assembly plant. A purpose built facility is proposed that will produce new rolling stock for East Coast and Great Western Trains. The site has the potential for large scale job creation with the Hitachi development having the potential to act as a catalyst for further growth and investment within this sector and bring wider benefits to Newton Aycliffe and County Durham as a whole. The land is therefore safeguarded for uses associated with train manufacture.

6.17 NetPark is a regionally significant centre for research and development (R&D) and plays a vital role in unlocking the research potential of North East universities and colleges. It is important to the continued success of NetPark that future phases of development are safeguarded for R&D and technology transfer activity linked to the research specialisms of the region's higher and further education institutions. It is estimated that there is currently 56.15ha of land available for development at NetPark which is unlikely to be fully developed out over the Plan period. In recognition of this 26.91ha is allocated within the Plan period and the remaining 29.24ha is safeguarded as future expansion land beyond 2030. Given its economic importance it is necessary to ensure that the safeguarded land is retained for future phases of development. If the monitoring of the take up of land at NetPark indicates that the safeguarded

land is required earlier, this will be addressed in a future review of the Plan.

6.18 Land at Tursdale offers an opportunity to develop a major rail freight interchange in County Durham, which would provide a facility of sub regional or possibly regional significance. A large area was previously reserved for such a use and it is necessary to retain 144.38ha of land for rail freight activity to allow any potential proposals to come forward. In total there is 176.81ha of land available at Tursdale, the remaining 32.43ha south of Bowburn Industrial Estate is allocated for general employment use by Policy 23 (General Employment Sites).

6.19 Newton Park is a site of 53ha located adjacent to junction 59 of the A1 bounding the A167 and Shildon Branch line. This site also has the potential to deliver a major freight interchange operation, providing rail linked distribution warehousing and having direct motorway access to rail and port container services. Given the potential Hitachi development and associated uses and the level of interest it is expected that this site will come forward before the similar proposal at Tursdale. However if this scheme is successful then it may stimulate interest in the other.

6.20 Drum Industrial Estate has proved a popular business location in the north of the County in recent years, with high land take. Just 4.65ha of land remains undeveloped and therefore land to the south of the estate, south of the A693 is identified as a proposed extension to the estate. The site is physically unconstrained with obvious locational advantages however it is situated within the Green Belt. The ELR provides clear evidence of need for the development of this site to justify its removal from the Green Belt. Following discussions with the Highways Agency, it has been indicated that development of the site for Warehousing and Distribution (B8) would be acceptable. Other use classes (B1 Business and B2 General Industrial) are unlikely to be acceptable due to capacity issues at Junction 63, which serves the Drum estate and Chester-le-Street.

6.21 The site South of Seaham has planning permission for the

development of a film studio, educational facilities, student accommodation, hotel and leisure uses. The applicants have recently submitted an application to extend the permission to 2017 but this has yet to be determined. The site is not suitable for general employment but should be protected for film related uses given the potential economic benefits that this opportunity could provide. Its development may also link to the future employment development at Hawthorne.

6.22 Within the Lambton Park Estate there is currently a small business park at Bowes. This provides a high quality office development in an attractive setting. To complement the allocation identified in Policy 12 (Executive Housing) a site to the east of the residential area and adjacent to Bowes Business Park is proposed for employment use. In order to attract entrepreneurs who may wish to relocate their businesses close to their home, it will only be available to residents of the Lambton Estate executive housing development. Occupancy conditions will therefore be applied to new premises within the site restricting them for use by residents of the Estate.

6.23 Site plans for each Specific Use Employment Site are included in Appendix G.

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Employment Land Review (2012)
- Strategic Employment Sites Evidence Paper (2012)

You told us that...

Consultation responses indicated support for increased economic development in locations that have strong economic performance. New development should be concentrated in accessible locations

within proximity to the East Coast Mainline and the A1(M). Employment land should also be allocated in areas where housing growth is planned.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

These sites provide the best options for specific use sites within the County. While all do have some environmental impacts these are not considered to outweigh the significant economic benefits associated with developing the sites.

Amazon Park: This proposed site is likely to provide a boost to the County's economy provide a significant level of employment and therefore potentially diversify the County's economy and make it more resilient. It has good access to the strategic transport network. The site is also well located for establishing links with existing businesses on the existing industrial estate. There is currently no direct access to the west of the site, a link road to Heighington Lane would improve access.

NetPark: The site could help diversify the County's economy, encourage investment in a growth economic sector and better enable the County to keep pace with other parts of the region in economic terms. The site is relatively free from environmental constraints apart from a few mature trees and hedgerows that act as current field boundaries. Development will however result in a loss of greenfield land that will result in a fundamental change in the character of the area.

Tursdale: The site has good access to the strategic transport network. It has potential to meet the operational requirements for development of a regional road/rail freight interchange, with the opportunity to build upon the County's central location within the Region. Due to the scale of the site it has the potential to provide significant employment

opportunities. Development will however, result in a loss of greenfield land that will result in a fundamental change in the character of the area.

Newton Park: Development of the site is likely to contribute to raising educational and employment aspirations and has the potential to encourage high salaried jobs, particularly when viewed in combination with potential additional employment allocations in Newton Aycliffe. Built development on the site would entail a fundamental change in character within the development footprint of the site and have some negative impacts on the landscape.

South of Drum: The site has excellent access to the strategic transport network and has the potential to contribute to improving the County's economy. It is within close proximity to urban areas, allowing for people the opportunity to live close to their place of work, thus reducing the length of journeys made and improving access to jobs and services. The proposed extension necessitates the deletion of part of the Green Belt and may have some impact on the landscape and biodiversity.

South of Seaham: The site is located on the A19-Dawdon link road and so has excellent links to the strategic transport network. This mixed use site employment site is likely to provide a boost to different economic sectors and potentially help diversify the County's economy. The development of this site is likely to be a major trip generator and therefore potentially increase traffic congestion, increase air pollution, and decrease air quality. Mitigation measures will need to be taken to guard against impact on archaeological assets and biodiversity.

Lambton Park Estate: Employment allocations should consider the potential to minimise the need to travel and ensure residential and employment development are well related. A business park in this location would minimise the need to travel and align with such

requirements.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Other sites were considered by the ELR however none was thought suitable for the specific uses that are proposed for each of these sites. Full details of the methodology used and the assessment of alternative sites is available in the supporting evidence paper available on the Council's website.

The NPPF tells us...

To help achieve economic growth, Local Planning Authorities should plan pro-actively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century (paragraph 20).

Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstance (paragraph 21).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Take up rates of types of employment within these sites

Question 26

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

Retail Allocations

Policy 25

Retail Allocations

In order to meet an identified need for specific types of retail, five retail allocations have been identified in the following locations, as shown on the proposals map, for the following uses.

North Road, Durham City

As part of the comprehensive redevelopment of North Road, 2.94 hectares of land is allocated for A1 use (Retail) to secure qualitative and quantitative improvements.

North of Arnison, Durham City

2.68ha of land is allocated for A1 use (Retail) and specifically for a convenience foodstore. Policy 7 (Durham City Strategic Housing Sites) provides the policy context for the development of this area as part of the North of Arnison Strategic Allocation.

Queen Street, Crook

1.56ha of land at Queen Street, Crook is allocated for A1 use (Retail) to meet the convenience need within the town. The site will only be

developed for food retail.

Festival Walk, Spennymoor

2.46ha of land at Festival Walk, Spennymoor is allocated for A1 use (retail) to meet the convenience and comparison need within the town.

North East Industrial Estate, Peterlee

3.24ha of land at North East Industrial Estate, Peterlee is allocated for A1 use (retail) to meet the bulky goods need within the town. The site will only developed for bulky goods retail.

6.24 The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2009) identified where in County Durham there was specific need to plan for future retail provision. The findings of this Study informs Policy 3 (Quantity of New Development) and Policy 4 (Distribution of Development) which set out the amount of new retail floorspace that is required and where it should be located. Wherever possible the allocations in this policy seek to meet that identified need.

6.25 The Council have identified the North Road area of Durham City as a key regeneration site within the City. This is with the aim of enhancing the retail offer, improving pedestrian access and connections, enhancing the public realm, highway improvements and the provision of a new bus station. The Council have produced a brief which sets out the development principles and site constraints. The Plan therefore identifies this site as a retail allocation and will support the delivery of qualitative and quantitative improvements to Durham City's retail offer on this site.

6.26 The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study identifies the need for a further supermarket in Durham City, however one of the main limitations of the City's retail offer is the lack of suitable or deliverable sites within,

or on the edge of the City Centre. While the site at North Road can provide a site for retail improvement, it is not of a scale to accommodate a large food retailer. Therefore the search for a suitable site was extended to sites beyond the City Centre. Details of the search process can be found within the Retail Site Search Evidence Paper.

6.27 Following consideration of alternative sites, land at North of Arnison was chosen as the preferred location. The Arnison Centre is identified as a District Centre in Policy 26 (Retail Hierarchy) and provides retail facilities to the north of the City, a Sainsbury's store exists alongside a number of high street comparison retailers. In view of the projected housing growth in this area and the lack of opportunities in the City Centre, land to the north of the Arnison Centre is therefore considered suitable for a new foodstore for Durham City. This will be developed as an extension to the existing retail provision and can provide an accessible and sustainable location, particularly considering the close proximity of the strategic housing allocations at Sniperley Park and North of Arnison.

6.28 Land at Queen Street in Crook offers a good location for retail development. The site is conveniently located adjacent to the market place, which will allow it to integrate well with the existing town centre and complement the existing retail offer. The site is classed as edge of centre and is the most suitable location to meet the identified convenience retail need in Crook. The site offers the opportunity for linked trips to the town centre and will also help improve its appearance.

6.29 The site at Festival Walk in Spennymoor is the most sequentially preferable site for retail development in the town. The site is situated at the heart of the town centre. It also currently suffers from high vacancy rates including a large former Kwik Save unit. The site has a detrimental impact on the appearance of the town centre and has long been recognised as a development opportunity. The site has the potential to meet both the convenience and comparison retail need. Development of Festival Walk would also bring regeneration benefits to the town and help

support existing retailers.

6.30 The identified need for bulky goods in Peterlee can be met by allocating part of the North East Industrial Estate, which has been identified by the Employment Land Review as suitable for redevelopment for other uses. While the site is located out of the town centre, it is considered the most suitable location to meet the bulky goods need. To the north of the site lies the major employer Walkers Crisps and the allocation of this site would complement this neighbouring use as part of a larger commercial area. It also complements any potential future housing development to east of the site and allows a buffer to be provided between the Walkers Crisps industrial site and any proposed residential area.

6.31 Site plans for each Retail Allocation are included in Appendix H.

Key Evidence Base

- Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2010)
- Retail Site Search Evidence Paper (2012)
- County Durham Employment Land Review (2012)

You told us that...

Consultation responses generally support for providing new retail facilities in locations where there were clearly identified deficiencies. Furthermore most respondents also suggested that retail development in other locations should be welcomed where the investment would result in improved choice and bring sustainability benefits.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

A number of other sites were considered however the sites identified within the Policy were felt to best meet the identified retail need. Full details of the methodology used and the assessment of alternative sites is available in the Retail Site Search Evidence Paper available on the Council's website.

The NPPF tells us...

Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should:

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. LPAs should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of sites.
- Allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre (paragraph 23).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Take up of the allocated retail sites

Question 27

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

Retail Hierarchy and Development in Commercial Centres

Policy 26

Retail Hierarchy and Development in Commercial Centres

1. Retail Hierarchy

The Council will protect and enhance the following hierarchy of **Sub Regional, Main Town, Small Town, District** and **Local** retail centres in the County.

Sub Regional Centres - Bishop Auckland, Durham City.

- Retail and leisure development that continues to fulfil these centre's sub regional role will be encouraged. Any development that threatens their sub regional role will not be permitted.

Main Town Centres – Barnard Castle, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Stanley.

- Within these centres, any quantitative expansion of new provision should be matched with qualitative improvements. Additional leisure development and proposals that will enhance the evening economy will be supported given the relatively limited current provision.

Small Town Centres – Crook, Ferryhill, Shildon.

- Within these centres, new provision should be predominantly aimed at meeting local residents' shopping needs and be of a scale appropriate to the town's respective catchments.

District Centres – Arnison Centre Durham City, Sherburn Road Durham City

- Additional retail development within these centres should be assessed against the policy tests in the National Planning Policy Framework. Additional high street comparison retail provision within the District Centres will need to be carefully assessed to protect the vitality and viability of Durham City Centre.

Local Centres - Annfield Plain, Bearpark, Belmont, Blackhall, Blackhill, Bowburn, Brandon, Burnopfield, Chilton, Cobblers Hall, Coundon, Coxhoe, Dipton, Easington Colliery, Esh Winning, Fencehouses, Framwellgate Moor, Garden Farm, Gibside, Gilesgate, Great Lumley, Horden, Lanchester, Langley Moor, Langley Park, Leadgate, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Murton, Newton Hall, Pelton, Sacriston, Sedgfield, Sherburn Village, Shotley Bridge, Shotton, South Moor, Stanhope, Tow Law, Trimdon Village, Ushaw Moor, West Auckland, West Cornforth, Wheatley Hill, Willington, Wingate, Wolsingham and Woodham.

- New retail provision within these centres should be local in nature and not perform a wider retail function or become a retail destination in its own right.

Out of Centre - Dalton Park and Tindale, Bishop Auckland

- Dalton Park and Tindale will not be designated within the retail hierarchy. They are recognised as out of centre locations and further development will be subject to the retail tests outlined below.

Proposals for retail and other town centre uses in the Centres defined in the Retail Hierarchy above should:

- a. Be consistent in scale with the size and function of the centre;
- b. Safeguard the retail character and function of existing centres and not detract from their vitality and viability;
- c. Be convenient and accessible in order to meet day to day needs of residents and contribute to social inclusion and sustainable development;
- d. Be accessible by a range of means of transport including walking, cycling and public transport in accordance with Policy 47 (Promoting Sustainable Travel); and
- e. Be of high quality design in accordance with Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Built Environment).

In all other locations outside of those identified in the retail hierarchy the loss of essential shops and services will be resisted.

2. Commercial Centre Boundaries

Town centre uses should be directed to sites within Commercial Centre Boundaries, as shown on the proposals map, with A1 (Retail) uses directed principally to the Primary Shopping Frontages. Proposals outside of these defined Commercial Centres will be required to:

- Undertake a sequential test; and
- If the development is greater than 2,500 sqm, undergo an impact test.

3. Primary and Secondary Frontages

Within the primary retail frontages as shown on the proposal map, A1 (retail) uses will be supported as the predominant use. A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot foot takeaways) uses will only be permitted provided that they contribute to the vitality and viability of the primary frontage.

Within the defined Sub Regional Centres (Bishop Auckland and Durham) planning applications for non A1 (retail) uses will only be approved:

- In Durham City where the proposal would not result in less than 50% of the premises in the primary retail frontage being in non-retail uses (i.e. other than A1 (retail))
- In Bishop Auckland where the proposal would not result in less than 40% of the premises in the primary retail frontage being in non-retail uses (i.e. other than A1 (retail))

Within the secondary retail frontages as shown on the proposals

map, a greater mix of uses will be supported. Uses A1, A2, A3, A4 will be permitted provided that the balance of uses within an area is maintained. Other uses (non A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) will be permitted where they provide a service to shoppers or tourists and they do not harm the predominantly retail character of the centre, either individually or taken together with other non retail development.

4. A5 Uses (Hot Food Takeaways)

Within Commercial Centre Boundaries, and in order to minimise the potential detrimental impacts of hot food takeaways, planning applications for A5 uses will be approved where the proposal would not result in more than 5% of the premises within the Commercial Centre being in A5 use.

In order to promote healthy lifestyles in young people, proposals for A5 uses outside of defined Commercial Centres but within 400m of a school or college building will not be permitted.

5. Evening Economy

Proposals that would contribute to the evening economy will be permitted provided they contribute to the vitality and viability of commercial centres and accord with this and other relevant policies in the Plan.

Retail Hierarchy

6.32 Retailing and the County's town centres are key drivers of the economy. Setting out a strategic framework for the retail centres is an important factor in improving the overall performance of County Durham's economy.

6.33 To understand the retail needs within the County, it is important

to understand the role of each town and local centre. National guidance advocates the need to develop a hierarchy of centres with each performing an appropriate role to meet the needs of its catchment area. The County Durham Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2010) provides recommendations for a retail hierarchy in County Durham. The hierarchy is based on a quantitative and qualitative assessment of each centre in the County, its wider function in terms of overall shopping and service offer, and the number of national multiples represented. County Durham's retail hierarchy has been based on these recommendations.

6.34 Analysis carried out within the Town Centres Uses Study found that Durham City and Bishop Auckland function as Sub Regional Centres. Both centres have over 50,000 sqm of floorspace within their defined centre boundaries, and have several major national multiple retailers represented. They are the largest centres in the County and their influence extends over a wide area. Durham City serves a central Durham catchment including Chester-le-Street and Peterlee, whilst Bishop Auckland serves Spennymoor, Crook and much of the rural west.

6.35 The defined Main Towns perform a supporting role to the sub regional centres within the County providing a lesser more limited offer and serving a more local catchment. Whilst these towns have major foodstores and a full range of local services and employment uses, the non-food retail offer in each of these centres is relatively limited with few national multiple comparison retailers present.

6.36 The defined Small Towns predominantly perform a local top up role with the majority of local residents looking towards mainstream foodstore provision in larger centres to meet their main convenience shopping needs. In addition the towns have a limited comparison retail offer and basic service and leisure provision.

6.37 Both of the defined District Centres have large mainstream convenience foodstore anchors and also a higher order non-food retail offer which reflect the origins of both centres as out of centre retail park

developments. The District Centres do however lack the local service function (banks, professional services etc.) of traditional centres.

6.38 The Local Centres are found within a large number of villages across the County. These support a number of local shops and services that meet local residents' daily shopping needs.

6.39 Despite recent retail approvals at both Dalton Park, Murton and Tindale, Bishop Auckland they are still considered to be out of town locations and are therefore not included in the retail hierarchy. Further retail proposals at both locations will therefore be subject to the appropriate policy tests.

Commercial Centres

6.40 Town and local centres are the heart of their communities. Government policy continues to support commercial centres by promoting vitality and viability within them. The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2009) defined town and local centre boundaries across the County and proposed boundaries based on the changing dynamics of these centres. The boundaries for these centres are defined on the proposals map and in more detail in Appendix I, and will provide the most suitable locations for retail and other town uses such as leisure or cultural facilities.

6.41 Only where there are no development sites within commercial centres will other locations be considered. Applicants proposing retail and town centre development in edge or out of centre locations will be required to undertake a sequential test. In addition where schemes are of more than 2,500 sqm, an assessment of impact on planned public and private investment and on the vitality and viability of nearby commercial centres must be carried out. Applicants will be required to follow guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Government's Planning for Town Centres Practice Guidance (or any guidance which may subsequently replace it).

Primary and Secondary Frontages

6.42 The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study defines Primary and Secondary Frontages for all of the County's Main Towns. Primary frontages are the main retail locations and will have the highest proportion of A1 retail uses within a commercial centre. Secondary frontages are also situated within commercial centres but provide opportunities for a more diverse range of uses. All Primary and Secondary Frontages are shown in Appendix J.

6.43 In the defined Primary Frontage the aim is to maintain a predominant retail offer but with an appropriate provision of non A1 facilities which will enhance the town centre experience by offering a reasonable choice of services to shoppers and visitors. Proposals will be assessed against the existing provision of retail uses and the mix of commercial and retail uses. Harm to the retail character will be determined by assessing a proposal's contribution to the vitality and viability of a centre. Consideration will need to be given to whether a proposal would result in 'dead frontage' i.e. not require passing trade, and whether the proposal would result in an over concentration of non-retail uses within the defined primary frontage. Non-retail uses should be dispersed around a centre contributing to movement and the flow of pedestrians.

6.44 Within the Sub Regional Centres particular care will be taken in assessing applications within the Primary Frontages. Applications proposing non A1 (retail) uses will be assessed against a defined threshold level. An assessment of uses within primary frontages found that in Durham the level of A1 (retail) uses stood at just over 50%. This figure should not be allowed to fall below this 50% figure, given the importance of the centre within the hierarchy. Likewise in Bishop Auckland, the assessment found the level of A1 (retail) uses to be just over 40%, again due the importance of the centre within the hierarchy the Policy seeks to keep the proportion of A1 (retail) uses in the Primary Frontage above 40%.

6.45 In the defined secondary retail areas, uses such as banks and building societies (A2), restaurants and cafes (A3), drinking establishments (A4) will be appropriate. When determining the appropriateness of non-retail uses in secondary areas, consideration of existing vacancy rates and the likely impact of a further non-retail use will need to be considered.

A5 Uses (Hot Food Takeaways)

6.46 Reducing levels of obesity is a key objective of the Council. One way this can be achieved is to encourage healthy eating. Large concentrations of hot food takeaways within our commercial centres can have the opposite by encouraging unhealthy eating habits. An over-concentration of hot food takeaways can also have a detrimental impact on vitality and viability. They can also give rise to complaints about noise, disturbance, odours and litter. In assessing proposals within commercial centres, consideration will therefore be given to the detrimental impact that an over-provision of A5 uses may have.

6.47 An assessment has been carried out of the numbers of A5 units within our commercial centres. This has identified that some have relatively high existing numbers of A5 uses within them ranging from 1.3% in Barnard Castle to 8.2% in Shildon. It is considered that a threshold of 5% is appropriate to ensure the a diverse mix of uses with our centres. If a proposal would exceed this threshold it will not be permitted. Two centres (Consett and Shildon) already have more than 5% of units as hot food takeaways therefore no further A5 uses would be permitted in either centre.

6.48 As the promotion of healthy eating amongst young people is a key national and local priority it is reasonable to limit the number of hot food takeaways close to schools and colleges. Therefore proposals for A5 uses outside of Commercial Centres but within 400m of these establishments will be controlled.

Evening Economy

6.49 The County Durham Retail and Town Centre Uses Study identified deficiencies in the evening and night time economy in many of the County's town centres. It will be important to support appropriate proposals that can improve the evening economy in these towns. Particular deficiencies were found in the towns of Stanley, Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe, and efforts will be made to support improvements in the evening economy within these centres. Proposals that relate to the development of the evening and night time economy (e.g. pubs, clubs, restaurants, shops and night-time entertainment) will be supported as valuable additions to the vitality and viability of Main Towns and Sub Regional centres, provided that the operation of such activities can be controlled to address amenity impacts (in accordance with Policy 17 (Local Amenity)). Such developments will be resisted where they have a detrimental impact on other uses or areas or otherwise undermine town centres.

Key evidence base

- Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2010)

You told us that...

Consultation responses showed strong support for policies that promoted vibrant town centres across County Durham, including the provision of new retail and leisure facilities.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Not defining Retail Centre boundaries was considered as an alternative option, but dismissed. The NPPF requires the definition of a retail hierarchy and commercial centre boundaries. There are therefore no alternative options to consider.

The NPPF tells us...

Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. Local Planning Authorities should:

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres; and
- Set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres (paragraph 23).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Annual town centre surveys

Question 28

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

Visitor Economy

6.50 The visitor economy is an important and resilient part of the County Durham economy, worth over £659m a year and consistently sustains the equivalent of around 10,700 full time jobs. But there remains a great deal of untapped potential. A healthy tourism industry can help sustainable economic growth, and contribute to prosperous communities and attractive environments, making it a key element of the Altogether Wealthier theme of our Sustainable Communities Strategy and Regeneration Statement.

6.51 County Durham aims to offer a visitor experience that matches its outstanding natural landscapes and internationally famous built heritage. The development priorities for the visitor economy are identified and assessed through the Durham Tourism Management Plan (DTMaP). This is produced by Visit County Durham, the official Destination Management Organisation for County Durham, which coordinates the development of the visitor economy and manages and markets the County as a destination. Visit County Durham offers support and guidance to potential tourism developers through the DTMaP Project Proposals Process. This ensures that projects are desirable in terms of market need, viability, sustainability and how they would impact on visitors, the economy, the tourism industry, the environment and residents. One of key roles of the DTMaP process is to ensure that potential investment is based on robust evidence.

6.52 Tourism and leisure development, including tourist attractions, leisure facilities, visitor accommodation and green infrastructure will be protected, and where necessary enhanced, promoted and expanded in partnership with key agencies and delivery partners. This will ensure their enhanced role as key economic drivers in stimulating and regenerating the local economy in line with a number of the Plan's Spatial Objectives (2, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15) and in particular Objective 6. Objective 6 aims to strengthen County Durham's role as a visitor/tourist destination, building on and adding to, the strength of existing attractions, townscapes and landscapes, encouraging the development of new visitor attractions and accommodation, particularly capitalising on the assets of Durham City as a destination. The DTMaP builds on this objective through specific priorities (listed in Appendix K) identified in partnership with key public and private visitor economy stakeholders. To enable and encourage the development of the County's tourism industry the following policies deal specifically with Tourist Attractions and Accommodation.

Policy 27

Tourist Attractions

In order to raise the quality of the visitor experience, the provision of new tourist attractions or the expansion of existing key attractions will be permitted provided:

- a. New attractions are located in sustainable and accessible locations, with a sequential preference for Durham City where appropriate;
- b. Where a rural location is necessary the development should;
 1. Meet identified tourism needs;

2. Constitute appropriate rural diversification;
 3. Support local employment, community services and infrastructure; or
 4. Relate to a new or existing tourist attraction that is based upon a site specific natural or heritage feature;
- c. It is appropriate to the site's location by reason of scale, design, layout and materials;
 - d. It is appropriate for the role of the settlement, it respects the character and appearance of the open countryside in accordance with Policy 36 (Development in the Countryside);
 - e. It does not have a significant adverse impact on an environmental designation, in order to prevent damage and disturbance to nature conservation features of local, national and international importance, as identified in Policies 37 to 43 (Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity);
 - f. It conforms specifically with Policy 1 (Sustainable Development), Policy 19 (Air and Light Pollution), and Policy 47 (Promoting Sustainable Travel);
 - g. It helps to ensure the future business viability of an existing or new attraction; and
 - h. It enhances and complements tourism attractions and themes in the County and supports the development of a year-round tourism economy and/or extends visitor stays.

Tourism Assets

6.53 There are approximately 70 regionally, nationally and internationally recognisable visitor attractions in the County which can be viewed at www.thisisdurham.com. The most visited are Durham Cathedral (more than 600,000 visitors and worshippers in 2011) and Beamish Museum (497,891 paying visitors in 2011/12). Other attractions with significant visitor numbers include Locomotion (National Railway Museum at Shildon), Hamsterley Forest, the World Heritage Visitor Centre, Durham County Cricket Club, Adventure Valley (Durham City), Bowes Museum, High Force, the Durham Light Infantry Museum, Raby Castle, Durham Botanic Gardens, Barnard Castle, Killhope Lead Mining Museum. In addition the County boasts a number of historic townscapes as well as local and national walking, cycling and riding routes which link beyond County Durham's borders. The County also holds major events which attract large visitor number such as the Durham Miners Gala.

6.54 County Durham includes a number of under developed heritage assets including the Lambton Estate, Ushaw College, Harperley Prisoner of War Camp and Auckland Castle; these assets are a non-renewable resource. Intelligently managed change may be necessary if these assets are to be maintained for the long term and the Plan's policies may be applied flexibly, in exceptional circumstances, to achieve wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.

6.55 The County also has a strong railway heritage. The Bishop Auckland to Darlington railway is recognised in the County's Regeneration Statement as an asset running through the core economic area of South Durham; connecting the main towns of Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Newton Aycliffe and providing a key gateway to the Durham Dales. Together with the Weardale Railway it will form a strategic railway tourism corridor linking the Darlington Railway Museum, Locomotion at Shildon and Weardale heritage railway (see Policy 48, Provision of new Transport Infrastructure, for more detail).

6.56 The rural and tranquil nature of Durham's countryside is an important asset for residents and visitors. Therefore development within the countryside needs to be compatible with their location in order to protect this areas unique character.

6.57 It is important to ensure that all of these existing heritage and environmental assets are both protected and supported in appropriate ways to help them flourish.

6.58 New tourist attractions will be directed to accessible and sustainable locations such as Durham City in the first instance in order to address the need to develop the tourism offer in the County and encourage visitors to stay longer. Where appropriate tourism development is not in accessible locations it will be focused on the conversion of existing buildings and developments that contribute to rural diversification, enjoyment of the countryside and access to heritage.

6.59 Important projects which may come forward within the Plan period and which would be considered against this policy include a possible major new attraction in Durham City, new facilities at Durham Cathedral and World Heritage Site, the Lambton Estate, Auckland Castle and Park, Ushaw College and Durham County Cricket Club.

6.60 Planning for tourism in rural areas should make the most of our rural assets, enriching them rather than harming the very character, quality and beauty that makes them attractive to residents and visitors. This can be achieved by ensuring developments and levels of visitor activity are not likely to significantly affect protected sites and species, particularly those of European importance. These rural assets include the North Pennines AONB (European Geopark status), Durham Heritage Coast, Durham Dales, Hamsterley Forest, Derwent, Tunstall and Balderhead Reservoirs, High Force, the Pennine Way, Sustrans C2C route, Auckland Palace Deer Park, Hardwick Park and privately owned estates such as the Raby Estate.

Policy 28

Tourist Accommodation

New visitor accommodation or extensions to existing visitor accommodation, regardless of type or location will be permitted where:

- a. They are appropriate to the scale and character of the area;
- b. They do not have a significant adverse impact on an environmental designation (as identified in Chapter 9 of the Plan);
- c. Occupation by any one person or group of persons does not exceed 9 months in any one calendar year;
- d. They encompass high levels of energy efficiency and/or renewable energy in line with Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Build Environment) and Policy 21 (Renewable Energy Development);
- e. They conform specifically with Policy 1 (Sustainable Development), Policy 19 (Air and Light Pollution), Policy 47 (Promoting Sustainable Travel) and Policies 37 to 43 (Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity); and
- f. They do not conflict with other relevant policies within the Plan.

Proposals for visitor accommodation in the countryside will also be permitted where:

- g. A rural location is necessary to meet identified tourism needs;
- h. It is an extension to existing visitor accommodation and helps to ensure future business viability;
- i. It involves the conversion of an existing building in accordance with Policy 36 (Development in the Countryside);
- j. It constitutes appropriate rural diversification; and
- k. It is located in close proximity to existing services.

Proposals for new, and extensions to existing, sites for chalets, camping^(xxxviii) and caravanning (both static and touring) will be permitted where:

- l. They are adequately screened all year round;
- m. They are laid out in a manner which would not adversely affect the character of the area;
- n. The materials and colour of the chalets or caravans, site services and infrastructure are designed to blend with the surroundings of the site and limited in scale to the needs of the site residents only;
- o. They do not significantly adversely affect the amenity of local residents, in accordance with Policy 18 (Local Amenity); and
- p. They conform with Policy 46 (Flood Risk) and provide a specific Warning and Evacuation Plan in accordance with the NPPF

xxxviii Chalets and camping can include yurts, tipis/teepees, geodesic domes, safari-style tents/canvas lodges, bell tents, wooden shepherds huts, wooden wigwams/kocoons/snugs, cabins, eco-pods or similar structure

Technical Guidance (Table 2).

Touring caravan storage will be permitted providing that:

- q. The caravans are not prominent in the landscape from either long or short range views; and
- r. Year round screening, compatible with the landscape, is provided.

including some social benefits. Appropriate conditions restricting this accommodation to holiday use will be employed to avoid the provision of owner occupied second homes which do not positively contribute to the production of sustainable communities and are economically less significant. This policy should also be cross referenced with Policy 32 (Housing Exceptions) which ensures delivery of affordable housing to rural areas.

6.64 The occupation of static caravans for permanent residential use is not considered appropriate unless they are located within an established static caravan park specifically developed for that purpose. Storage sites for touring caravans help remove caravans from residential areas where they are often unsightly. However sites need to be secure, well screened throughout the year and preferably located close to settlements.

Accommodation

6.61 There are approximately 650 accommodation businesses with over 15,000 bed spaces (this includes seasonal university accommodation). A detailed audit of existing accommodation and gaps in provision has been completed and this will inform the determination of future planning applications, for example if there is an over provision of certain types of holiday accommodation in a given area.

6.62 Durham City's dual role as a tourist and business centre assists in the provision of visitor accommodation and ensures a high level of occupancy throughout the year. However the City currently lacks a coordinated critical mass of of quality business and conference facilities which would help build upon this high value non seasonal market. A detailed audit of facilities, capacity, market demand and potential has recently been completed and this will inform the determination of future planning applications. ^(xxxix)

6.63 It is recognised that some visitor accommodation in rural areas, in suitable locations, can have a positive impact on the local economy,

Key Evidence Base

- Durham Tourism Management Plan (DTMaP) (2012)
- Accommodation Study (2012)
- Conference Feasibility Study (2012)
- World Heritage Site Management Plan (2006)
- Destination Development Plans (various)
- Local Nature Partnership Plans

You told us...

xxxix The DTMaP and associated reports can be viewed at <http://www.tourismnortheast.co.uk/visit-county-durham/strategies-and-plans>

Key messages which have come from previous consultation include:

- In relation to improving Durham City as a leisure and tourist destination, the majority of respondents stated that we should continue to develop the level of facilities in the City and locality while respecting the capacity of the City to take further development.
- Tourism development should be supported and not hindered in rural areas.
- More should be made of the associated health, biodiversity and climate change adaptation benefits associated with tourism development.
- Sustainable transport links were important.
- The gateways in to Durham City should be improved.
- Existing tourism assets should be protected and helped to develop.

The Sustainability Appraisal told us...

- The policy should be widened out to ensure that economic growth in rural areas is not restricted. The policy should also be widened to ensure protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage assets, and particularly sites or areas of national or international importance. Sustainable Transport, waste management, flood risk and air quality issues needed to be addressed more clearly within the policy. The most appropriate option from the Issues and Options Document is Option 2 (Continue to develop the level of facilities in the City and locality

while respecting the capacity of the City), as it achieves the best economic/environmental balance whilst respecting and building upon the character of the City.

Alternative Options considered but not selected...

The majority of respondents favoured Option B which looks to develop the level of facilities in the City and locality while respecting the capacity of the City to take further development.

We agree that this is the best way forward as Option A (limited intervention) will not allow the City to meet its full potential as an economic and tourism driver for the County, while Option C (a step change) may damage the historic fabric of the City, which is a key asset in itself.

The NPPF says...

- Plans should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors in rural areas and which respect the character of the countryside. (paragraph 28).
- This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres. (paragraph 28).
- The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment including protected wildlife, geodiversity sites and landscape areas in a way which is appropriate to their status. (paragraph 109).
- Local Authorities should set out a positive strategy for the

conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, while recognising that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. (paragraph 126).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor effectiveness of the Policy:

- Visitor Spend
- Tourism Employment
- Contribution to improved economic performance

Question 29

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

7 Housing

7.1 A key objective of the County Durham Plan seeks to ensure that new housing is accessible to, and meets the needs and aspirations of, County Durham's communities (Objective 5). The Council also recognises that everyone should be given the opportunity to access a decent home, which they can afford and is in a community where they want to live. The Plan can contribute to achieving these objectives by planning for a sufficient quantity, quality and type of housing in the right locations, taking account of need and demand and seeking to improve choice. The Strategic Policies of the Plan set out a minimum target and a locational distribution for new homes to meet identified need and to encourage economic growth.

7.2 This chapter of the Plan develops these Strategic Polices to identify the most appropriate sites to accommodate the new homes we need and to ensure that we make the most efficient use of land, utilising previously developed land wherever possible. We have also sought to identify the most sustainable locations wherever possible to allow new residents to access the facilities we all need.

7.3 We also provide clarity on the housing we will expect to see delivered to address the needs of residents, particularly older people, those that live in rural areas and those that cannot currently afford their own place to live. There is also a framework for assessing the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers although this will be developed in more detail in a future separate document. The physical appearance and size and type of housing is also an important consideration which is addressed in this chapter.

Existing Housing Commitments

Policy 29

Existing Housing Commitments

Housing development will be approved on sites where an existing planning permissions lapses during the Plan period providing that the proposal accords with relevant policies of this Plan and that there has been no material change in circumstances that precludes development.

7.4 The supply of housing land within the County includes sites which are either under construction or have unimplemented planning permissions. These have been taken into account when developing the housing distribution and selection of sites to allocate for housing purposes. As at the 1st January 2012 unimplemented planning permissions amounted to 5276 additional homes. A further 3333 homes are expected to be completed during the Plan Period on sites which are currently under construction.

7.5 Planning permission will be renewed for housing on these currently unimplemented sites providing that the proposal accords with the relevant policies in this Plan and there have been no material changes to justify refusal of permission. Where permission for housing development is renewed the new schemes may need to be changed to reflect the requirements of the policies in this Plan. Where appropriate, conditions will be imposed accordingly. This Policy also applies to smaller sites under 1.5ha which currently have permission.

Key Evidence Base

- Development Management planning application monitoring system
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2012)

You told us that...

- This Policy did form part of any of the previous consultation on the Plan. However consultation was undertaken as part of the planning application process.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

- Whilst these sites have not been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, their sustainable credentials would have formed part of their assessment as a planning application and in the decision to grant planning consent. Existing planning permissions which no longer meet the requirements of current policy and will not contribute towards sustainable development will not have their permissions renewed when they lapse.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

- No alternative options have been considered as these sites currently have planning permission.

The NPPF tells us...

Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until

permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Annual SHLAA updates

Question 30

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

Housing Allocations

Policy 30

Housing Land Allocations

In order to meet the housing requirement and distribution set out in Policy 3 (Quantity of Development) and Policy 4 (Distribution of Development) the following sites, as shown on the proposals map, have been allocated for residential development:

Table 8

Settlement	Allocations Ref	Site	Site Area (Ha)	Estimated Yield	Phasing
CENTRAL DURHAM					
Main Towns					
Durham City	HA5	Sniperley Park	84.2	2200	Medium
	HA8	Mount Oswald	30.8	303	Short
	HA9	Durham Johnson School (Whinney Hill)	2.6	77	Short
	HA10	Potters Bank	1.91	15	Short
	HA/11	Former Dairy, Land at Stonebridge	1.8	64	Medium
	HA12	Aykley Heads	9.0	220	Short to Medium
	HA13	Sniperley Park and Ride	1.7	45	Short
	HA14	Willowtree Avenue	1.9	69	Medium
	HA15	North of Arnison	72.9	1225	Medium
	HA16	Sherburn Road	23.4	450	Medium
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages					
Brandon Langley Moor Meadowfield	HA2	East of Brandon Football Club	1.7	60	Short
	HA3	Brandon Lane	2.4	70	Medium
	HA18	Langley Hall Farm	2.0	70	Short
	HA20	Browney Lane	9.8	222	Medium
Coxhoe	HA6	West of Grange Farm	3.6	111	Medium

	HA7	Bogma Hall Farm	7.8	200	Medium to Long
Langley Park	HA19	East of Langley Park	11.1	250	Medium
Sacriston	HA21	East of Davison Terrace	1.6	58	Short
	HA22	Lingey House Farm North	2.6	78	Short
	HA23	West House Farm	5.8	174	Medium
Ushaw Moor	HA24	North of Ladysmith Terrace	5.5	75	Medium
Rest of Central Durham					
Bearpark	HA1	North Of Cook Avenue	5.6	145	Long
Burnhope	HA4	Greenwood Avenue	4.20	50	Medium to Long
Lanchester	HA17	Cadger Bank	3.6	95	Short
NORTH DURHAM					
Main Towns					
Chester-le-Street	HA51	Civic Centre	1.8	60	Short
	HA52	North of Hermitage Comprehensive	2.9	70	Short
	HA53	BOC Site, Birtley	7.4	210	Short to Medium
	HA54	Picktree Lane	9.3	200	Short to Medium
	HA55	North of Conyers Avenue	6.2	170	Medium to Long
	HE1	Lambton Park	95	400	Lifetime of Plan
Consett	HA56	English Martyrs & Villa Real Railway Bridge	12.2	250	Short

	HA57	Gloucester Road	1.8	65	Medium
	HA58	Victory Yard	1.7	84	Medium
	HA59	South Knitsley Lane	16.8	370	Medium
	HA60	South of Berry Edge Farm	2.6	60	Medium
	HA62	Blackfyne Community Sports College Site A	5.7	100	Short
	HA63	Genesis Site	16.1	440	Medium
	HA64	Castleside Reservoir	3.3	90	Short
	HA65	Moorside Comprehensive School	4.5	100	Short
	HA66	Rosedale Avenue	2.1	40	Short
	HA67	Blackfyne Community Sports College Site B	1.9	60	Short
Stanley & Tanfield Lea	HA71	Stanley School of Technology	3.0	100	Short to Medium
	HA72	Middles Farm & South Moor Hospital	10.5	350	Medium
	HA73	Humber Hill	3.8	110	Medium to Long
	HA74	Shield Row	12.33	205	Long
	HA75	Oxhill Farm	3.6	200	Short to Medium
	HA76	Pea Road	3.7	100	Medium
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages					
Annfield Plain	HA48	Greencroft School	2.7	85	Short
	HA49	Shield Row Lane	2.0	65	Medium
	HA50	Kyo Road	3.0	48	Long

Great Lumley	HA68	Scorer's Lane	4.1	95	Short
Pelton/ Newfield	HA69	Brackenbeds Lane	2.3	55	Medium to Long
	HA70	Rear of Elm Ave	7.4	195	Short
Rest of North Durham					
Burnopfield	HA78	Syke Road	3.35	86	Short
Urpeth	HA77	Brooms Public House	2.0	40	Short to Medium
SOUTH DURHAM					
Main Towns					
Bishop Auckland	HA79	East of Brack's Way	2.3	69	Short
	HA80	Brack's Farm	9.9	297	Short
	HA81	Former Chamberlain Phipps	1.6	60	Short to Medium
	HA82	Woodhouse Close Estate	3.0	91	Short to Medium
	HA83	Cheesmond Avenue	1.5	54	Short to Medium
	HA84	Auckland Park	16.9	500	Short to Medium
	HA85	Canney Hill	2..1	61	Medium
	HA86	Woodhouses Farm	24.4	600	Medium to Long
	HA87	Walker Drive, former Cemex Plant	2.9	143	Medium
	HA88	South and West of West Auckland Football Ground	3.1	92	Medium
Crook	HA90	Rear of High West Road	27.3	600	Medium to

					Long
	HA91	West of Crook Primary School	1.6	40	Medium
Newton Aycliffe	HA93	Site N Cobblers Hall	1.8	62	Short
	HA94	Site O Cobblers Hall	4.7	165	Short
	HA95	Agnew 5 & Land south of Agnew Plantation	5.0	157	Medium
	HA96	Woodham Community College	4.4	132	Medium
	HA97	Congreve Terrace	1.7	61	Medium
	HA98	Eldon Whinns	11.5	342	Medium
	HA99	Low Copelaw	49.5	950	Medium to Long
	Shildon	HA101	North of Fulton Court	2.2	65
HA102		All Saints and Land Adjacent to All Saints	1.9	40	Medium
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages					
Chilton	HA89	West Chilton Farm	3.9	118	Medium
Ferryhill	HA92	South of Dean Road	11.1	291	Short
Sedgefield	HA100	South of Eden Drive & Land at Stockton Road	17.1	444	Short to Medium
Willington	HA104	Opposite West Road	4.6	50	Medium
Rest of South Durham					
Trimdon Grange	HA103	Rose Street	1.6	45	Short
EAST DURHAM					
Main Towns					

Peterlee	HA28	Adjacent Shotton School	2.2	66	Short
	HA29	Manor Way	2.4	77	Short
	HA30	Dene House School	2.9	88	Short
	HA31	South of Edenhill Community Centre	2.6	91	Short
	HA32	North Blunts	2.4	85	Short
	HA33	Former ITEC	1.77	52	Short
	HA34	North East Industrial Estate	18	500	Medium to Long
	HA35	Low Hills	33	730	Short to Medium
Seaham	HA36	Seaham Colliery Site	13.4	300	Medium to Long
	HA37	Lawnside	4.77	90	Medium to Long
	HA38	Land North of Portland Avenue	5.1	100	Medium to Long
	HA39	Seaham Leisure Centre	7.4	130	Medium to Long
	HA40	Seaham School	3.7	80	Medium to Long
	HA41	New Drive	10.52	250	Medium
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages					
Easington & Easington Colliery	HA25	Glenhurst Farm	2.3	60	Short
	HA26	Council Offices	2.4	63	Medium

Shotton Colliery	HA42	South of Front Street and East of Windsor Place	1.62	60	Short to Medium
	HA43	Land Behind Burns Terrace & Swan Castle Farm	13.2	400	Medium to Long
Wingate	HA/47	South of Wellfield Road	2.4	72	Short
Rest of East Durham					
Thornley	HA46	Land North of Hartlepool Street	6.9	166	Medium to Long
	HA45	Land at Dunelm Stables	5.8	95	Short
Station Town	HA44	Rodridge Street	2.0	50	Medium
WEST DURHAM					
Main Towns					
Barnard Castle	HA105	North of Darlington Road (High Riggs)	6.0	100	Short
	HA106	Rear of High Riggs	3.0	49	Short
	HA107	South of Green Lane	2.0	33	Short
	HA108	Land at Auction Mart	1.4	35	Medium
	HA109	Grove works & former allotments adjacent to Grove Works	1.3	35	Medium
	HA110	South of HM Young Offender Institution Startforth	2.8	75	Medium
	HA111	West of Startforth Morrill Memorial School	2.5	38	Medium
Smaller Towns and Larger Villages					
Middleton in Teesdale	HA115	South of Pennine Cottage	1.1	20	Medium
Wolsingham	HA116	Wolsingham Steelworks	4.7	149	Short

Rest of West Durham					
Cockfield	HA112	West of Meadowcroft	0.92	15	Medium
	HA113	South of Meadowcroft	0.75	20	Medium
Gainford	HA114	Neville Close	1.6	30	Medium

Planning applications for housing submitted on these housing allocations, and are in accordance with the phasing indicated, will be approved if the proposed scheme is in accordance with other relevant policies of the Plan. An application for for an allocation in advance of its phasing will only be approved if:

- The allocation's early release does not prejudice the delivery of other allocated sites phased in an earlier time period within the locality;
- The release of the site is required now to maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites; and
- The infrastructure requirements of the development can be satisfactorily addressed.

7.6 The sites allocated for housing in this Policy will provide a range and choice of sites capable of meeting future requirements and delivering the preferred Spatial Approach for the future development of County Durham. By allocating a site the Council is establishing the principle of that development of the site for housing is likely to be acceptable. Site allocations are important because they help local people understand what may happen in their neighbourhood in the future and give guidance to developers and landowners. They also help the Council and infrastructure providers to look at the cumulative impact of development and enable us to plan for future needs such as transport schemes, school places and

water infrastructure. Allocations are positive policies which promote the development of a site and help ensure the right type of development happens. If a site is not allocated, it may still be suitable for development, subject to all other relevant policies in the Plan, in particular Policy 16 (Development on Unallocated Sites). When identifying sites consideration has been given to likely timescales for delivery to ensure a continuous supply of suitable available land.

7.7 Every Local Authority is expected to demonstrate that they have a rolling five year supply of deliverable sites^(xi) with an additional 5 or 20% depending on past delivery to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Developable sites or broad locations should be identified for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. To fulfil these requirements and to provide additional certainty we have chosen to identify allocations for the full Plan period up to 2030 in each Main Town, Smaller Town and Larger Village and each Remainder area as required by Policy 4 (Distribution of Development).

7.8 The number of sites to be allocated has been reduced by the existing housing commitments under construction and with planning permission. These are identified in Policy 29 (Existing Housing Commitments). The sites allocated by this Policy meet the shortfall between the housing requirement and these commitments.

7.9 With the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans the Council have taken the decision to only allocate housing sites larger than 1.5 hectares or 0.75 hectares in West Durham. These thresholds still provided a good range of sites to be considered. Smaller sites can be allocated by Neighbourhood Plans providing they conform with the relevant policies of the Plan.

Site Selection

7.10 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was the primary source of potential housing sites to be considered for allocation. Sites in the SHLAA have been derived from a number of sources including:

- Previous unimplemented housing allocations;
- Surplus employment sites identified in the Employment Land Review;
- Sites submitted by land-owners and developers;
- Sites proposed by communities, Parish and Town Councils and members of the public; and
- Other sites known or owned by the Council.

7.11 The SHLAA Partnership (the Council, The Home Builders Federation, Registered Social Landlords and Estate Agents) categorised sites as Green (potentially suitable for housing), Amber (potentially unsuitable) and Red (definitely unsuitable). All Green and Amber sites identified in the SHLAA were assessed.

7.12 The first stage in the site selection process was a full sustainability appraisal of each site^(xii). This was undertaken against the criteria in our Sustainability Appraisal Framework which includes, amongst others:

- Reducing the causes of climate change;
- Developing a sustainable and diverse economy;

xi Calculated against the housing requirement in Policy 3 (Quantity of Development)

xii <http://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

- Promoting strong, secure communities;
- Reducing the need to travel;
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Protecting and enhancing the quality and character of landscape and townscape; and
- Protecting and improving air, water and soil resources.

7.13 Following the sustainability appraisal other considerations were then applied such as; physical relationship with the existing settlement; infrastructure constraints; viability; deliverability; and marketability. This provided the list of sites to be allocated in this Policy. A site plan for each allocation is included in Appendix L.

Estimated Yield

7.14 An estimate of the number of dwellings to be delivered on each site was determined by adopting an average density and developable area based on Policy 35 (Density of Residential Development). Where we were aware of a specific site constraint eg topography this was also taken into account.

Phasing

7.15 Each allocated site has been assessed for its likelihood of being delivered to ensure that we are satisfied that each site is likely to come forward for development during the Plan period, although ultimately this can be dependant upon external factors such as finance availability for house builders, mortgage availability for purchasers, and aspirations of landowners. We have however, placed each allocated site within a timescale of short (1-5 years), short to medium, medium (6-10 years),

medium to long and long (11 years and up to 2030). The timescale of each site is an indication of when we think the site is likely to come forward and reflects:

- How much development can be accommodated by existing infrastructure and whether improvements are needed;
- Site specific issues that require mitigation such as screen planting or measures to manage impacts on wildlife;
- The requirement to develop the most sustainable sites within a settlement first in a sequential manner; and
- Demand, marketability and viability.

7.16 The phasing of sites is important for the successful delivery of the Plan's priorities and sites should only come forward in different phases if this would not prejudice the delivery of other allocated sites.

7.17 To test the deliverability and viability of each site we will be undertaking development appraisals of each allocation before the list is finalised and included in the Submission Draft of the Plan.

Key Evidence Base

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2012)

You told us...

- Which sites you wanted assessing within the SHLAA, and a 6-week consultation exercise was undertaken giving interested parties an opportunity to contest the Council's assessment of

suitability of each site. The process also allowed information to be gathered on the availability and achievability of each of the SHLAA sites. In cases where there was a dispute, the SHLAA partnership was available to arbitrate over contentious sites to help reach a consensus as to whether a site should be classified as suitable or unsuitable.

Sustainability Appraisal told us...

- Which sites were appropriate to be included as allocations when assessed against the criteria for sustainable development. We have used the Sustainability Appraisal Report, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and wider planning consideration when deciding the housing apportionment for all main towns and secondary settlements, and also the preferred housing sites to meet these housing targets.

NPPF Says...

- Says that local planning authorities should provide the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. (paragraph 7). They should also have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area identifying the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations over the plan period, reflecting local demand (paragraph's 47 and 50).

Implementation and Monitoring Indicators

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Number of sites developed in according to the timescale set out
- Number of units built
- The SHLAA will identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against the Plan's housing requirements

Question 31

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

Addressing Housing Need

Policy 31

Addressing Housing Need

To contribute towards meeting the needs of the County's existing and future residents we will require:

- 10% of private or intermediate housing provided on all sites to meet the specific needs of older people in terms of their design,

form and layout; and,

- b. All qualifying new housing proposals to provide a percentage of Affordable Housing in perpetuity, which is accessible, affordable and meets the needs of those residents unable to access the open housing market.

The Council will support the provision of housing for vulnerable people and specialist housing provision, including nursing homes and residential and extra care facilities, in appropriate locations and where there is an identified need.

Qualifying Thresholds and Requirements for Affordable Provision

The qualifying thresholds where affordable provision will be required and the number of units which we will seek for each of the Housing Market Areas, subject to site viability, are set out below:

Table 9 Qualifying Thresholds for Affordable Provision

Housing Market Area	Percentage of Housing Units	Site Size Threshold*	Housing Unit Threshold
Central Durham	20%	0.5 ha	15 units
North Durham	15%		
South Durham			
East Durham	10%	0.2 ha	5 units
West Durham	25%		

*Irrespective of dwelling numbers proposed.

In applying these requirements we will consider:

- c. The extent of the housing need in the local housing market, as supported by up to date evidence; and,
- d. The cost of developing the site and the impact of this on the viability of any proposed scheme. In circumstances where the viability of the scheme is in question, the developer will be required to demonstrate, to our satisfaction that this is the case.

Off-Site Provision of Affordable Units

On all housing proposals which include 5 or fewer affordable housing units, where it can be justified by the developer that it is the most appropriate course of action, we will accept off-site contributions in lieu of on-site provision.

On sites where there are more than 5 affordable housing units financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where:

- e. There is clear evidence that a greater number of affordable housing could be delivered off site; or,
- f. The resulting financial contribution would contribute to specific regeneration activity in the relevant Housing Market Area, including bringing viable vacant housing back into use.

In either instance financial contributions should equal the full cost of developing or buying on the open market the same number of new properties of the size and type and in a similar location that would have been provided on site.

The calculation for the financial contribution will take into account the following key factors:

- g. The unencumbered residual land value;
- h. Total number of units on site;
- i. Registered Providers purchase amount;
- j. Number of units for affordable housing; and,
- k. Total development costs.

Non-Viable Sites

In instances where it is clearly demonstrated by the developer that it is not viable to meet the above affordable housing requirements we will require an increased proportion of housing units that cater for older persons needs commensurate with the number of affordable housing units that would have been required.

Changing Market Conditions

Where the provision of affordable and older person's housing is below the targets required above, the Council will include an overage payment clause in the Section 106 Agreement relating to the planning permission, to secure a financial contribution on completion of the scheme to reflect changes in market conditions

7.18 Many households in County Durham who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing cannot afford to buy or rent at market rates. These households need affordable housing. This type of housing is expensive to provide and generally needs to be subsidised.

7.19 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which forms part of the evidence base of the Plan, identifies the number of households

needing affordable housing across the County. Levels of need are more significant than it is possible to achieve with available government grant or through cross subsidy from private housing development.

7.20 Realistic requirements for affordable housing that can be expected as part of housing schemes have therefore been defined by looking at levels which can be supported without undermining the viability of housing development across the County. Requirements have been set for each of the County's five Housing Market Areas (which are the same as the Plan's Delivery Areas). New housing development in Central Durham and West Durham, where prices for new houses are buoyant, can support relatively high levels of provision. More modest levels of affordable housing will be achievable in the rest of the County where prices for new houses are relatively low. The Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study which forms part of the evidence base of the Plan, gives detailed information on this approach. Issues relating to individual sites and localities will also be taken into account when applying these requirements.

7.21 Affordable housing includes housing for social and affordable rent, owned by the Council or a Registered Provider. It also includes 'intermediate housing' for sale or rent, provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels. Types of intermediate housing are: shared ownership between a buyer and a social housing provider; low cost homes for sale; or homes where purchasers can move from full rental to buying. Affordable housing must generally remain affordable to successive occupiers in perpetuity.

7.22 It is important that a variety of affordable housing options are offered to meet the varying circumstances of those in need. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that a tenure mix of affordable housing across the County of 70% affordable rented housing and 30% intermediate housing would be appropriate. Other factors will also need to be taken into account, including the tenure mix in the existing settlement,

local housing need, the viability of the site and the availability of related mortgage products.

7.23 Numbers of older people in the county and in the country as a whole are set to increase dramatically over the plan period as the baby boom generation gets older and life expectancy increases. Increases in older households will be equally dramatic. National household projections suggest that over 70% of over-all household growth in the County will be households aged over 65. A third of all households will be aged over 65. There will be exceptional growth in households aged over 85 of more than 250%, with particularly high associated care needs overlapping with housing.

7.24 Our Older Persons Accommodation Strategy shows that much of the County's substantial stock of dedicated housing for older people is outdated, and frequently does not meet their needs in relation to size, layout, location and accessibility. This housing needs to be progressively up-dated by the provision of new social housing for older people which meets modern standards. This will enable existing social housing for older people to be made available to smaller households of working age, particularly smaller households who are under occupying social housing and who are affected by the Governments current changes to the welfare system.

7.25 Our Older Persons Strategy and SHMA both show there is a particular shortage of private sector housing and intermediate housing which is suitable for older people. They show that a much greater amount of housing of various types will be needed to meet older people's needs and aspirations in the future. This includes bungalows, accessible apartments, supported retirement housing with resident or visiting wardens, and housing with high levels of care provision. All new housing provided for older people must meet high standards of accessibility and amenity relevant to their needs. We will also be sympathetic to households which wish to extend or adapt existing homes in order to care for older relatives,

where any related impacts are acceptable.

7.26 In some instances it may not be appropriate to provide affordable housing on site, for instance where there were such a small number that it would be difficult for a Registered Provider to manage them or where the site was in an area where there were already large numbers of affordable homes. When a developer, or in some cases the Council, can demonstrate this is the more appropriate approach then an off-site contribution commensurate with the cost of providing the affordable housing on-site will be acceptable. If it can be fully justified the purchase of properties for the purposes of providing affordable housing may be an acceptable alternative to a financial contribution.

7.27 Details of how requirements for affordable housing and older persons housing will be calculated, either on or off site, will be included in a Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing to be published next year.

Key Evidence Base

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)
- Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure Development Viability Study (2012)
- Older Persons Accommodation Strategy
- Durham Housing Strategy (2010)

You told us that...

There are challenging times ahead for the economy and housing

development is likely to be sluggish at best for some time, which will hit the delivery of affordable housing. Therefore in order to maximise the provision of affordable housing the county needs to take a pragmatic approach, acknowledge that there is no “one size fits all” approach and accept that different locations will require and be appropriate for different types of affordable housing.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The implementation of this policy will result in positive economic effects in the short term as the targets set for provision of affordable housing across County Durham has been subject to viability testing so should ensure that in the majority of cases provision will not make future development unviable in County Durham.

The NPPF tells us...

The local planning authority must plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. It must identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing required in particular locations reflecting local demand. Where a need for affordable housing is identified it must set policies for meeting this need on site unless off site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified. Housing needs should be defined in a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered through the:

- Development Management process
- The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) affordable Homes Programme

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Total number of houses granted planning permission by affordable; intermediate; older persons; market
- Total number of houses completed by affordable; intermediate; older persons; market
- Net number of houses completed by affordable; intermediate; older persons; market

Question 32

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

Housing Exceptions

Policy 32

Housing Exceptions

Housing development that is contrary to other policies in the Plan will be permitted if the development provides affordable housing in perpetuity and where:

- a. There is evidence of need identified in an appropriate housing needs assessment and the tenure split reflects this need;

- b. There has been substantial and meaningful community engagement;
- c. The development is within or adjacent to an existing settlement as defined by the Settlement Study;
- d. The development is in scale and keeping with the form and character of the settlement and local landscape setting and is in accordance with Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Built Environment) and does not have a significant adverse impact on an environmental designation (as identified in Chapter 8 of the Plan);and
- e. Their development supports local facilities and services.

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

- f. It makes up no more than 30% of the total number of units;
- g. The provision of market housing meets a identified local need; and
- h. It is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the overall scheme and no public subsidy is available.

7.28 There may sometimes be circumstances where affordable housing can only be delivered on an appropriate scale by permitting development in the countryside adjoining existing built up areas. Such sites are known as exceptions sites, the bulk of which occur in rural areas, although there may also be some more urban sites. Exception housing should meet local needs, reflect demand for particular sizes, types and tenure of houses

and be affordable in perpetuity.

7.29 The justification for development on such sites can only be made on the basis of a pressing local need for affordable housing which cannot easily be met in other ways. Any exception site should satisfy a number of criteria including the need to be well related to local services and facilities and reflect the character, appearance and landscape setting of the rest of the settlement.

7.30 Where there are issues with the viability of an entirely affordable housing scheme an element of market housing may be acceptable provided the financial need for the market housing can be demonstrated. Any cross subsidy from the market housing must be used to the scheme can be delivered without public grant funding (rather than it being used merely to enhance land values). The proportion of market housing will be limited to 30% of the total number of units to ensure that the development is principally about the delivery of affordable housing where it is needed and is not seen as a way to deliver unnecessary housing in the countryside.

7.31 It is anticipated that most exception sites will be focused upon villages which are able to provide for the widest range of employment opportunities and community facilities. In this way, facilities could both support and be supported by new development and have a greater opportunity in the long-term to sustain the village.

7.32 There may sometimes be circumstances where there is a very specific need for housing in smaller communities which will need to be balanced carefully against a lack of nearby facilities. Such cases will be limited in number and require a strong justification for why the need is best met in that specific community rather than in a larger nearby settlement.

7.33 It is likely that most housing exception sites will be in the more rural west of the County. It is therefore important to note that although

exceptions sites will generally be contrary to other policies in the Plan they must still comply with the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, which prevents adverse impacts on European protected sites such as Natura 2000 sites and RAMSARs.

Key evidence base

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2012)
- Durham Housing Strategy (2010)
- County Durham Older Persons Accommodation Strategy (2010)

You told us that...

Responses to earlier consultations have been very supportive of an exceptions policy; providing that affordability is retained in perpetuity. Exceptions housing should not just be restricted to villages that meet narrow 'sustainability criteria' (such as having a shop, a school, and regular public transport). Provision should be linked to community led planning, community land trusts and landowners.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Support an Exceptions Policy as it would allow small sites adjacent to rural settlements to deliver affordable housing where needed. However, care needs to be taken that exception sites are not located in a way that adversely affects the character of the settlement, and the design, along with use of local materials, relate well to the local area.

Other affordable housing policies should also be put in place in parallel with an exceptions policy to ensure that affordable housing supply in areas of greatest need is robustly addressed.

Alternative Options not chosen...

Not providing the policy framework which would allow exceptions housing would not allow local housing need to be addressed.

The NPPF says...

The NPPF supports the use of market value dwellings to help support the delivery of affordable homes on exception sites.

In rural areas, exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs (para. 54).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process
- The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Affordable Homes Programme

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Performance Indicators: NI 154, NI 155
- The delivery of affordable homes compared with local need as illustrated in the County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Question 33

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

Sites for Travellers

Policy 33

Sites for Travellers

Site allocations for Travellers will be allocated in the Submission Draft of the Plan, supported by evidence of need. Allocated sites:

- Will be sufficient to provide a five year supply of realistically deliverable sites and at least a six to ten year supply of developable sites;
- Will be considered in or adjacent to existing settlements in the first instance, and then on brown field land in other locations;
- Will be sympathetic to the scale of adjoining settlements and large enough to provide for adequate on site facilities including parking, storage, residential amenity, and, where appropriate,

business use; and

- For Travelling Showpeople, will allow for mixed use yards to provide space for the storage of equipment.

All allocated sites and any sites proposed outside the allocation process:

- Should not detract from the amenities of adjoining residents;
- Should be accessible to schools, health care and other local facilities;
- Should be well screened, landscaped and acceptable in relation to the character of the surrounding area; and
- Should have satisfactory access to services, including water, sewerage, and refuse disposal.

If temporary sites are needed to enable existing sites to be refurbished, nearby locations will be considered in the first instance and permission granted on a temporary basis.

Temporary transit sites related to common travelling routes will be permitted where there is evidence of need and where their impact is reasonable when weighed against short term use.

7.34 County Durham has significant numbers of Gypsies and Travellers, mostly living in housing but also living on six authorised sites across the County at:

- Tower Road, Greencroft, Stanley (14 plots);

- Drum Lane, Birtley (14 plots);
- Adventure Lane, West Rainton (17 plots);
- St Phillip's Park, Coundon Grange (25 plots);
- Green Lane, Bishop Auckland (20 plots); and
- East Howle, Ferryhill (25 plots).

7.35 These sites have a total of 115 plots, making up over a third of all plots in the North East. They are generally full for most of the year. The Council also enables Gypsies and Travellers to travel through the County and to popular events, like Appleby Fair. One transit site is currently provided at Bishop Auckland for short term seasonal use and the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Service provide mobile support services, like refuse collection, to groups of travellers.

7.36 Research shows that Gypsies and Travellers face the most serious disadvantages of all ethnic minorities with a much shorter life expectancy, low income and low educational attainment. The Council is carrying out major improvements to existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites across the County. It is also working with other agencies to improve health and education in this community.

7.37 There are a small number of Travelling Showpeople in the County. They have specific site requirements which include the need for good access to the road network to travel to fairs and shows, along with space within sites to store and maintain equipment.

7.38 The accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people are currently being assessed. This is being done in consultation with travellers, their representative bodies, other local authorities, and relevant interest groups. Unfortunately the findings of this

needs assessment will not be available in time to inform this version of the Plan but will be available to inform the Submission Draft. Therefore if the needs assessment identifies a need for new pitches we will allocate them in the Submission Draft. Sites will only be allocated after careful consideration of their future management and extensive consultation with the travelling and settled community. Specific site allocations will particularly help to address problems that Gypsies and Travellers face in finding accommodation that supports their traditional way of life.

7.39 Proposals for sites ahead of the preparation of a separate document will be supported where there is identified need and where they meet the criteria in this Policy. Proposals for sites and pitches will also be subject to other policies in the Plan in the same way as any other type of development. Policies which may be particularly relevant include Policy 46 (Flood Risk), Policy 48 (Provision of New Transport Infrastructure), Policy 39 (Landscape Character), Policy 44 (Historic Environment) and Policy 36 (Development in the Countryside).

Key Evidence Base

None

You told us that...

Most respondents supported the proposed approach. Those who did not or who had reservations were often concerned that local communities affected by proposed sites should be fully consulted. Others wanted to ensure that resources like high quality landscape, historic heritage and sites of nature conservation interest were protected.

The Sustainability Appraisal Tells Us That...

The sustainability appraisal advises that it is important to ensure that

sites do not: prejudice nature conservation or geology; have a negative impact on the historic environment or archaeology; lead to the sterilisation of important minerals; or risk surface water flooding. There were also concerns that sites should allow for business use or have good access to employment.

National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Says...

National planning policy says that local planning authorities should set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. A five year supply of deliverable sites and a five to ten year supply of developable sites should be identified in locations which are sympathetic to the scale of nearby settlements and protects local amenity (*Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*: CLG March 2011, paragraphs 8 & 9,).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process
- Working with Gypsy and Traveller Officers and the Homes and Community Agency
- Consulting with travellers, their representative bodies, other local authorities, and relevant interest groups

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy:

- Net additional Traveller Pitches/Plots
- New transit sites

Question 34

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

Type and Mix of Housing

Policy 34

Type and Mix of Housing

On all new housing developments the Council will seek to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, taking account of existing imbalances in the housing stock, site characteristics and viability and market considerations.

7.40 Within County Durham there is a need for a mix of homes of different types and tenures to meet the requirements of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes. There may also be an over or under-supply of a particular house type in an area. The 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies the need and demand for and the supply of specific types of housing in County Durham. The difference between the supply and demand will identify these imbalances in the housing stock by type (i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced, etc.) and size (measured in number of bedrooms).

7.41 Wherever possible new development should seek to address these imbalances. However on some sites it will not be appropriate to be too prescriptive on the housing composition of a scheme, for example there may be specific physical site constraints that may limit the range of housing that is possible or more likely there may be market demand or viability issues. These issues will always be considered and explored in negotiation with developers.

7.42 We are also keen to encourage the development of the self build industry within the County. Research shows that many people are interested in building their own homes. The Government is committed, in partnership with local authorities, to overcoming a range of practical problems which they face. The number of mortgages available to them is also set to increase substantially. Specific development opportunities for self building will be explored.

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012)

You told us that...

Most of responses to the Issues and Options paper agree that there is a need to match the housing requirement with the supply. Several parish and town Councils noted the need for more bungalows and affordable houses in their areas, while other responses suggest a need for more larger detached units and executive units (important issues addressed elsewhere in the Plan). Overall agreement with our approach which provides for the type and mix of housing according to the site characteristics and informed by the SHMA evidence on local need.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Awaiting Sustainability Appraisal comments.

Alternative Options not chosen

None.

The NPPF tells us that...

The NPPF requires LPAs to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. To do this authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. They should also identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand (paragraph 50).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment updates will indicate how well the Policy performs and will help to ensure that advice remains up to date

Question 35

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

Density of Residential Development

Policy 35

Density of Residential Development

Housing development should make efficient use of land and conserve resources, particularly in and around town centres and other locations where there is good access to frequent public transport services.

The density of new development should be informed by the character of the local area and contribute to:

- The design objectives set out in Policy 17 (Sustainable Design in the Built Environment);
- Improving the mix of house types in accordance with Policy 34 (Type and Mix of Housing);
- Providing adequate levels of public open space, semi-private communal open space and private outdoor space, as set out in Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure); and
- Retaining as far as possible existing site features, including mature trees, shrubs, hedgerows and amenity areas.

Subject to the above, densities (measured in dwellings per hectare (dph)) will vary according to the relative accessibility and character of locations. As a rule higher densities (30 to 50 dph) will be favourably considered on central sites in or near town centres and larger village centres that have good access to public transport and a range of facilities.

Medium densities of around 30 dph will normally be appropriate for sites that are in more peripheral locations within these settlements.

In smaller settlements and for some edge-of-settlement locations lower densities (less than 30 dph) may be more appropriate to respond to local character and context.

7.43 The primary purpose of a density policy should be to make efficient use of land, where density is a measure of the number of dwellings which can be accommodated on a site or in an area. This is an important aspect of housing delivery as the density of housing development has implications for sustainability. Higher densities mean more housing units can be provided in an area, thereby minimising the land take for development. Where there is good access to facilities by walking and public transport, higher density housing can help to support local businesses, services and infrastructure.

7.44 Some areas of the County have a high concentration of a particular form of housing eg terraced. In such areas it may therefore be more appropriate to provide lower density housing which while not reflecting the local character would create a more balanced housing stock.

7.45 Higher density housing that is poorly designed or poorly located can also have an adverse impact on a locality and sustainability. Therefore, housing densities must be applied flexibly in order to support other objectives. The application of this Policy should also help broaden the

range and mix of homes available.

7.46 In assessing housing density the main consideration will be the extent of the building footprint in relation to the building plot and surrounding development. When a building being sub-divided to form flats or terraced housing there will also need to be an assessment of the area of the site required to provide off-street parking and circulation in comparison to the surrounding area.

Key Evidence Base

- DCLG Ministerial Statement - Previously Developed Land (Density) (2010)

You told us that...

The vast majority of responses to consultation in the Issues and Options Paper supported a flexible approach to density and not a rigid 30 dwellings to the hectare which was previously required. Some responses indicated that there is a requirement for specific housing types that would not necessarily conform to a density of 30 dph, while other respondents noted that the density should respond to the site characteristics. Other comments related to the need to use land in an efficient way (i.e. to develop sites at higher densities) to ensure land take is carefully managed and to ensure more sustainable settlements.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Awaiting Sustainability Appraisal comments.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

The NPPF tells us that...

The NPPF promotes sustainable forms and patterns of development that are located in appropriate locations and respect the site characteristics. It also promotes efficient use of land. It states that to boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances (paragraph 47).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Density of developments measured as dwellings per hectare

Question 36

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

8 Natural and Historic Environment

8.1 County Durham's environment and its well being are fundamental to the quality of life of the people who live and work in the County and to the success of the County's economy. Environmental considerations are therefore fundamental to all the policy areas address in the Local Plan. The quality and diversity of many of County Durham's built and natural environments are amongst the County's major assets. This section addresses key planning issues in the natural and historic environment. Each of these issues will be developed further in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) on the Built, Natural, and Historic Environment. The Plan's approach to the Built Environment and the design of new built development is set out in Section 5, General Development Principles.

8.2 The Natural Environment of County Durham is one of great contrast and diversity. From the North Pennines in the west to the Durham Coast in the east it contains landscapes, habitats and features of local, national and international importance. Over 30% of the County area is covered by some form of statutory designation, compared to the national average of 8%. This high quality natural environment delivers a wide range of eco-system services and is critical to both the quality of life and the economic prosperity of the County's residents and its attractiveness to visitors. There are parts of the County where the natural environment has been degraded in some degree by forces such as past industrialisation or agricultural intensification. There are also some areas, such as the countryside around towns, where the environment doesn't always best serve the needs and aspirations of local communities.

8.3 The NPPF identifies conserving and enhancing the natural environment as a core land-use planning principle and says that the planning system can contribute to this by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;

- Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and,
- Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Development in the Countryside

Policy 36

Development in the Countryside

Planning permission for development in the countryside will only be granted where at least one of the following exceptions may apply:

- a. The land is allocated for development in the County Durham Plan;
- b. The development proposals are considered necessary for the efficient operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and other appropriate land based businesses, including the diversification of activities on existing farm units which do not prejudice the agricultural use;

- c. Where sustainable enhancements to the countryside, landscape and biodiversity will result, including proposals for tourism and leisure developments which benefit local communities and visitors such as, walking, horse riding or cycling; or
- d. Proposals for the change of use of existing appropriate buildings which are in keeping with, or would enhance, their setting; are soundly built and capable of being adapted without complete or substantial re-building and/or extension; have no significant adverse impact on the users of other land and buildings; which directly support the retention of local services and community facilities; and represent a sustainable and viable use that will enhance the local rural economy.

Where development is considered acceptable, it will be required to be unobtrusive and must respect the form, scale and character of the landscape. For example, through careful siting, design and use of materials. New buildings should be sited adjacent to existing buildings or building groups, rather than isolated in the landscape.

Proposals should have no significant adverse effects on, and where appropriate enhance and expand, nature conservation and heritage features, contributing to the delivery of biodiversity action plans, habitat enhancement, and landscape character.

Proposals will not be permitted if they result in a level of visual impact, light pollution, noise, traffic or activity which is out of keeping with its countryside location, in accordance with Policy 19 (Air and Light Pollution) of the plan.

8.4 The policy approach in the Local Plans of many former District Councils in County Durham was to identify settlement boundaries as the

mechanism for establishing the acceptability of the location of new development. This Policy sets out a new and more objective approach to assessing the sustainability of new development, based on the performance of proposals against identified criteria, which does not rely on settlement boundaries.

8.5 As a general principle, new development will be directed to sites within built up areas, or sites allocated for development, whilst the countryside will be protected from inappropriate development. Land which is not within existing built up areas, if not allocated for development on the Proposals Map, will be treated as 'countryside'.

8.6 As well as providing leisure and recreational opportunities the countryside is a constantly changing workplace. It is necessary to balance and integrate the requirement to protect the countryside with the need to sustain and encourage the vitality and viability of the rural economy, including agriculture and tourism. Whilst many of the activities in the countryside are outside the scope of planning control, there are other forms of development which can be accommodated without detrimental effect on the countryside.

8.7 New buildings should, wherever possible, respect the style and character of the locality. Proposals for new buildings in the countryside outside of existing settlements or on land not allocated for development will be strictly controlled. Development of housing exceptions will be dealt with under policy 32.

8.8 There is a varied range of buildings in the countryside which are no longer suitable for their original purposes. The majority are likely to be agricultural buildings but there may also be churches, chapels, mills, schools, public houses, stables and others for which an alternative use is being sought. Many of these buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Provided they are structurally sound, conversion of these buildings, for example to employment or community use, visitor accommodation or housing can safeguard their

future. By re-using existing resources, conversions can also meet the aims of sustainable built development. However, there are some buildings which are not suitable for conversion, including those which are: structurally unsound; roofless, missing substantial sections of wall, or so ruined that only vestiges remain of the original structure; of temporary construction; eyesores which should be removed in the interests of landscape conservation; unsuitable in terms of size and form of construction; or, at risk of flooding.

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Settlement Study (2010)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

You told us that...

At Issues and Options Stage, a statement of intent for Delivering Sustainable Development was consulted upon which included the principle of concentrating the majority of development within urban areas as set out in the settlement hierarchy, in order to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and conversions whilst encouraging sustainable development. A key element of the preferred spatial strategy is permitting development which demonstrably meets local needs (such as affordable housing or economic diversification) whilst protecting the countryside from wider development pressures.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The policy needs to include reference to ensuring that development is also directed to protect the viability and vitality of rural areas.

At Preferred Options stage, it was suggested that the policy include

a reference to heritage assets in the same manner as landscape and biodiversity assets in order to reduce potential negative effects. Other exclusions were suggested in order to increase positive effects against social and environmental objectives:

- Development / infrastructure which directly supports the retention of local services and community facilities
- Development that would enable the connection to the gas network for off gas areas
- Cross reference to rural exceptions policy may be required in reasoned justification.

Response to SA Recommendations...

Heritage assets reference and housing exceptions reference accepted. Development / infrastructure which directly supports the retention of local services and community facilities accepted. Off gas areas exception not accepted as this is considered under infrastructure.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

Not applicable - No options were put forward in respect of this issue at Issues and Options Stage.

The NPPF tells us...

That we should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and support the thriving rural communities within it. A strong rural economy should be promoted by Local Plans.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Planning applications granted contrary to advice

Question 37

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

Natural Environment

Landscape, Biodiversity And Geodiversity

8.9 The County Durham Plan addresses priorities for the conservation and improvement of the County's diverse landscapes within the context of meeting development needs (reflecting Strategic Objectives 5 and 11).

Policy 37

North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be protected and enhanced. Within or adjacent to the AONB development will only be permitted where it does not, individually or cumulatively, have a significant adverse impact on its special qualities or statutory purposes.

Major developments will only be permitted in the AONB in exceptional circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated to be in the public interest and where the following have been fully considered:

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

Development will be expected to be designed and managed to the highest environmental standards and to have regard to the objectives of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan, and to the guidance given in the North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines and the North Pennines AONB Building Design Guide.

8.10 Large parts of the North Pennines are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function which could affect land in an AONB, and reaffirms the purposes of designation as follows:

- The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty;
- In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be

taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment; and

- Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

8.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that AONBs, along with National Parks and the Broads, have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. It states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas.

8.12 The North Pennines AONB is the largest AONB in the United Kingdom, covering almost 1,000 km². Approximately one third of the AONB lies within County Durham, the remainder lying within Cumbria and Northumberland and a small part in North Yorkshire. The North Pennines is widely considered to be one of the most remote and unspoilt places in England. It includes extensive areas of near-wilderness and smaller-scale traditionally-managed pastoral landscapes. Substantial areas within the AONB are designated for their nature conservation or cultural heritage value and it is important for a wide range of other ecosystem services such as carbon storage; flood protection and food and timber production. The whole of the AONB is designated as a European Geopark. The AONB is one of the most tranquil places in England with dark skies free of light pollution and little artificial noise. In addition to being a landscape for which we share a national responsibility, the AONB is an asset of great strategic importance to the County both environmentally and economically.

8.13 The AONB is a living, working landscape whose character has been created and maintained by human activity over the generations. Sustaining that character will depend on careful stewardship of the land, and careful decision making about future development. Major development generally can and should be located outside of AONBs. Development that meets the needs of local communities and visitors should be accommodated provided that it protects the AONBs special qualities for the benefit of all.

8.14 This policy recognises the importance and sensitivity of the AONB and the need to conserve and enhance it as an environmental and economic asset (Strategic Objectives 5,7 and 11). It recognises that varying degrees of protection should be afforded to international, national and locally designated sites and aims to protect its special qualities (Strategic Objectives 12,14 and 16) to an appropriate degree. Policies on Renewable Energy, Minerals, Waste and other developments including criteria for the protection of the AONB are contained in the relevant sections of the Plan, as are policies on other environmental assets such as Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Cultural Heritage.

8.15 The AONB is covered by a statutory Management Plan, produced by the North Pennines AONB Partnership, which provides a framework and programme of action for its conservation and enhancement. The Partnership has also produced a number of guidance documents including the North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines and the North Pennines AONB Building Design Guide. All of these documents have been endorsed by the council and are therefore material considerations when considering development proposals.

Key Evidence Base

- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949, as amended)

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- Landscape Strategy (2008)
- Landscape Character Assessment (2008)
- Landscape Guidelines (available online)
- Technical Paper No. 22: Landscape (April 2009)
- North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2009-14 (2009)
- Geodiversity Action Plan
- North Pennines AONB Planning Guidance (2011)
- North Pennines AONB Building Design Guidance (2011)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for biodiversity and geodiversity, however it was considered that there were no alternative options for landscape and a character-based approach would be taken. Comments were received regarding reliance on regional policy and on wind energy developments.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Policies need to go further than the bare minimum (reflecting biodiversity duties and national guidance) and ensure that biodiversity is enhanced as well as protected. County Durham's richness of biodiversity assets could be highlighted in the supporting text, with references to important areas of the County that have international recognition. The Biodiversity Duty on local authorities to have regard

to the promotion of biodiversity in all their functions could be specifically referenced in the supporting text, although it is recognised that the management plan for this area delivers on these themes.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

It was originally considered that a policy would not be needed on the basis that the Regional Spatial Strategy addressed development in the AONB. This policy is now necessary due to the revocation of the RSS. The proposed approach provides the necessary protection and enhancement highlighted by the Sustainability Appraisal.

The NPPF tells us...

Great weight should be given to protecting landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations. Planning permission for major developments should be refused except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Planning policies should identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason. Planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation by encouraging good design (paragraph 125).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of

this Policy:

- Development granted contrary to advice (MMO/LA)
- Planning applications refused (LA)
- Partnership working with the land owners and managers along the coast and with the appropriate statutory agencies
- SSSI/SPA/SA condition assessments which should provide some indication of developmental impacts

Question 38

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

Policy 38

Durham Coast and Heritage Coast

The coast of County Durham will be protected and enhanced by:

- a. Only permitting development in the coastal zone where there is overriding social or economic benefit from that development and where the development cannot be accommodated elsewhere outside of the coastal zone;
- b. Restricting development proposals in the setting of the coastal zone which threaten its isolated character and only granting

planning permission for development within this zone where it is considered appropriate in terms of scale, massing and design and also in terms of associated noise and traffic generation;

- c. Protecting the coastal zone from development proposals which would increase risk from climate change, flooding, erosion and land instability;
- d. Appropriate enhancement and restoration having regard to the Heritage Coast Management Plan;
- e. Improving public access and enjoyment of the coast and allowing development related to recreation, education, sport, art and tourism where such proposals are consistent with the conservation of its natural beauty and the protection of its heritage features and otherwise in line with the Heritage Coast Management Plan objectives; and
- f. Extending the Heritage Coast designation to include the area around Dene Mouth, Blackhall.

8.16 The coastline of County Durham is made up of alternating sandy bays and rocky headlands backed by magnesian limestone cliffs unique to this area. It stretches 11 miles from the border with the City of Sunderland at Ryhope Dene in the north to that with the borough of Hartlepool south of Crimdon Dene. The majority of the area up to 1km inland from the cliff edge is undeveloped other than the Crimdon Caravan Park resort and the port and coastal town of Seaham, where development extends to the high water mark. The Durham coast is a unique asset comprising distinctive bays and headlands. The coastal zone contains a number of important species and habitats including extensive areas of internationally important magnesian limestone grassland and paramaritime

grassland and is home to important species such as the Durham Argus butterfly. Much of the coast is designated as SSSI. It is of international value for both nesting and migrating birds. Parts are designated as SPA and SAC and two areas are designated under the Ramsar Convention (Blackhall foreshore extending to the Hartlepool Headland in the south and Seaham Harbour North). Biodiversity issues and the approach to protecting sites and species are addressed in Policies 40 - 43.

8.17 The limits of the coastal zone extend both seaward and landward of the coastline, reflecting the geographical extent of natural coastal processes and also human activities related to the marine environment. For the purpose of planning on the coast and Heritage Coast however, the coastal zone is defined as the area of land between the mean low water mark on the seaward side and the coastal railway line, from the county boundary with Hartlepool to Hawthorn Junction south of Dawdon. To the north of this point, the coastal zone is defined as the cliff line as far as the Seaham Hall car park and then the B1287, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals in this area should only be undertaken on the basis of maintaining and enhancing its environmental capital in accord with the principles of sustainable development.

8.18 As well as being protected for its Heritage Coast definition and for the important and vulnerable habitats and species present the coast should be protected for the quality of life which it brings. In County Durham the undeveloped coast is yet to realise its full potential for recreation and tourism, largely due to the past legacy of pollution and environmental degradation associated with the coastal collieries. The East Durham coast has been greatly improved by the Turning the Tide project (1997-2002). The Durham Heritage Coast Partnership continues to deliver improvements to the coast via the Durham Heritage Coast Management Plan which aims to balance enhancement with conservation, whilst taking account of the economic and social needs of the small communities along the coast and

also the interests of fishing, forestry and agriculture. It is important that the type and location of recreational activities is sympathetic to the sensitive habitats and species which thrive there. In particular, the presence of protected bird species will constrain certain forms of development in this location. Seaham Harbour has significant potential as a marina and location for water based recreation, the presence of protected species would require appropriate mitigation to be identified prior to expanding water-based activities.

8.19 Heritage Coast is a non-statutory definition. The main objectives are to conserve, protect and enhance natural beauty, to facilitate and enhance its enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public, to maintain and improve the environmental health of associated inshore waters and beaches, and to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities on the coast.

8.20 Coastal management and planning is a strategic issue which requires an integrated approach. This is more formally termed as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). Accordingly the Council will work closely with partners and neighbouring planning authorities to integrate fully with other areas on the coast in planning and managing the coastal area. In line with the NPPF^(xlii), we will collaborate with the Marine Management Organisation under the Duty to Cooperate in order to ensure that policies across the land/sea boundary are integrated.

8.21 The entirety of the Durham coastline has been assessed by the Shoreline Management Plan^(xliii) as being of no significant risk in terms of Coastal Change other than the specific area referred to as Red Acre Cliffs (nr. Londonderry building, Seaham). National policy is clear that the planning system should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts

xlii paragraph 179 and footnote on marine areas.

xliii Shoreline Management Plan 2: River Tyne to Flamborough Head(SMP2)

of physical changes to the coast.

8.22 The NPPF also requires LPAs to maintain, enhance and protect the character of the undeveloped coast, especially where it is defined as Heritage Coast. Strict control of development up to the edges of the delineated coastal zone is of key importance into the future in preserving the special setting of the Heritage Coast and maintaining views out of the coastal area. Regard should be had to the principles of Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment as development adjacent to the coastal zone is a key factor which impacts upon its quality and the visitor experience. This is particularly important for the setting of the Heritage Coast and also the possibility of development affecting processes on the coast or increasing flood risk.

Key Evidence Base

- Durham Heritage Coast Management Plan (2005-2010)
- Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)
- Shoreline Management Plan 2: River Tyne to Flamborough Head
- Technical Paper No. 22: Landscape (2009)

You told us that...

Responses to earlier consultation confirmed the importance of maintaining the setting of the Durham Heritage Coast and safeguarding it from development which would detract from the quality of that setting. It is acknowledged that the quality of experience of the coast per se is dependent upon its setting and the nature of views inland towards the urban areas.

The importance of Seascape Character Assessment was cited in relation to the need to appropriately develop the setting of the coastal zone into the future.

It is also acknowledged that the Durham coast is a relatively untapped resource in terms of the tourism economy and as a recreation resource and that there is scope for sustainable development of these use types but this must be in line with the principles of enhancement and protection which are fundamental to the Heritage Coast definition and to the appropriate development of the coast.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Consideration of the potential impact of increased housing in the eastern part of North and East Durham on coastal SACs and SPAs will be required particularly at Blackhall Colliery/Rocks, Horden and Seaham. Linked to this increases in the human population accessing the SAC and SPA areas is a key consideration. There are limited areas for town extensions in Seaham in this regard, and housing at Peterlee could also impact on coastal SAC's and SPA's.

Regarding the South of Seaham Strategic Employment Site, an appropriate level of ecological assessment would be necessary prior to development. To avoid any potential damage to European, nationally, and locally designated sites an HRA and/or EIA should be carried out as part of the planning permission proposal.

Note: There are no sustainability appraisal implications reported for increased instance of Coastal Change due to planned new developments.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None

The NPPF tells us...

In coastal areas, local planning authorities should:

- Maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast (paragraph 114);
- Take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans and apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management across local authority and land/sea boundaries, ensuring integration of the terrestrial and marine planning regimes (paragraph 105);
- Identify as a Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast (paragraph 106);
- Reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast (paragraph 106);
- Be clear as to what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances (paragraph 106);
- Make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas (paragraph 106);
- Use Shoreline Management Plans to inform the evidence base for planning in coastal areas (paragraph 168); and
- Ensure that future development does not hinder the creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route

around the coast (paragraph. 107).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Development granted contrary to advice
- Planning applications refused

Question 39

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

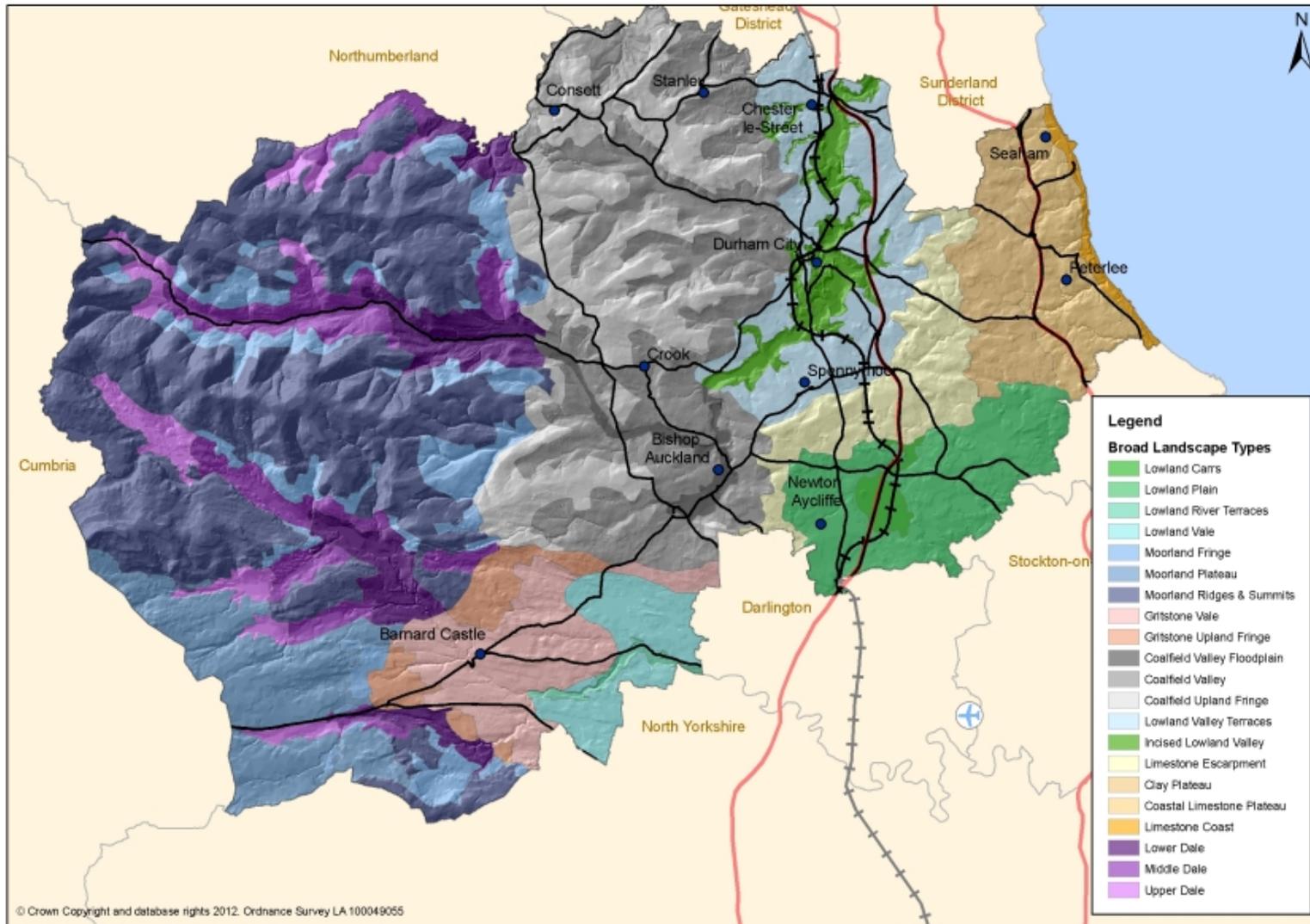
Policy 39**Landscape Character**

Proposals for new development will only be permitted where they would not cause significant harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape, or to important features or views, unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh its impacts.

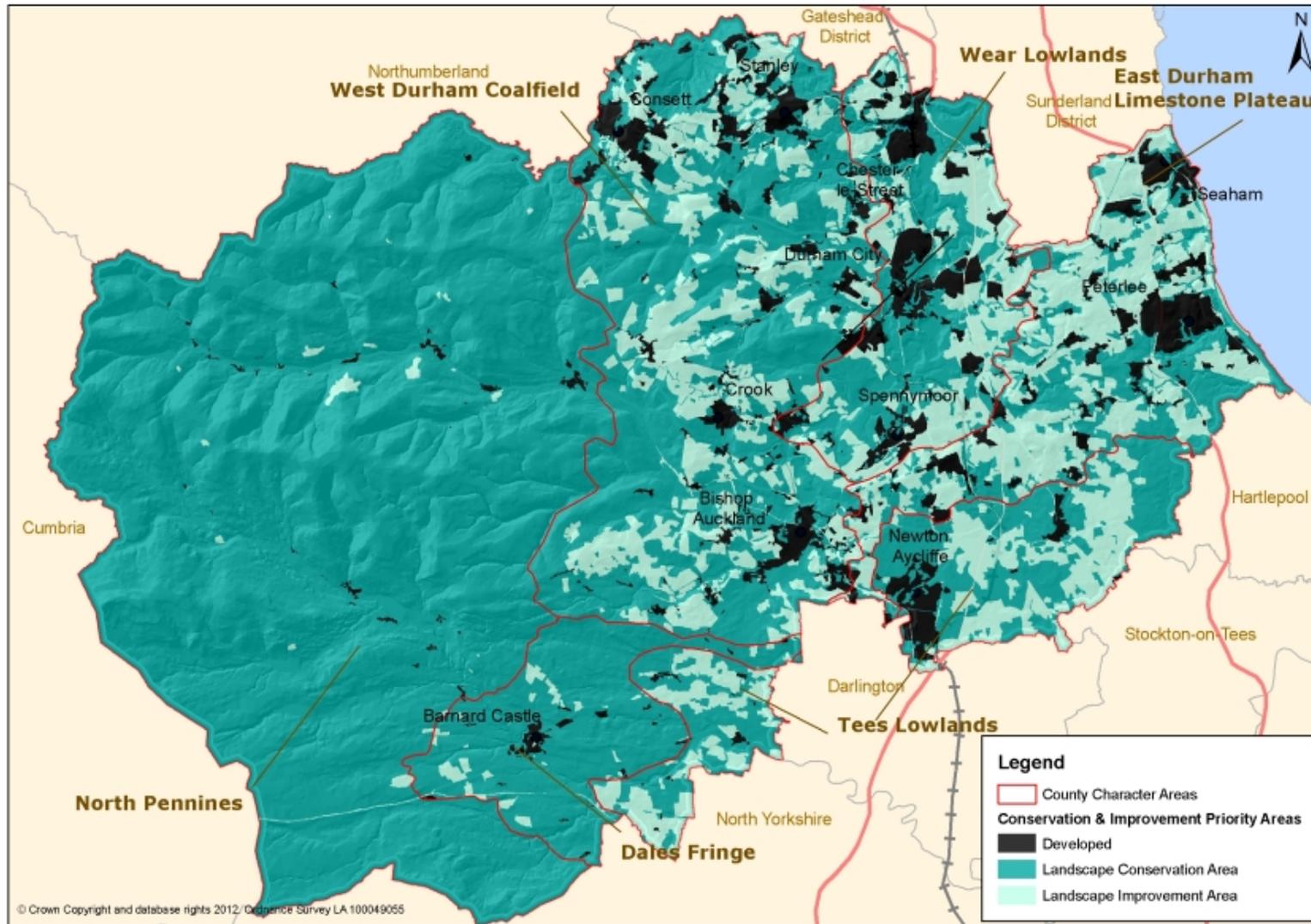
Development proposals should have regard to the objectives of the County Durham Landscape Strategy and contribute, where possible, to the conservation or enhancement of the local landscape and the work of local landscape partnerships.

8.23 The Durham landscape is one of enormous contrast and diversity. From its western boundary high in the summit ridges of the North Pennines, to the limestone cliffs of the North Sea coast, remote moorlands and pastoral dales give way to fertile settled farmlands. This diversity is a product of both natural and human influences. The varied rocks, landforms and soils of the County, and differences in climate between the exposed uplands and sheltered lowlands, have influenced both the natural flora of the landscape, and the way it has been populated, managed and exploited by its people over the centuries.

Map 5 Broad Landscape Types



Map 6 Landscape Conservation And Improvement Priority Areas



8.24 Its beauty and diversity are important both to the quality of life of local communities and the economic prosperity of the County as a whole. In the past there has been an emphasis on identifying and protecting high quality landscapes. In recent years there has been an increasing recognition that all landscapes matter and that their sensitivity to development depends on their character. This character-led approach to all landscapes, of whatever quality, whether urban or rural, built or natural, is fundamental to the European Landscape Convention, of which the UK is a signatory.

8.25 The County Durham Landscape Character Assessment classifies the landscape of the County into a range of landscape types and character areas at three levels, from the strategic to the very local, and provides detailed information on their character. The County Durham Landscape Strategy analyses the issues affecting the landscape and sets out objectives and priorities for conservation and improvement. It identifies broad Landscape Conservation Priority Areas and Landscape Improvement Areas. The County Durham Landscape Guidelines cover a range of topics including trees, woodlands and forestry, hedges and grasslands and includes development and land management guidelines for broad landscape types.

8.26 The NPPF says that the planning system should contribute to, and enhance, the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged. This Policy recognises the need to conserve and enhance the County's environment while meeting its development needs, reflecting Strategic Objectives 5 and 11. It also recognises the varying degrees of protection appropriate to the hierarchy of national and locally designated sites, reflecting Strategic Objectives 12 and 16.

8.27 Parts of the County are covered by landscape scale partnerships

such as the statutory North Pennines AONB Partnership, the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership, the Limestone Landscapes Partnership, the Heart of the Teesdale Partnership and the County Durham Hedgegrow Partnership. Development proposals can contribute to the work of partnerships as a delivery mechanism for mitigation measures.

Key Evidence Base

- Landscape Strategy (2008)
- Landscape Character Assessment (2008)
- Technical Paper No. 22: Landscape (April 2009)
- European Landscape Convention (2007)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for biodiversity and geodiversity, however it was considered that there were no alternative options for landscape and a character-based approach would be taken. Comments were received regarding reliance on regional policy and on wind energy developments.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

No alternative options were put forward. Whilst the SA considered the statement of intent, the recommendations did not include landscape as this was considered separately.

Alternative Options considered but not selected:

The identification of local landscape designations is no longer

appropriate. It was considered that the approach which recognised that "all landscapes matter" was the only option.

The NPPF tells us...

The planning system should contribute to, and enhance, the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Development granted contrary to landscape advice

Question 40

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

Policy 40

Trees, Woodlands and Hedges

Trees

Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the need for, and benefits of, the proposal clearly outweigh the loss.

Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing trees where possible and integrate them fully into the design having regard to their management requirements and growth potential.

Where trees are lost, replacement planting will be required within the site or the locality.

Woodlands

Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing woodlands and integrate them fully into the design having regard to their future management requirements. Development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of woodland unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the loss and suitable replacement planting, either within or beyond the site boundary, can be undertaken.

Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss, fragmentation, isolation or deterioration of ancient woodland, as shown on the proposals map, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm and appropriate compensation can be made. Proposals affecting ancient woodland (including planted ancient woodland sites) not previously identified as such, will be subject to the same

considerations.

Hedges

Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing hedgerows where they make a positive contribution to the design of the proposals.

Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of hedges of high landscape, heritage, amenity or biodiversity value unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Where hedges are lost, replacement planting or renovation of existing hedges will be required within the site or the surrounding area.

8.28 Trees, woodlands and hedges make an important contribution to the beauty, diversity and distinctiveness of our rural landscapes and the beauty and liveability of our townscapes. Tree and woodland canopies create shelter and shade, intercept rainfall and airborne pollutants and regulate the movement of water through river catchments, reducing soil erosion and the leaching of pollutants into surface and ground waters. Woodland ecosystems are a key component of the County's biodiversity providing habitats for both rare and common species.

8.29 Trees and woodlands take many years to mature: ancient woodlands and veteran trees in particular are irreplaceable. Ancient semi-natural woodlands make up only around 1.3% of the county and contain plant and animal communities that survive from the very distant past. Natural England has produced an inventory of ancient woodlands which the County Council has updated on the basis of more recent information. This includes ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) and planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS) which are often as important for the conservation of woodland species where they persist in the

under-storey. ASNW and PAWS are shown as Ancient Woodland on the proposals map but this is not definitive. Many woodlands, and particularly small woodlands, are not picked up by the inventory and are only found to be ancient after detailed survey. Where development proposals lie close to planted or otherwise damaged ancient woodlands, there may be opportunities to carry out restoration works in mitigation of impacts. These works could be secured by planning obligations or other agreements, in accordance with Policy 64 (Developer Contributions).

8.30 Mature trees, woodlands and hedges are sensitive to the impacts of development, either directly through their removal or indirectly through the impacts of construction. Due to the length of time and the cost taken to replace mature features, and the contribution they can make to the quality of development, they should be retained and protected where possible. Surveys and assessments carried out in accordance with recognised standards should be used to inform the design process and minimise impacts. Where their loss is unavoidable they should be replaced with suitable new planting either within the site or in the locality if this is more appropriate. Development can make a positive contribution to the tree and hedgerow resource in the locality through new planting or the restoration and improved management of existing features.

8.31 Where trees within or adjacent to a site could be affected by development, a full tree survey and arboricultural implications assessment to BS 5837 will be required as part of the planning application. This should be carried out at a sufficiently early stage to inform the design of the development. The implementation of any protective measures it identifies will be secured by the use of planning conditions.

8.32 The NPPF says that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. This Policy

recognises the need to conserve and enhance the County's environment while meeting its development needs, reflecting Strategic Objectives 5 and 11. It also recognises the varying degrees of protection appropriate to the value and importance of different features, reflecting Strategic Objectives 12 and 16.

Key Evidence Base

- Landscape Strategy (2008)
- Landscape Character Assessment (2008)
- Technical Paper No. 22: Landscape (April 2009)
- European Landscape Convention (2007)
- Hedgerow Regulations (1997)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for biodiversity and geodiversity. Comments were received on the ancient woodland surrounding the proposals for relief roads.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

No alternative options were put forward. Whilst the SA considered the statement of intent as no alternative options were put forward this option was not discussed specifically. The policy should include the promotion of biodiversity in new developments; the promotion of native tree/hedgerow planting in appropriate areas of low cover / fragmentation (as identified in the County Durham Landscape Strategy); and the creation of green infrastructure.

The NPPF tells us...

Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Developments granted contrary to advice
- Amount of ancient woodland in the County
- No net loss in ancient woodland

Question 41

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

Policy 41

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Proposals for new development that would result in significant harm to biodiversity will not be permitted where the harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Proposals for new development will be expected to minimise adverse impacts on, and actively enhance, biodiversity and geodiversity in order to provide net gains.

Proposals for new development will be expected, where appropriate, to incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within or around the site, and to contribute to the consolidation and development of local ecological networks, and the implementation of the biodiversity action plans and management plans of local partnerships.

Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be permitted, where they accord with other relevant policies in the Plan.

Development proposals will be expected to protect peatlands, and contribute, where possible, to their restoration.

8.33 Biodiversity, the variety of life on earth is at the heart of a more sustainable future for the County. Retention and enhancement of biodiversity is a key measure of sustainability. The NPPF confirms the government's commitment to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the benefits of ecosystems. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2000 place a duty on all Local Authorities to conserve and

enhance biodiversity and includes a list of priority species and habitats for conservation. The government has laid out its targets for wildlife and ecosystem services in "Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services" and planning policy should contribute to the delivery of its targets.

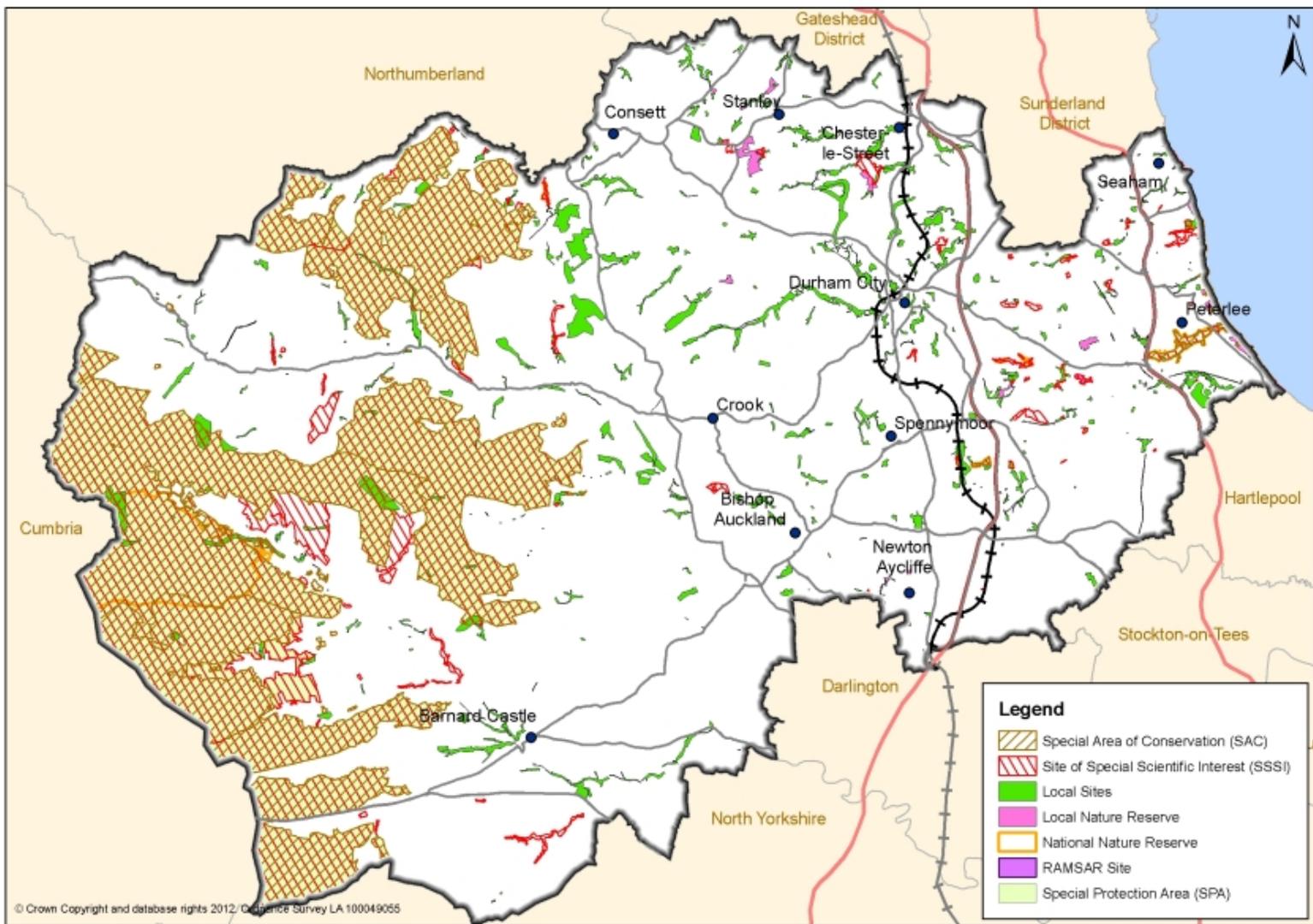
8.34 County Durham has a rich variety of ecological habitats and species and many areas and features of geological interest that are internationally, nationally and locally designated for their biodiversity and geodiversity value.

8.35 Retention of ecosystems, as well as their enhancement, is essential for the maintenance and recovery of priority species and habitats and their natural migration and spread in response to climate change, as well as providing opportunities for green infrastructure works and landscape enhancement, and an attractive environment to live, work and play.

8.36 The re-use of previously developed land for new development makes a major contribution to sustainable development. However, brownfield land can support an extremely rich diversity of wildflowers and animals, and has its own UK BAP Priority Habitat 'Open Mosaic Habitats and Previously Developed Land'. Where such sites have significant biodiversity or geological interest of recognised local importance, this interest should be retained or incorporated into any development.

8.37 Given the extent of peatlands in County Durham and the important role that they play as carbon sinks, there should be no further loss of near-natural peatlands in the UK, and all recoverable peatlands should be restored to a peat forming state, resilient to climate change and with long-term safeguards. The North Pennines AONB have had success in restoring significant areas of peatland, through its Peatscapes project, with the blocking of approximately 1000km of moorland grips by 2012, this will hydrologically restore over 1000 ha of blanket bog. There is therefore a need for protection and enhancement of carbon sinks and green infrastructure.

Map 7 International, National And Local Biodiversity And Geodiversity Sites



8.38 The location and design of new development should be informed by the most up-to-date biodiversity data available. It will be expected that biological data gathered to support the development process will be submitted to the local biodiversity record office.

8.39 The Plan also recognises the variable degrees of protection required for the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites found within the landscape (Strategic Objectives 12 and 16). All development proposals affecting International Wildlife Sites will be considered against Policy 42 (International Wildlife Sites).

Key Evidence Base

- County Durham Biodiversity Action Plan (Durham Biodiversity Partnership, 2007, updated online)
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2000 (2000)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for biodiversity and geodiversity. No alternative options were put forward.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Policies need to go further than the bare minimum (reflecting biodiversity duties and national guidance) and ensure that biodiversity is enhanced as well as protected. County Durham's richness of biodiversity assets could be highlighted in the supporting text, with references to important areas of the County that have international recognition. The Biodiversity Duty on local authorities to have regard

to the promotion of biodiversity in all their functions could be specifically referenced in the supporting text.

Preferred Options suggestion of changes to policy wording to mean that all developments would be required to incorporate appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity within or around the site.

Response to SA recommendations...

Changes not accepted. This would result in undue burden upon developers and is not appropriate in all cases. NPPF states that 'Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations' and states 'providing net gains in biodiversity where possible'.

The NPPF tells us...

Sustainable development involves positive improvements to the natural environment, moving from a net loss in biodiversity to net gains for nature. Planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in the NPPF.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance
- No net loss in areas of biodiversity importance

Question 42

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

Policy 42

International Wildlife Sites

Development upon international wildlife sites (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites) will not be permitted where it cannot be ascertained, following appropriate assessment, that there would be no adverse effects on its integrity, unless the proposal is able to pass the further statutory test of 'no alternatives' and 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' as set out in Regulation 62 of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Development proposals within 0.4km of international wildlife sites, and any other development proposals which may have an effect upon international wildlife sites, will be subject to Appropriate Assessment. Such projects will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant effect upon the integrity of the relevant site, in isolation or in conjunction with other projects.

Where development proposals would be likely to lead to an increase in recreational pressure upon international wildlife sites, developers will be required to contribute towards mitigation measures. Depending on the type, location and size of development, the creation or improvement of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), in accordance with Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure) and the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, or contributions towards actions as detailed in relevant management plans. Alternatively, developers should undertake a Habitats Regulations screening assessment and, where necessary, a full appropriate assessment, to demonstrate that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA.

Land designated and/or managed as mitigation/compensation/offsetting sites for development on Natura 2000 sites receive the same level of protection as Natura 2000 sites.

8.40 The need for Appropriate Assessment is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended in 2007, and again in 2010) now known as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Regulations, land use plans must be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) if they are likely to have a significant [adverse] effect on a Natura 2000 site (Special Areas of Conservation, SAC and Special Protection Areas, SPA). It is Government policy (as described in Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity & Geological Conservation) for sites designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) to be treated as having equivalent status to Natura 2000 sites. As such, Appropriate Assessments should also cover these sites.

8.41 The growth proposed in the Plan may have the potential to

adversely affect the integrity of these internationally designated sites^(xliv), both within and beyond County Durham, particularly in relation to disturbance, noise, water abstraction, water and air quality, renewable energy infrastructure, tourism, recreation and general urbanisation effects.

8.42 Certain international wildlife sites are already proven to be experiencing recreational and urbanisation impacts on site integrity. These are:

- Northumbria Coast SPA/Ramsar site.
- Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar site.

8.43 Where development proposals may impact, either directly, indirectly, or in combination, on international wildlife sites, and are not directly connected to or necessary to the management of the site, a scoping opinion may be required to determine whether there is a need for Appropriate Assessment.

8.44 Within international wildlife sites (measured as the crow flies from their perimeter) an Appropriate Assessment will be needed to demonstrate that any development will not have a significant adverse effect on the SPA and/or the acceptability of any avoidance measures provided.^(xlv)

8.45 Outside this zone, some other developments may have the potential to impact upon international wildlife sites. In coastal settlements, these may include residential developments which increase the number of inhabitants and hence increase recreational pressure, and non-residential developments which are likely to increase visitor numbers to Durham's Coast. In such cases developers may be required to provide, or contribute

towards, mitigation measures such as the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) or other measures as outlined in relevant management plans such as the Heritage Coast Management Plan. By doing so, development will not have to undergo an appropriate assessment.^(xlvi) However, appropriate assessment may be required for some large-scale development proposals where, in the opinion of the Council, there may be significant impacts upon an international site that cannot be adequately mitigated.

8.46 Regulation 62 of the Habitats Regulations transposes the requirement of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. This permits the approval of plans or projects where there is a negative assessment under certain exceptional circumstances.

8.47 In accordance with Regulation 62, development proposals which would have a significant impact upon international wildlife sites will only be permitted if they can demonstrate:

- That there are no suitable alternative locations for development;
- That all forms of mitigation (rather than compensation) have been fully considered;
- That adequate compensatory measures to maintain the overall ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network are in place (or at least secured could be put in place and will be delivered in advance of any harm caused to a site; and,
- That there are 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest'. In the case where the site hosts a priority natural habitat or species, only reasons relating to human health, public safety or beneficial

xliv Neither the Directive nor the Regulations define what is meant by 'the integrity of the site'. However, paragraph 20 of Circular 06/2005 defines the integrity of the site as 'the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats, and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified'.

xlv Please refer to the HRA of the County Durham Plan for reasoning behind the establishment of these zones.

xlvi This principle has been established through the High Court Judgement of J Sullivan in Hart DC v SoS for Communities and Local Government [2008].

consequences of primary importance to the environment, can be considered, unless the competent authority has sought and had regard to an opinion from the Commission. For less sensitive European sites it would also be possible to consider projects which provide long term, large scale economic benefits.

8.48 Further guidance will be set out in the Natural Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Key Evidence Base

- Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for biodiversity and geodiversity. Comments were received on the dangers of reliance on other policy and the need for an overarching policy within the Plan or policies which set out locally specific issues.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Policies need to go further than the bare minimum (reflecting biodiversity duties and national guidance) and ensure that biodiversity is enhanced as well as protected.

The NPPF tells us...

The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined. Wildlife sites which should be

given the same protection as European sites are as follows:

- Potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- Listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- Sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor effectiveness of the Policy:

- Development adversely affecting international or equivalent sites of nature conservation
- Changes in areas of biodiversity importance
- Amount of brownfield land developed
- Improvements in local biodiversity

Question 43

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

Policy 43**National and Locally Protected Sites and Species**

Development proposals in, or which are likely to adversely impact upon, any of the following designations:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- National Nature Reserves;
- Local Sites;
- Local Nature Reserves (LNRs);
- Protected and Priority species and their Habitats; and
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

Will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of development would:

- a. Significantly and demonstrably outweigh the adverse impact; and
- b. Make a significant contribution to the management of the site, protection of species, the creation of new habitats and the

creation of local ecological networks.

Development which, alone or in combination, has a demonstrable adverse impact on the ability of protected species to survive, reproduce and maintain or expand their current distribution will not be permitted unless:

- c. There are demonstrable reasons of imperative overriding public importance; and
- d. Adequate appropriate mitigation/compensation can be provided.

New development should seek to create new appropriate habitats supporting local protected and priority species.

8.49 Durham's natural environment is one of its greatest assets and includes a particularly large proportion of the UK's biodiversity, including some of Europe and the UK's most significant sites which are protected by national policy and statutory legislation (as detailed in Policy 43 (National and Locally Protected Sites and Species)). However the valuable natural environment includes not only Internationally protected sites, but also National and local sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, Local Sites and Local Geological Sites, as well as other features of nature conservation value.

8.50 Collectively these sites and natural features make up the local ecological networks necessary to underpin and maintain a healthy natural environment. Policy 36 (Development in the Countryside) seeks to ensure protection and enhancement of these sites and features, and is necessary to help halt and reverse current negative trends and meet new challenges particularly arising from climate change adaptation and pressures associated with the increasing population.

8.51 It is vital that all stages of sustainable development are informed by relevant ecological information, from site selection and design to planning decisions and long-term management. To determine the likelihood of harm occurring, the effects on any existing habitats, species and/or features of nature conservation importance should be assessed and the results documented. The method of survey and level of detail will vary according to the size and type of development and whether priority species and habitats exist on site. All effects should be considered, including positive and negative, direct and indirect, cumulative, and on and off site impacts over the lifetime of the development (including construction, operational and restoration phases), also giving consideration to disturbance effects such as noise, lighting, recreational pressures, trampling, traffic, domestic pets, vandalism etc.

8.52 The following criteria should be addressed when development is proposed:

- Avoidance of existing sensitive habitats and species through careful site selection;
- Location and design of new development should be based upon the most up to date biodiversity data available;
- Retention of existing habitats and features of interest, and provision of buffer zones around any sensitive areas;
- Enhancement of biodiversity where possible through improving the condition of existing habitats or creation of new ones. Particular attention should be paid to priority habitats referred to in the Durham and/or UK Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Where harm is identified as likely to result, provision of measures to adequately avoid or mitigate that harm should be set out. Development may be refused if adequate mitigation cannot be

provided; and

- Provision of adequate management of the retained and new features.

8.53 Potential adverse impacts on the ability of protected species to survive, reproduce and maintain or expand their current distribution may include:

- Direct mortality;
- Increased risk of mortality for example through increased risk of road kill;
- Loss of, or degradation of foraging areas;
- Loss of densities, either directly or indirectly by loss/degradation of surrounding habitat;
- Fragmentation of supporting habitats; and
- Increased risk of conflict between species and people.

8.54 Compensation is a last resort, but will be necessary in some instances where other approaches cannot guarantee ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity and any unavoidable losses are outweighed by other sustainability considerations. Such measures should be delivered within the development site where possible. However where this is not feasible it may be more appropriate to deliver off site measures through legal agreements and landscape scale projects. Appropriate compensatory measures should demonstrate no net loss of the relevant local biodiversity resource in the short and long-term, and be delivered as close to the development site as possible to avoid the degradation of local ecological networks or ‘ecosystem services’

8.55 Sustainable development also provides opportunities to enhance the natural environment for wildlife and Durham's communities, particularly through landscaping, public open space, Sustainable Drainage Systems and features of the built environment e.g. bird and bat boxes. Such measures should contribute to delivery of relevant Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets, but also be tailored to local landscape character (Policy 39). Development may also open up opportunities to bring degraded or neglected features back into favourable condition through sensitive management to encourage wildlife. Such restoration will be particularly valuable where it contributes towards landscape scale projects.

8.56 Biological data gathered to support the development process should contribute to local biological recording.

Key Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

You told us that....

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for biodiversity and geodiversity.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Policies need to go further than the bare minimum (reflecting biodiversity duties and national guidance) and ensure that biodiversity is enhanced as well as protected.

The NPPF tells us...

NPPF sets out the government's objectives for the planning system to contribute to and enhance the local environment including

minimising impacts on biodiversity and contributing to landscape scale plans for biodiversity enhancements. It also states 'distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks'.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor effectiveness of the Policy:

- Development adversely affecting sites of nature conservation and important habitats and species.
- Changes in areas of biodiversity importance
- Amount of brownfield land developed

Question 44

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

Historic Environment

Policy 44

Historic Environment

Development proposals will preserve, conserve and, where possible and appropriate, enhance the historic environment and should avoid or mitigate against harm. Development proposals which have the potential to affect designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the asset would be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced, supported by sufficient evidence.

Distinctive elements of County Durham's historic environment, which create a sense of local distinctiveness and identity, will be conserved and enhanced, and their potential to contribute towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will be exploited.

Designated Heritage Assets

Development which would lead to substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of, a designated heritage asset will not be permitted unless it can be clearly and convincingly demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh it, or all of the following apply:

- The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term that will enable its conservation; and
- Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or

public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Development that would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset will only be permitted where that harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. When considering the balance of considerations great weight will be given to the conservation of the asset.

Designated Heritage Assets include:

- Archaeological Remains
- Historic Battlefields
- Conservation Areas, their special character and appearance
- Listed Buildings, Buildings and structures of special architectural and historic significance, including their setting
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site

Non-designated Heritage Assets

The effect of development proposals on the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be taken into account in determining applications. In assessing proposals that affect

non-designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, regard will be given to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of any harm or loss.

The provision of evidence in assessing the impact on the Non-designated heritage assets identified through the planning process will be critical in determining the application.

Non-designated heritage assets may include :

- Buildings and structures, identified through the planning process, of special architectural and historic significance, including their setting.
- Parks & Gardens of local interest (some of which have been previously identified in Local Plan. Those currently identified are shown on the proposals map and listed in Appendix M. Whenever necessary, sites may be added to, or removed from the list).
- Spaces which contribute to the significance of the historic environment.
- Assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments.

Heritage Assets generally

Development will not be permitted that would entail the loss, in whole or in part, of a heritage asset (designated or non-designated) unless it can be demonstrated, or secured by other means, that the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Developments that promote the educational, recreational and/or

tourism potential of archaeological sites and monuments through sensitive management, enhancement and interpretation, and those that offer significant improvements to heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats will be permitted, where they do not conflict with other policies in the Local Plan.

Development will be required to conserve, and seek opportunities to enhance, structures and areas of significance throughout County Durham including the fabric, character, setting and cultural significance of designated and other non-designated heritage assets, including:

- a. The sensitive re-use of redundant and under-used historic buildings and areas which is consistent with their long term conservation especially in relation to the viable re-use of heritage assets at risk; and
- b. Opportunities to enhance County Durham's historic public realm by ensuring that all development, including transport and infrastructure work, access improvement, is sensitive to the historic environment.
- c. Opportunities for historic buildings and buildings in conservation areas to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change will be promoted and permitted where public benefit outweighs harm to the significance of the place.

Development proposals that may affect a heritage asset should be supported by an appropriate Heritage Statement which should describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset/s affected, including any contribution made by their setting, and how the proposed development responds to it.

Enabling development

Enabling development which is intended to secure the future of heritage assets but contravenes other policies in the Plan will not be permitted unless:

- a. It will not harm the significance of the asset or its setting;
- b. It will secure the long-term future of an asset and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose;
- c. It is necessary to resolve problems arising from the inherent needs of an asset, rather than the circumstances of the present owner, or the purchase price paid;
- d. Sufficient subsidy is not available from any other source;
- e. It is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the asset and that its form minimises harm to public interests; and
- f. The public benefit of securing the future of the asset through such enabling development decisively outweighs the disbenefits of breaching other policies.
- g. Access to the Heritage Asset will be significantly improved.

8.57 National Policy requires local planning authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment recognising its irreplaceable nature. They should take into account:

- The desirability of putting heritage assets to a viable use consistent

with their conservation;

- The contribution conservation makes to wider sustainability aims; and
- The desirability of new development contributing to local character.

8.58 County Durham has a wide variety of heritage assets that evidence and reflect human interaction with the landscape from pre-historic times to the present. These are manifested in landscapes, towns and villages, individual buildings and features, ancient monuments, open spaces, historic public realm and archaeological sites, with many phases interlaid upon one another. The County's designated heritage assets include:

- 1 World Heritage Site;
- 3036 Listed Buildings (101 Grade I; 157 Grade II*; and 2778 Grade II);
- 93 Conservation Areas;
- 226 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs);
- 17 Registered Parks and Gardens; and
- 1 Historic Battlefield

8.59 All of these assets are recorded on the County's Historic Environment Record (HER), a computerised inventory of all aspects of our surrounding environment that have been built, formed or influenced by human activity, including known heritage assets, sites without statutory protection and the find-spots of archaeological objects. As part of the planning process the local authority may identify additional non-designated

heritage assets that are not currently statutorily protected. Impact on a non-designated heritage asset is in itself a material consideration for planning decisions.

8.60 Heritage assets, designated and non-designated, are irreplaceable, so any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. This Policy aims to ensure that Durham's listed buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, landscapes and areas of historic and built heritage significance are preserved and enhanced so that they can continue to make an important contribution to the environment, economy, quality of life and lifelong learning for this and future generations. It is essential that these assets are linked comprehensively with the World Heritage Site to ensure visitors explore more than just the city. The approach to Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site is addressed separately in Policy 45.

8.61 Designation of heritage assets does not preclude the possibility of new development, repairs, alterations or extensions; the Council is committed to working pragmatically to find positive solutions which will allow the historic built environment to play its part in delivering modern aspirations. However, alterations to, or development which affects, heritage assets will only be acceptable where they are consistent with the conservation of a heritage asset's significance. Consequently, it is expected that development will be of the highest standard in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the area or building, be sensitive to its character, appearance and setting and avoid or mitigate harm to, as well as improving understanding of archaeological deposits and features and their significance. Development proposals and any associated climate change mitigation and adaptation measures which do not safeguard significance will be considered unacceptable unless such harm is outweighed by public benefit, as detailed in the Built Environment and Historic Environment SPDs. In considering applications for new development in such areas, the Council will seek to ensure that the form, scale, design and materials of new buildings are complimentary to its

context.

8.62 In determining planning applications that may affect a heritage asset applicants should describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset/s affected, including any contribution made by their setting. In the case of sites which include or have the potential to include heritage assets with an archaeological interest this will also involve field evaluation culminating in the formulation of a mitigation strategy requiring approval by the Council. This information should be set out in an appropriate Heritage Statement which should be in accordance with the Council's validation criteria.

8.63 The Council will assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies. Any assessment will be soundly based on evidence.

8.64 Elements of a heritage asset's setting may make a positive or negative contribution to its significance, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral. The level of detail in the Heritage Statement should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on this relative significance.

8.65 Where the Council considers there to be a real and specific planning threat to the character, appearance and significance of any Conservation Area and that protection is required to prevent harm to such significance, permitted development rights will be withdrawn under Article IV of the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 as amended.

8.66 Applicants are expected to take account and adequately respond, where appropriate, to conservation area appraisals and management plans and other guidance produced at a national and local level. The preparation of further conservation area management plans and other

proactive strategies will be encouraged to support policy delivery.

8.67 The Council will continue to keep under review Conservation Areas in the County and where appropriate, designate new areas. Appraisals of Conservation Areas will define the boundaries and analyse the special character and appearance of the area. The Council will seek to target areas and properties which are identified through Appraisals and seek to influence change in a proactive way, wherever opportunities arise.

Key Evidence Base

- Historic Environment Record
- Buildings at Risk Register
- Shared Visions: The North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (2006) and ongoing update
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (2008)
- Conservation Area Management Plans

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for the historic built environment.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA of the Issues & Options emphasised the importance of a policy on the historic environment and its integration into strategies and the approach to the Plan. However the proposed policy would benefit from certain aspects being explored further or new aspects added

and should be expanded accordingly.

SA of the Preferred Options made recommendations on the economic potential of heritage assets; ensuring climate change is built into decisions; and ensuring that the policy encourages heritage assets to be more accessible. It was suggested that Reasoned Justification wording was changed regarding the de-allocation of Conservation Areas and to make sure that lifelong learning is embedded.

Response to SA recommendations...

Majority of recommendations accepted and policy and Reasoned Justification revised. Suggested changes regarding Conservation Area review not accepted. Review is implicit in current wording.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None

The NPPF tells us that...

Local planning authorities should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment recognising assets' irreplaceable nature. They should take into account: the desirability of putting heritage assets to a viable use consistent with their conservation; the contribution conservation makes to wider sustainability aims; and the desirability of new development contributing to local character. Applicants should describe the significance of any assets affected, including the contribution of their setting (paragraph 126).

Implementation and Monitoring

This Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process ^(xlvii)

The following indicators will be used to monitor effectiveness of the Policy:

- Conservation Areas with up to date Appraisal, and Management Plans
- Listed buildings at risk
- Heritage assets adversely affected by development
- Article IV Directions

Question 45

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

Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site

Policy 45

Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site

The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS) will be protected by requiring development proposals to

demonstrate that full consideration has been given to their impacts. Proposals will need to demonstrate that the development will cause no substantial harm (including cumulative or consequential harm) to the significance of the WHS either through impacts on its fabric, character or setting.

Developments should take opportunities to make a positive contribution to the WHS and its setting and to support and sustain its positive management.

8.68 Through the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has identified the formal recognition and management of World Heritage Sites (WHS) as a key means of conserving the world's cultural and natural heritage for present and future generations. The designation of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS in 1986 recognised its national and international significance. The key qualities of the site relate to its historical, cultural and architectural importance and are set out in a list of Outstanding Universal Values (OUV). It is imperative therefore that new development does not detrimentally impact on the WHS and its OUV, and that opportunities to positively enhance the site are supported.

8.69 The setting of the WHS is the environment in which it is experienced and understood. Development outside of the designated boundary can have adverse impacts on either the visual environment of the WHS or on features associated with it which contribute to its universal value. The setting of the WHS is formed in part by an 'inner bowl' contained by nearby ridges and spurs incised by the meandering River Wear, and a more diffuse 'outer bowl' contained by more distant high ground including the limestone escarpment to the east and south, and higher spurs and ridges to the west. These form important horizons and skylines in the backdrop

xlvii Further detailed guidance on the historic environment will be contained within the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document.

of many views of, from and within the WHS, and contain important vantage points from which the WHS is viewed. Development within these areas can detract from the appearance of the WHS, as can development beyond the outer bowl which breaks the skyline. This is particularly true for tall structures such as wind turbines and masts.

8.70 In considering this Policy particular reference should be made to the statement of OUV for the World Heritage Site and the relevant World Heritage Site Management Plan. The Management Plan provides a strategy for conserving the World Heritage Site that meets the needs of the Site's users and visitors. It is not a statutory document, but an advisory framework to inform decisions about the management of the Site. It aims to:

- Conserve the Site;
- Enhance the character of the Site and its surroundings for the benefit of local communities and visitors; and
- Maintain the Site's active role as a religious, educational and residential environment.

8.71 Applicants will be required to demonstrate that full account has been taken of the impact of the proposals upon the World Heritage Site and its setting and demonstrate that those proposals will have no adverse effect upon its OUV. Development proposals which fall within the World Heritage Site boundary, or potentially impact upon its setting, should assess the impacts principally within the design and access and heritage statements related to the proposal. In doing so, it is recommended that particular attention be paid to the Built Environment SPD and the Historic Environment SPD which set out to ensure materials used are in keeping with the distinctive character of the site and setting.

8.72 Due consideration should be given to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations which list WHSs as among the 'sensitive areas' where lower thresholds apply to the assessment of the need for EIA.

Key Evidence Base

- Statement of OUV for the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS (xlviii)
- World Heritage Site Management Plan (2006)
- UNESCO World Heritage Committee decision of August 2008 to extend the boundaries and associated mapping

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on a statement of intent for the historic built environment, however it was considered that there were no alternative options and a strategic and a proactive approach to its protection, enhancement and management would be taken. This included the World Heritage Site. Comments were received on supporting the economic use of historic buildings and the sustainability of listed buildings as well as access issues within the WHS. The majority of respondents supported the approach.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

It is important to define the concept of 'setting' and the relationship of Durham to the World Heritage Site – it might be advisable to consider the creation of a 'buffer zone' around the Cathedral. This is

xlviii Available on English Heritage website: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/a-e/Draft_SOUV_Durham_Castle_and_Cathedral.pdf.

because the importance of the WHS and its significance as a material planning consideration needs to be consistently made, not only in terms of the site, but also its setting and any buffer zone. The policy should seek to harmonise with policies on renewable energy development and minimise the impact of such development. The economic potential of the historic environment should be fully explored.

At Preferred Options Stage, it was suggested that the term 'substantial' be defined within the Reasoned Justification and that it would be advisable to consider the setting of a buffer zone around the WHS. It was also suggested that reference be made to the Historic Environment & Sustainable Design in the Built Environment SPDs to ensure that materials used in development that could affect the setting of the WHS is in keeping with the distinctive character of the site and setting.

Response to SA recommendations...

The setting of the WHS is protected by reference to the inner and outer bowls and therefore it was considered that no change was needed in reference to buffer zones. Buffers do not need to be defined on maps for setting to be understood. Reference has now been made in the RJ to the Historic Environment and Built Environment SPDs. There will no longer be a Sustainable Design in the Built Environment SPD. Changes have not been made to the Reasoned Justification regarding definition of 'substantial'. The policy is following NPPF (paragraph 132) and therefore does not need the change.

Alternative Options considered but not selected

None.

The NPPF tells us...

Local Plans should include a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, recognising that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in accordance with their significance. Planning applications should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Heritage assets are irreplaceable and any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of, designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably (paragraph 137).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Developments granted contrary to advice
- Through progress towards the objectives of the adopted World Heritage Site Management Plan

Question 46

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

Water Environment

Policy 46

Flood Risk

All development proposals will be required to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site, commensurate with the scale and impact of the development. Development will not be permitted unless:

- a. In the functional floodplain, as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, it is water compatible or essential infrastructure;
- b. In flood zones 2 and 3a it passes the Sequential Test, and if necessary the Exceptions Test, as required by national policy;

- c. The development, including the access, will be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible will reduce flood risk overall;
- d. There is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. New development should aim to achieve a 30% reduction in current rate of surface water runoff where feasible. Surface water runoff should be managed at source wherever possible, avoiding disposal to combined (public) sewers. Development should set part of the site aside for surface water management, and use other measures to contribute to flood risk management in the wider area and supplement green infrastructure networks, contributing to mitigation of climate change and flooding as an alternative or complementary to hard engineering; and
- e. The development incorporates a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) to manage surface water drainage, unless it is proven that SuDS are not appropriate. Where SuDS are provided arrangements must be put in place for their whole life management and maintenance.

Where improvement works are required to ensure that the drainage infrastructure can cope with the capacity required to support proposed new development, developer contributions will be required, in accordance with Policy 64 (Developer Contributions).

Water Quality

Development which would adversely affect the quality or quantity of surface or groundwater, flow of groundwater or ability to abstract water will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that no significant adverse impact would occur or mitigation can be put in

place to minimise this impact.

All development must demonstrate control of the quality of surface water runoff during construction, and for the lifetime of the development. For major developments ^(xlix), the management of water should be an intrinsic part of the overall development.

Flood defence infrastructure

Proposals for additional flood defences will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the proposal represents the most sustainable response to a particular threat.

Proposals which seek to create natural flood plains, or seek to enhance and/or expand flood plains in appropriate locations, will be permitted where they conform to other policies in the Plan.

8.73 The water environment is vital for its contribution to the County's biodiversity and is important to the quality of life of people both within and outside the County. Development must be within environmental limits and carefully consider how the water environment will be affected. How much wastewater can be safely disposed of, the protection of vulnerable aquifers and the prevention of increased flooding are key considerations in developing sustainable communities.

8.74 Flood risk is an important consideration in spatial planning. In County Durham, flood risk is mainly fluvial, from rivers and watercourses, and from surface water. National policy is clear that planning policy should minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding where there is the possibility of any flood risk to a proposed development site, or the potential for flood risk impact on other sites, a site-specific

Flood Risk Assessment will be required.

8.75 It is important also to consider the protection of water resources from pollution. The Magnesian Limestone Principal Aquifer underlies the eastern part of the County and is a source of drinking water for both Northumbrian Water and Hartlepool Water Company. It is therefore vital that this resource is protected. Pollution can affect groundwater for many decades and may be impossible to remove completely, even after the source of the pollution has been cleared up. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires pollution prevention in new and existing development.

8.76 Green infrastructure can be an important flood management and climate change and flood mitigation mechanism. If surface water is removed from combined sewers it increases their capacity and therefore prevents flooding. This is particularly important to development proposed in Key Surface Water Flood Risk Areas, as identified in the Surface Water Management Plan. SuDS and green infrastructure can also prevent pollution by filtration of surface water runoff thereby contributing to improvements in quality of watercourses in line with legislation.

8.77 The Environment Agency is responsible for licensing abstractions, pollution control and the quality of the water environment, whilst Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) is responsible for water services and sewage treatment. A Water Cycle Study (WCS) was carried out in 2011 to ensure that the growth envisaged for the County can be supported and is not hindered by water infrastructure and resources. This has informed the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) as well as allocations in this Plan.

8.78 A Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the County was carried out in 2010, together with a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP). The SFRA provides an overview of the areas susceptible to flooding and the risk posed by flooding from rivers, the

xlix Major development is defined as comprising 10 or more dwellings or 1000m² of employment floorspace (see GPDO (2006, as amended))

North Sea, groundwater and surface water runoff. It assesses the risk as it stands today, as well as the increased risk from a changing climate. The Surface Water Management Plan contains more detail and informs and interacts with the County Durham Plan by giving Action Plans and priorities for each area, in line with our proactive approach to flood risk and climate change. It identifies Surface Water Risk Areas (SWRAs) and an Action Plan for these and other issues. These documents form part of the evidence base for the County Durham Plan and inform the IDP. Critical Drainage Areas have also been identified in the County in the SWMP, and development in these areas will need careful consideration. The majority of SWRAs are in the east of the County, or around urban conurbations. The Employment Land Review, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and WCS were used with the SFRA to ensure that development will take place in the right places in County Durham, as part of our pro-active approach. Work on the IDP has involved working with NWL and we continue to collaborate with them and other infrastructure providers.

8.79 Proposals within the County should minimise their impacts on the water environment and reduce water usage In line with the Sustainable Development Policy.

8.80 Whilst this policy is applicable to all forms of development, a policy addressing the specific requirements for Minerals and Waste proposals will be contained in the future Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document. The policy approach to the Durham Coast is addressed separately in Policy 38 (Durham Coast and Heritage Coast).

Key Evidence Base

- EU Water Framework Directive (2000)
- Surface Water Management Plan (2011)

- Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2010)
- Water Cycle Study (2011)
- Technical Paper No. 10: Water (2009)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options did not include a specific option on the water environment, but consulted upon Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption. Comments were received regarding SuDS and flood risk. The majority supported SuDS.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Policies should include reference to reducing flood risk to developments through appropriate locations and sequential testing and also safeguarding, enhancing and providing green infrastructure that contributes to reducing flood risk, improving 'liveability', and conserving biodiversity. It also identified deliverability of improvements to storm drainage could be through the CIL policy. Recent comments added that a 50% reduction in surface water run off be required from brownfield and greenfield sites in line with Environment Agency (EA) advice, and suggested other policy interventions which could be used to mitigate the impact of non-mains drainage.

Response to SA recommendations...

No changes made. The policy has been drafted in line with Environment Agency recommendations. Other elements of the SA recommendations (regarding policy interventions to mitigate non-mains drainage impacts) will be addressed in the Built Environment SPD.

Alternative Options considered but not selected...

None.

The NPPF tells us...

That the Planning system should minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development away from areas at highest risk or where development is necessary, to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere (paragraph 100).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Planning applications with an objection from the Environment Agency
- Amount of new development in flood zones 2 and 3
- Number of new developments incorporating SuDS

Question 47

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

9 Transport and Infrastructure

9.1 The Council will use its planning and transport powers to deliver a high quality integrated and sustainable transport network which supports our aspirations for a strong economy, a vibrant tourism offer and improved quality of life for all of County Durham's residents.

9.2 The relationship between transport, infrastructure and planning is of great importance. The location of housing, employment, education, health, retail and leisure facilities can have a significant impact on patterns of travel and accessibility, particularly for those without a car. The County Durham Plan has been developed having had regard to and in order to complement the current Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

9.3 Infrastructure can be physical such as transport, social such as education and green such as parks and sports pitches. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan covers all forms of infrastructure that support this Plan. Specific policies relating to various types of infrastructure are covered in the relevant sections of this plan. For example:

- Transport Infrastructure and the Relief Roads are dealt with in Policies 8, 9 and 48;
- Flood Defence Infrastructure is dealt with in Policy 46;
- Renewable Energy Infrastructure is dealt with in Policy 21;
- Waste Infrastructure is dealt with in Policy 61; and
- Green Infrastructure is dealt with in Policy 20.

9.4 The Council has worked with statutory undertakers, utility companies and other agencies to develop an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which supports the proposed development identified in the Local Plan. This will

ensure the delivery of essential infrastructure to serve existing and proposed development as well as ensuring the overarching aspirations of the Plan can be met.

9.5 If additional infrastructure is not delivered alongside new development, it can put pressure on existing facilities that may not have the ability or capacity to cope with the additional demand. This may have a detrimental impact on the existing population.

9.6 The provision of infrastructure is managed by a wide range of organisations, not just the Council. The Local Plan in conjunction with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will play a key role in securing private sector involvement in infrastructure delivery, and in aligning the programmes of the various providers.

9.7 Section 11 of the Local Plan provides more detail on the Council's use of S106 agreements and the emerging Community Infrastructure Levy to secure contributions towards infrastructure provision. These mechanisms will enable the Council to deliver infrastructure, facilities, amenities and other benefits to support and serve new development.

Promoting Sustainable Travel

Policy 47

Promoting Sustainable Travel

All development proposals should promote sustainable travel by:

- a. Promoting, accommodating, and facilitating investment in sustainable modes of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking;
- b. Providing appropriate, well designed, convenient, safe and

secure parking for vehicles and cycles; and

- c. Ensuring that any new traffic generated by new development can be safely accommodated on the local and strategic highway network, or can be made safe by appropriate transport improvements.

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

Commercial development creating 100 or more parking spaces should include 3 charging points for electric vehicles and 15% car sharing parking bays per 100 parking spaces provided. Where development providing accommodation (hotels etc), is permitted, 1 in 20 spaces should be allocated for electric car charging.

9.8 The County Durham Plan seeks to minimise the distance and need to travel, make best use of the existing public transport and the highways network while promoting sustainable transport choices. The majority of new residential, commercial and employment development will be guided to the County's main towns and secondary settlements.

9.9 It is crucial that the Council, developers and other stakeholders deliver sustainable travel choices as development sites come forward via the planning system. We can do this by promoting, accommodating and facilitating sustainable travel.

Promoting Sustainable Travel

9.10 The County's dispersed settlement pattern means that the majority of its residents do not live, work, shop or spend recreational time all in

one place. Commuting to work and school make up a large proportion of all traffic, particularly during morning and evening peak times.

9.11 Sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing and alternative fuel vehicles will be promoted through travel planning as well as good design. Development proposals that are likely to generate significant additional journeys should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan whilst smaller developments will require Transport Statements.

9.12 A Transport Assessment assesses the potential impact of new development on existing transport networks. A Travel Plan focuses on solutions to any impacts on the Transport network caused by new development.

9.13 The thresholds for traffic assessments/travel plans can be found within the Durham County Council Accessibility & Parking Guidelines⁽¹⁾.

9.14 By working with bus and rail operators, the Council will seek to encourage operators to provide transport that is made reliable, affordable and as simple to use as possible. We will also encourage operators to consider the impact of proposed development in their future investment plans through work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Accommodating Sustainable Modes of Travel

9.15 Access to sustainable forms of transport should be integrated into the design of new developments. All future development should be planned to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport.

9.16 New developments should incorporate the 'pedestrian and cycle first' principle. All new developments must include pedestrian and cycling routes which are direct, attractive and convenient and take priority

¹ The Durham County Council Accessibility & Parking Guidelines is available to download: http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/Parking_and_Accessibility_Guidelines-2003.Pdf.

over motor traffic. Buildings and car parks should link to new or existing footpath or cycling networks, where appropriate.

9.17 Bus travel is by far, the most used form of public transport in County Durham. A dispersed settlement pattern, low car ownership, worklessness and the ageing population are all reasons why the bus service in County Durham is so important. Transit 15 has sought to improve the frequency and reliability of buses travelling into Durham City. The aspiration is for 7 main towns around County Durham to run buses every 15 minutes to Durham City. The Council have also extended Belmont Park and Ride to increase the number of parking spaces. It is also likely that the Sniperley Park and Ride will be extended in the future.

9.18 As part of new applications, developers must consider the impact of the development on the local bus routes. As a minimum, a Transport Statement should be provided which describes the local public transport network and includes a full description of how the development will incorporate access to this network.

9.19 In County Durham, it is very important that we plan in a sustainable manner for the accommodation of motor vehicles as private vehicles are the most popular mode of transport in the County. All new developments must provide adequate parking for cycles, motorcycles and cars as part of new development. In addition, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and car sharing bays will be required where 100 parking spaces or more are being provided.

9.20 We are proposing 3 electric parking spaces per 100 created because it is anticipated that most owners of electric vehicles will be able to charge at home overnight but this number of charging points will provide the facility for those individuals that need to re-charge while they are away from home. Where development providing accommodation (hotels etc) is permitted we are proposing 1 electric parking space per 20 spaces in

order to provide visitors with the infrastructure to charge vehicles overnight away from home.

9.21 We are proposing 15% car sharing bays because the National Travel Survey undertaken in 2010 states that the average vehicle occupancy rate for commuting journeys is 1:2 or 20%⁽ⁱⁱ⁾. Since not all these journeys will be officially car sharing journeys, other factors have been taken into consideration. The document entitled Making Travel Plans Work (Department of Transport, 2002) states that overall levels of car sharing are around 16%, slightly above local levels. It is therefore felt that 15% is a realistic figure that introduced alongside an effective Travel Plan should encourage more sustainable travel.

9.22 The detailed design implications relating to this policy are detailed in the Councils Car Parking and Accessibility Guidelines, while general design principles are detailed in Policy 1 (Sustainable Development) and Policy 17 (Sustainable Design and the Built Environment).

9.23 There is a greater onus on developers promoting, accommodating and facilitating sustainable modes of transport on development sites in main and secondary settlements. In smaller settlements in rural areas, there is a greater reliance on private cars and this has been recognised in the rural proofing process and addressed in the Sustainable Development policy. The reliance on the private car for accessibility in rural areas will need to be taken into consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Facilitating Sustainable Travel

9.24 Where the measures outlined in the Travel Plan or the design of a scheme are insufficient to fully mitigate the impact of increased trip generation on the local highway network, off site transport infrastructure improvements will be required.

ii This means that there is only one person in the vehicle for 80% of commuting trips.

9.25 Developers will be expected to provide additional investment via a legal agreement so additional traffic can be accommodated. For example, a contribution could be made to the Council to improve the local bus service or to provide additional capacity on the highway network.

Key Evidence Base

- Local Transport Plan 3 (2011)
- County Durham Parking & Accessibility Guidelines (2003)
- County Durham Cycling Strategy (2012)
- Making Travel Plans Work (2002)

You told us...

- The majority of journeys include an element of walking.
- County Durham should now be taking the lead in setting out Sustainable Transport alternatives.
- Major funding will need to be found to make the existing highway network more attractive for cycle use.

Sustainability Appraisal told us...

- A combination of measures must be used to reduce reliance on the car.
- Reducing reliance on the private car has positive environmental, economic and social impacts.

- Make provisions for pedestrians and cyclists a priority.
- Despite problems of transport poverty in rural areas, developing a more reliable public transport system may be problematic in small dispersed communities (i.e Weardale and Teesdale).

Alternative Options not chosen...

- We have not taken forward the option of financial dis-incentives to control level of car use as we are trying to plan positively through development and new transport Infrastructure to support greater use of sustainable travel options. We have also not taken forward the option for the use of technology and home working in this policy as broadband coverage is already being implemented by us and our partners.

NPPF Says...

- The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. (para. 29)
- Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. (para. 30)
- All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. (para.32)

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Number of Travel Plans submitted
- Charging points and car sharing bays provided per hundred spaces
- Traffic counts on key highways

Question 48

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

Transport Infrastructure

Policy 48

Provision of New Transport Infrastructure

Provision of new transport infrastructure identified in the County Durham Infrastructure Delivery Plan that enhances connectivity both within the County and with other parts of the region and beyond to deliver economic growth, regeneration and tourism will be permitted providing it conforms with other policies in the Plan.

New highway schemes will be approved where they:

- a. Are necessary to improve the existing highway network;
- b. Accommodate future development sites;
- c. Avoid harmful impact upon residential amenity;
- d. Minimise the harmful impact on the natural and built environment; and
- e. Make safe and proper provision for the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

Safeguarding Routes and Facilities

Development that would prevent the implementation of the following safeguarded transport routes, as shown on the proposals map and in Appendix N, will not be permitted:

- f. Strategic cycling routes within and between the 12 main towns;
- g. Leamside Line;
- h. Railhead at Seaham Harbour;
- i. Thrislington Rail Head;
- j. Ferryhill-Cornforth-Raisby Quarry alignment;
- k. Rail Facility at Ferryhill Station;
- l. Stillington Line;
- m. A new rail station at Peterlee/Horden to serve the Durham Coast

Line; and

- n. Investment in the Weardale Heritage Railway & Bishop Auckland to Darlington railway lines.

9.26 In County Durham, there are some ongoing and future transport infrastructure improvements that will improve the links both within and beyond County Durham. These schemes will help support economic growth and help deliver new development across the County. Contributions from the Community Infrastructure Levy will be sought as appropriate to support the delivery of key transport infrastructure improvements. (See Policy 64 (Developer Contributions)).

Cycling and Walking

9.27 In County Durham, local travel options will be promoted through ongoing improvements to the existing cycle & footpath network including the existing National Cycle Network and other nationally promoted trails and through the identification and delivery of cycling super routes within and between the 12 main towns. The development of the network will increase opportunities for sustainable travel to work, school and key services. These routes also provide important tourism and leisure opportunities. Cycling super routes will be identified in time for the submission draft of the County Durham Plan.

9.28 Existing public rights of way and nationally promoted cycling and walking routes are promoted through the Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure).

Freight

9.29 The ability of business to transport goods and raw materials is essential to the efficient functioning of the economy. While the majority of freight within the County will continue to use the road network, it is

important that there are viable alternatives to road transport.

9.30 The main opportunities for improving rail freight in County Durham could come through the re-opening of the Leamside Line by providing an alternative route to the East Coast Main Line (ECML) between Tursdale south of Durham City and the Tyne and Wear conurbation. The Leamside Line and Durham Coast Line have the potential to be more than just freight lines by providing passenger services connecting areas of deprivation with areas of employment, making central and East Durham more attractive for inward investment.

9.31 The proposals for rail freight interchanges at Tursdale and Newton Park will greatly improve the facilities for rail freight in the County and they are protected in Policy 24 (Specific Use Employment Sites).

9.32 The Council will seek to protect and safeguard land that is associated with the movement of freight or minerals that is or could be important to the economy of the County.

Rail

9.33 The railway system connects a number of settlements in the County with major centres in the Tyne and Wear conurbations and Tees Valley to the south. While the East Coast Main Line is currently running at capacity, there are opportunities for improving the rail network in the South, West and the East of the County by improving the Durham Coast Line as well as the Bishop Auckland to Darlington and Weardale Heritage Railway lines.

9.34 A new station for Peterlee/Horden at Sea View would improve access for passengers on the Durham Coast Main Line. It would connect areas of deprivation with areas of employment (such as the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear conurbations) as well as making East Durham more attractive for inward investment. The recent report 'Peterlee-Horden Station: Outline Demand Forecasts' completed in March 2012 has

evidenced that a station in this location is commercially viable.

9.35 The Bishop Auckland to Darlington railway is recognised in the County’s Regeneration Statement as an asset running through the economic area of South Durham; connecting the main towns of Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Newton Aycliffe and providing a key gateway to the Durham Dales. Together with the Weardale Railway it will form a railway tourism corridor linking the Darlington Railway Museum, Locomotion at Shildon and Weardale Heritage Railway line.

Highways

9.36 The key strategic highway infrastructure required for the successful implementation of the County Durham Plan are the Northern and Western Relief Roads. These proposals are covered by specific policies in Chapter 4.

9.37 The efficient movement of vehicles and people across the entire highway network is crucial to achieving the Council’s ambition of improving the economy as well as being essential in the move towards sustainable local communities. Proposals for improvements to the highway network will be supported, in the absence of suitable alternatives, where they are viable and improve the economic prosperity of the County. Roads must be justified in accordance with the criteria set out and should be routed and/or designed in such a way that they are assimilated into their surroundings with minimum disturbance.

9.38 Highway proposals will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Local Transport Delivery Plan with a schedule of schemes accompanying the submission draft of this Plan. Schemes already identified include:

- Local Road Improvements at the Honest Lawyer Junction (A167);
- Improvements at Northlands Roundabout, Chester-le-Street;

- Strategic Road Network Improvements at Junction 63 of the A1 (M), Chester-le-Street; and
- Phase 2 of the East Durham Link Road at Murton.

9.39 The Council has responsibility for maintaining and improving the Local Road Network and we will continue to consult with the Highways Agency to monitor the impact of developments on the Strategic Road Network (i.e the A1, A19 and A66).

Key Evidence Base

- Local Transport Plan 3 (2011)
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2010)
- County Durham Cycling Strategy (2012)

You told us...

- The Council should focus on priority infrastructure for bus and rail, particularly in congestion hotspots, and improve cycling and walking links.
- The Plan should include a policy for further park and ride facilities in Durham City and to link the bus and rail stations to the University.
- Guided bus ways are more expensive to construct and less-environmentally friendly than conventional rail transport and could not transport freight.

Sustainability Appraisal told us...

- Different measures will work in different areas of the County.
- Rural communities have been especially hard hit by the trend for concentration of shops, services and other facilities in major centres.
- Improving accessibility to jobs and services in a sustainable manner, which lead to a higher retention of a skilled workforce, living and investing in the County and contributing to a prosperous and strong economy.

Alternative Options not chosen..

- No alternatives were proposed were proposed in the Issues and Options Paper.

NPPF Says...

- Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes.
- Local Authorities should work with transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure including large scale facilities such as rail freight interchanges.
- Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice (para. 41).

Implementation and Monitoring

The policy will be delivered by:

- Network Rail, Northern Rail and the Local Transport Authority via the Local Transport Delivery Plan

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy:

- Monitoring by Local Transport Authority

Question 49

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

Utilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure

9.40 This policy addresses those forms of infrastructure not covered elsewhere.

Policy 49**Utilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure**

Proposals for new or extension to existing energy generation⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾, utility transmission facilities, telecommunication masts or other broadcast

iii other than renewable energy generation which is covered in Policy 20 (Renewable Energy Development).

equipment which facilitate the electronic transfer of data, will be permitted where:

- The development is of an appropriate scale and it is sited and designed to minimise its impact on visual amenity in line with Policy 18 (Local Amenity);
- It is located at an existing mast or transmission site, where it is technically and operationally feasible;
- The benefits of the scheme outweigh any negative impacts, particularly in areas of sensitivity such as AONB; Green Belt, World Heritage Site or Conservation Area; and
- The proposal conforms with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

9.41 As well as taking into account existing utilities infrastructure such as overhead power lines, underground cables and gas pipelines which run across or adjacent to development sites, the provision of new infrastructure is required to enable the growth proposed in the Plan. The Council will need to work in close partnership with energy providers to ensure minimum disruption to existing networks as well as enabling the phasing and delivery of appropriate utility infrastructure to support proposed development.

9.42 Changes in demand patterns can require the reinforcement or expansion of the existing infrastructure. The introduction of new technology, such as the increased use of electric cars, can have a significant impact on the need for new infrastructure.

9.43 The Energy White Paper makes it clear that UK energy systems will undergo a significant change over the next 20 years. To meet the

goals of the White Paper it will be necessary to update much of the UK's energy infrastructure during this period. There will be a requirement for:

- An expansion of national infrastructure (e.g. overhead power lines, underground cables, extending substations, new gas pipelines and associated installations); and
- New forms of infrastructure (e.g. smaller scale distributed generation, gas storage sites).

9.44 Modern telecommunications are essential to the national and local economy. Mobile telecommunications and access to high speed, reliable broadband are now considered essential to the success of many business operations and individual lifestyles.

9.45 With the development of new and advanced services the demand for new infrastructure is continuing to grow. The Council supports the enhancement of telecommunications in the County whilst at the same time seeking to ensure that the visual and environmental impacts are minimised.

9.46 Preference and encouragement will be given to mast sharing where this is technically possible. However the cumulative impact of additional infrastructure being added to an existing site will need to be taken into account as part of the application process.

9.47 Where new equipment is proposed, which cannot be located on an existing site due to technical and operational constraints, operators will be required to provide evidence that they have explored the possibility of alternative existing sites. This is of particular importance where the site falls within an area of sensitivity, where it would normally be refused because of siting or appearance considerations.

Policy 50

Sewage and Waste Water Infrastructure

Proposals for new, or extensions to existing, waste water or sewage treatment works will be permitted where:

- a. They are required to improve the treatment of sewage and waste water; or
- b. They are required to improve discharge standards; or
- c. They are required to increase the treatment capacity; and
- d. They are suitably located in relation to the drainage system; and
- e. The proposal conforms with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

9.48 Northumbrian Water (NWL) is the supplier of water and sewerage services for the County, looking after around 70 sewage treatment plants. Changes in population distribution and economic growth over the plan period will increase demand on sewage treatment and the disposal of waste water. The Council have been working closely with NWL and the Environment Agency to ensure there is adequate and timely provision of treatment works in areas identified for growth in the Plan. This is a key part of the IDP and the detail is contained in the Water Cycle Study. ^(liii)

9.49 Priority should be given, where possible, to accommodate any additional capacity within existing sewage treatment works. Where new

sites are required there will need to be a balance between meeting higher discharge standards, the environmental benefits of the development and the protection of the existing environment and amenity.

9.50 Increased demand for sewage treatment and higher water quality standards will mean that there will be additional sludge (a by-product of the process) to be disposed of. Additionally proposals for recovery of sludge to produce beneficial end products will be encouraged where they can be located without significant adverse effects on local communities or the environment.

Key evidence base

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2012)
- Water Cycle Study (2012)

You told us...

- The timely provision of infrastructure to support development, especially where existing infrastructure was overburdened, was very important.
- Future development should not be approved until guarantees are provided that the development will contribute to provide the required facilities and infrastructure.
- The provision of high tech infrastructure (such as broadband) was not sufficiently referenced in the Plan.
- Some of the proposed development sites have existing (or

liii The Water Cycle Study can be found at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=8233>

adjacent) electricity transmission equipment, gas installations, overhead power lines, underground cables, gas pipelines and water pipes. Sites would have to be planned carefully to ensure minimum disturbance to existing infrastructure resources.

The Sustainability Appraisal told us...

- Policies awaiting appraisal.

Alternative Options considered but not selected...

- None.

The National Planning Policy Framework says...

Local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to:

- Assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, waste water and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands (paragraph 162);
- Take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their areas (paragraph 162); and
- Take account of cross boundary issues.
- Section 5 (paragraphs 42 to 46) highlights that high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. This section of the NPPF provides

detailed guidance on supporting the expansion of communication networks, where and how masts and sites should be situated and competition between operators.

- Certain other forms of development are appropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include engineering operations, which will include infrastructure provision such as sewage treatment works (paragraph 90).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- Working in partnership with infrastructure providers to ensure timely delivery of infrastructure

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Monitored through the delivery of infrastructure in line with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Question 50

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

10 Minerals and Waste

10.1 National planning policy requires the Council, as the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority for County Durham to provide for the future needs for new mineral extraction and waste management. We intend to fulfil this requirement through the preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD). The main County Durham Plan document will set out strategic policies for minerals and waste in County Durham over the Plan period. It will:

- Identify the scale of future minerals extraction and waste management capacity that will need to be accommodated within the County over the period to 2030;
- Set out where and when new provision will be necessary;
- Provide clear guidance to enable site specific allocations and planning applications to be considered in both locational and criteria based terms; and
- Allocate strategic sites for new minerals and waste development, where considered necessary.

10.2 A subsequent Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD will then contain detailed development management policies and any non strategic minerals and waste sites.^(liv) Once adopted the policies and provisions of the County Durham Plan and the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD will replace the saved policies of the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (December 2000) and the saved policies of the County

Durham Waste Local Plan (April 2005).

Minerals and Waste in County Durham

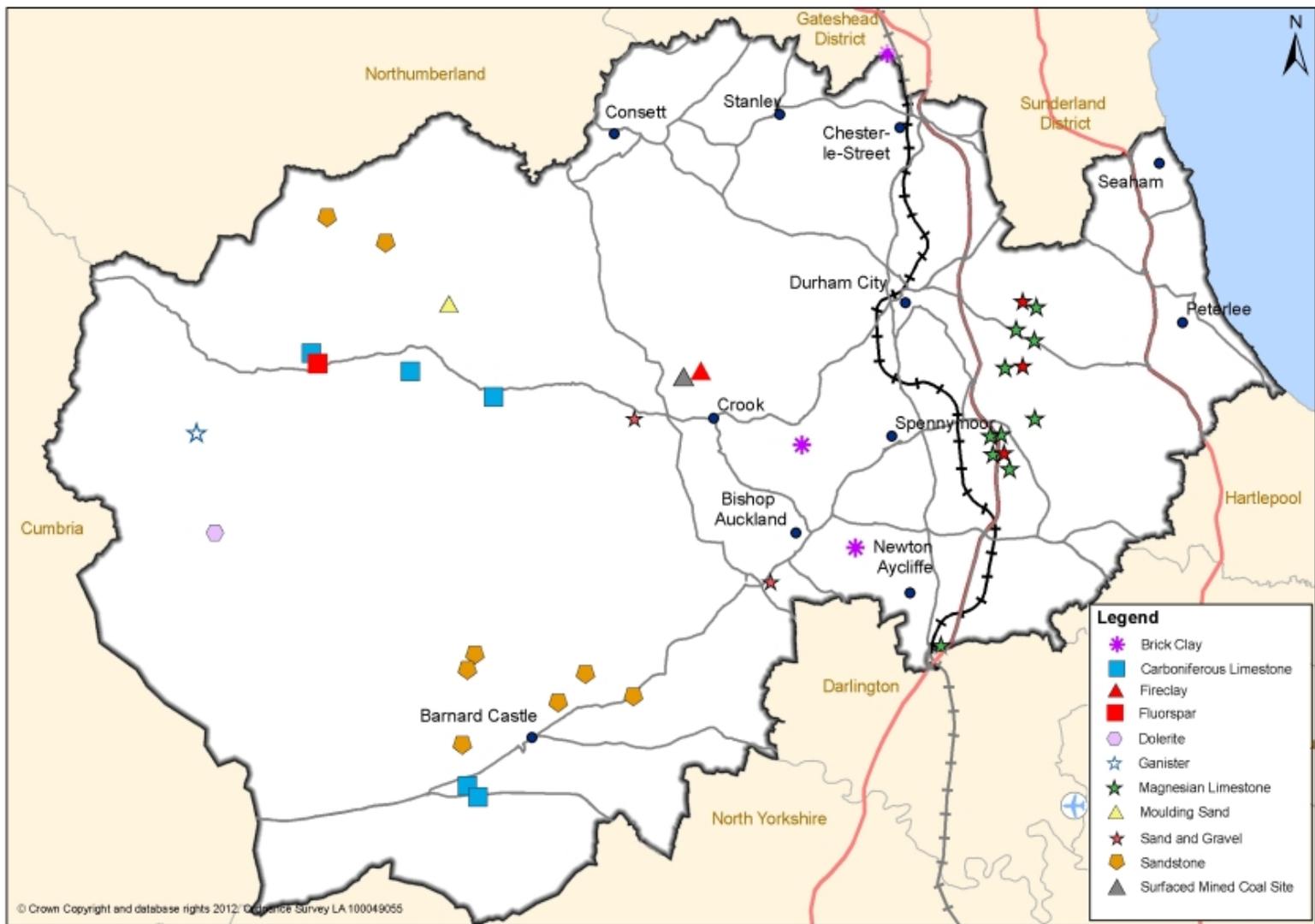
10.3 Minerals are a fundamental natural resource. They are of vital importance to modern economies and are essential to sustainable economic growth. They contribute to the local economy through both direct employment and as essential raw materials, without which it would be impossible for the building and construction industry to deliver the new development and infrastructure which is required through the County Durham Plan.

10.4 County Durham is a geologically rich county and possesses a wide range of mineral resources. The production of aggregates^(lv) for use in the building and construction sector is the most important mineral extraction activity today. County Durham is a regionally important producer of aggregates and produces significant quantities of magnesian limestone, carboniferous limestone, dolerite and sand and gravel every year. Other important non aggregate minerals worked in the County include: brick making raw materials including coal measures mudstone and glacial clay to supply three of the regions remaining brick works; and natural building and roofing stone for a variety of purposes including general walling, building, paving, roofing and architectural building stone.

^{liv} Further details of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document are set out in Appendix H).

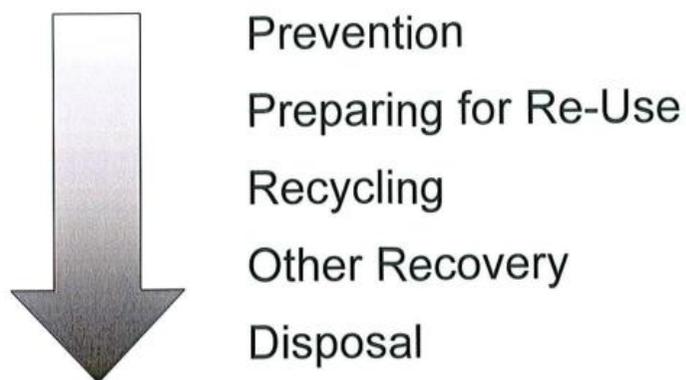
^{lv} Aggregates are normally defined as being hard granular, materials which are suitable for use either on their own or with the addition of cement lime or a bituminous binder in construction. In Britain it is common practice to distinguish between primary aggregates and alternative sources such as secondary aggregates. Primary aggregates are produced from naturally occurring mineral deposits, extracted for use as aggregate and used for the first time. Secondary aggregates are usually defined as (a) aggregates obtained as a by product of other quarrying and mining operations such as colliery spoil or (b) aggregates obtained as a byproduct of industrial processes such as power station ash.

Map 8 Mineral Sites in County Durham



10.5 Historically, County Durham has also been a major producer of coal. Although all deep coal mines have now closed, continued interest remains in the extraction of coal by surface mined methods. Magnesian limestone is also worked for industrial purposes for use in the steel industry and a proportion of magnesian limestone, which is either unsuitable for aggregates or high grade uses, is used to produce agricultural lime to correct the acidity in soil. In addition County Durham contains a range of other mineral resources including deposits of fireclay that is sometimes found in association with coal, silica sand and vein minerals such as fluorspar and barytes although none are currently being worked today.

Figure 4 Waste Hierarchy



10.6 Waste is a natural by-product of all social and economic activity. Over the last twenty years international and national concern for the impact of the disposal of waste has led to a fundamental change in how waste is viewed. Rather than managing the disposal of waste primarily through landfill using voids created by mineral extraction, waste is now recognised as a valuable resource. Planning for waste management now seeks to

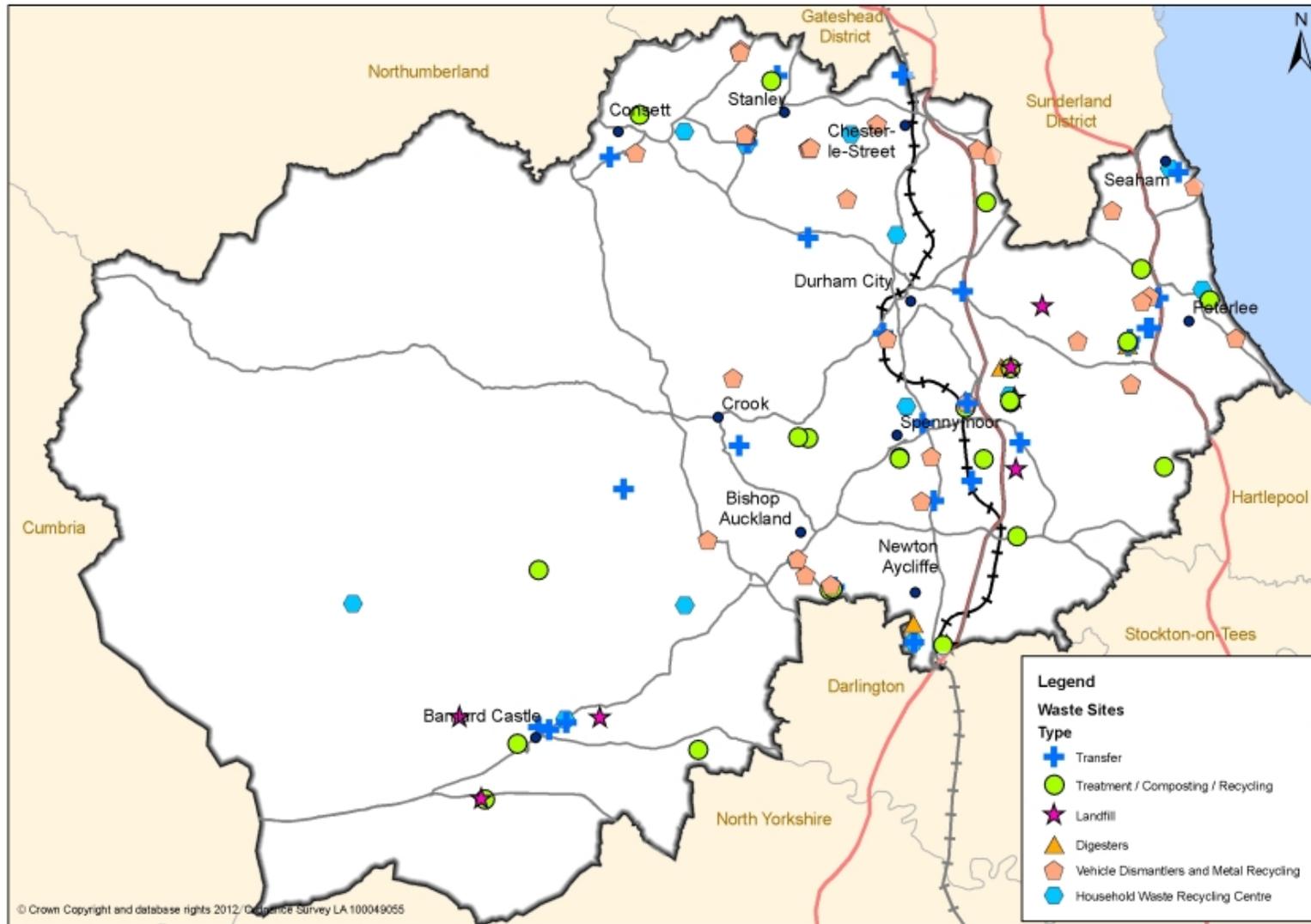
tackle the growth in waste, prevent waste at source, decouple economic growth from waste growth, and maximise the recovery of value through waste management which focuses upon increased recycling, composting and energy recovery, with final disposal a last resort, in line with the waste hierarchy.

10.7 County Durham faces major challenges in planning for waste management. Not only is the policy landscape changing, but the planning system and regional apparatus with it, and radical shifts in the behaviour of waste managers, waste producers and the public are needed. Waste management is increasingly seen as part of the wider efforts to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change and the Government's Waste Review has pointed to the 'zero waste' economy as a clear goal. The strategy of the County reflects the Waste Hierarchy and will play a vital role in ensuring sustainable development in County Durham and ensuring that resource use is within limits whilst ensuring necessary infrastructure is appropriate and in the right places. County Durham is a major producer of waste. Currently over 1.6 million tonnes of waste require management in County Durham every year^(lvi) consisting of a wide range of waste streams including significant quantities of municipal, commercial and industrial and inert waste. In addition to these streams a range of other waste streams need to be managed including hazardous waste, agricultural waste, sewage and water treatment sludge and low level radioactive waste.

10.8 As part of the effort to encourage sustainable development and respond to climate change, the County Durham Plan needs to ensure that the use of resources is put onto a more sustainable footing. This will require careful extraction and efficient use of mineral resources, and the prevention and reduction of waste and recovery of value through sustainable waste management, as part of the move towards a low carbon economy.

lvi Waste Interrogator, Environment Agency, 2010 and Environment Agency website: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/data/132641.aspx>.

Map 9 Existing Waste Management Sites in County Durham



10.9 The minerals and waste policies of the County Durham Plan have been prepared against a backdrop of planning reform including the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East and the replacement of the existing suite of national planning policy and minerals planning guidance notes and statements with the new National Planning Policy Framework. The Regional Technical Advisory Body (RTAB) on waste has also ceased. The NPPF does not address waste and current indications are that national waste policy will be published alongside the new National Waste Management Plan for England, now expected in 2013. As a direction of travel, the Waste Review of June 2011 sets out the Government's aims for a 'zero waste' economy.

10.10 The minerals and waste policies of the County Durham Plan are founded on a robust and credible evidence base, set out in Minerals and Waste Technical Papers. A single minerals and waste background paper will be prepared to support the submission version of the Local Plan. The approach to minerals and waste planning set out in this chapter builds upon, and has had regard to, previous consultation undertaken.

Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

10.11 The minerals and waste policies will seek to deliver the vision and strategic objectives 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the County Durham Plan.

Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management

Policy 51

Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management

All new built development proposals should use mineral resources efficiently, minimise waste and, where technically and economically feasible, use a proportion of recycled and secondary aggregates in place of primary minerals.

All proposals for mineral extraction will be required to minimise the amount of mineral waste produced in extraction, handling, processing and stockpiling; and maximise the potential for mineral waste to be used in recycling or on-site restoration. If mineral waste is not required for these purposes then where practicable, a market for its potential use should be identified.

Where mineral extraction is acceptable in principle the concurrent working of two or more minerals from the same site will be encouraged and permitted provided that:

- a. The operation or restoration of the site is not prejudiced or significantly delayed; and
- b. The overall proposal remains acceptable and does not have a significant adverse impact on the the environment and amenity of local communities in accordance with other relevant policies of the County Durham Plan.

Proposals for temporary recycling facilities related to construction, demolition and highway projects with on-site re-use of materials will be supported. Proposals for temporary recycling facilities for construction and demolition wastes will also be permitted at active quarries and landfill sites for a temporary period not exceeding the permitted life of the quarry or landfill site provided that:

- c. The operation or restoration of the site is not prejudiced or significantly delayed; and
- d. The overall proposal remains acceptable and does not have a significant adverse impact on the the environment and amenity of local communities in accordance with other relevant policies of the County Durham Plan.

The extraction of minerals will be permitted only for the purposes for which their specific qualities are essential. Control will be exercised through use of conditions, planning obligations or other legal agreements as necessary and appropriate.

10.12 In order to deliver sustainable development the Plan encourages the sustainable use of minerals and waste. For minerals this will be achieved by adopting an approach to minerals supply which encourages the efficient use of mineral resources, by reducing as far as possible the quantity of material used and mineral waste generated. The use of as much recycled^(lvii) and secondary aggregate^(lviii) material as possible, before finally securing the remainder of material needed through new primary mineral extraction will also be encouraged. Similarly, for waste we will seek to ensure that waste is managed in accordance with the principles of the Waste Hierarchy. This requires that priority should be given to the reduction of waste at source, followed by increased re-use, followed by recovery (recycling, composting etc), with less reliance on the disposal of waste without any recovery.

10.13 In order to help conserve mineral resources for future generations it is important that all new development projects use mineral resources efficiently, and increase the use of recycled materials and material previously consigned to waste as a mineral working deposit. Where it is technically and economically feasible new development projects should always use a proportion of recycled and secondary aggregates in place of primary minerals. Similarly, where redevelopment occurs on brownfield sites it is recognised that development schemes will need to maximise

the potential for recovering and recycling construction materials. Through its own activities the Council will seek to do this wherever possible and will support and encourage the building and construction industry to consider opportunities to do the same. In order to help facilitate the use of secondary and recycled aggregates, we will seek to guide new secondary aggregate recycling facilities to suitable industrial site locations and large brownfield redevelopment sites. We also recognise that opportunities may exist to locate recycling facilities at active quarries and in conjunction with landfilling operations on a time limited basis, which is in accordance and does not conflict with the primary planning permission at the quarry or the landfill site.

10.14 When new primary extraction is required the Plan will seek to conserve the County's mineral resources to ensure their long term availability. We will do this by encouraging mineral operators to minimise the amount of mineral waste produced in extraction, handling, processing and stockpiling, by maximising the potential for mineral waste to be used for recycling or in-site restoration, but if not required for these purposes and where practicable, identify a market for its use.

10.15 When two or more minerals are found together in the same site it is often beneficial in economic and environmental terms for the minerals to be worked together. We will therefore require the consideration of concurrent working of minerals, thereby enabling full recovery of mineral resources and their beneficial use. Examples in Durham are fireclay which is often found in conjunction with coal suitable for surface mined extraction and permian sand which can often be extracted from magnesian limestone quarries. Experience has shown there may also be scope for better use

lvii Recycled Aggregates can be sourced from a variety of material: arising from construction and demolition (concrete, bricks, tiles), highway maintenance (asphalt planings), excavation and utility operations. They can be purchased from demolition sites or from suitably equipped processing centres. The quality of the recycled aggregate is dependent on the quality of the materials that are processed, the selection and separation processing used, and the degree of final processing that these materials undergo. There are two methods of producing recycled aggregates: in situ at the site of the arisings, or ex situ in a central plant. Major cost savings can be achieved by in situ production of recycled aggregate, including transport costs and the accrual of the environmental benefits of reducing lorry movements.

lviii Secondary Aggregates are derived from a very wide range of materials that may be used as aggregates. Many arisings of secondary materials have a strong regional character. For example, china clay sand in SW England, slate waste in North Wales, and metallurgical slag in South Wales, Yorkshire and Humberside.

of materials which can be discarded as waste or used in restoration or sold for lower grade uses.

10.16 Some industrial processes require high grade minerals (minerals of high quality or purity) such as dolomite, some of which is suitable for use in the chemical, metallurgical and glass industries. Although mineral deposits will usually comprise material of varying qualities, it is important that these scarce resources are not used for more general purposes, such as construction aggregates, when lower grade alternatives are readily available. We shall ensure through the use of conditions and/or agreements that these resources are worked in the most efficient manner possible so that proper use can be made of their special qualities and that they remain available for the future. Although this approach primarily relates to dolomite at present, industrial specifications may change and other minerals may be considered as high grade during the Plan period.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)
- Waste Technical Paper (2010)
- National and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2005-2020 (2009)
- European Waste Framework Directive (2008)

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on how should we best encourage the use of secondary and recycled aggregates. Earlier consultation generally supported the majority of options which were proposed. However, Options A and F have not been taken forward

for the reasons set out below (see alternative options not chosen). While we recognise that Option B which stated, encourage the efficient use of minerals by requiring that high quality minerals are reserved for appropriate high quality end uses, is not related to encouraging the use of secondary and recycled aggregates, we consider that this option could form a suitable part of a sustainable minerals and waste management policy. Our preferred approach will also seek to encourage the minimisation and beneficial use of minerals waste for recycling, or on site restoration if the material is not suitable for recycling (Option C); seek to identify locations such as general industrial estates, existing or proposed waste management facilities and active quarries as suitable places for temporary recycled and secondary aggregate facilities, subject to certain safeguards (Option D); to require that all new developments use minerals efficiently and include measures to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover the waste they produce during construction and demolition, where possible maximise the on-site use of recycled and secondary aggregates, and the reuse of other building materials, within the development (Option E); and to encourage developers to maximise the potential for recovering and recycling construction materials at the end of the development's life (although we accept that it will be to onerous to require that consideration should be given to this through the design of, and specification of materials used in the development), (Option F).

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Sustainability of the Issues and Options recommended Option F a combination of all options. However, for the reasons stated the preferred approach is a combination of all options with the exception of Option A.

Alternative Options not chosen...

Option A which proposed, conserve mineral resources by requiring that new crushed rock and sand and gravel working is only granted where it would meet an established need and cannot be met by secondary and recycled aggregates, has not been chosen because the contribution of secondary and recycled aggregates has already been taken into account by Government in preparing its guidelines for aggregates provision. Accordingly, Option G which proposed all of the above i.e Options A to F is not chosen.

The NPPF tells us...

Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the Country needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation (paragraph 142). So far as practicable, take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the supply of materials, before considering extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously; (paragraph 143). Minerals planning authorities should work with other relevant organisations to use the best available information to assess the projected demand for their use, taking full account of opportunities to use materials from secondary and other sources which could provide suitable alternatives to primary materials (paragraph. 163).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process
- The preparation of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Capacity (tonnage) of secondary and recycled aggregate management facilities

Question 51

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

Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure and waste management sites

Policy 52

Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure and waste management sites

Important minerals related infrastructure including mineral processing infrastructure, secondary aggregates recycling facilities, concreting plants, mineral transportation infrastructure and waste management sites, as shown on the Proposals Map^(lix), shall be safeguarded and

lix These facilities are listed in Appendix J 'Safeguarded Minerals and Waste Sites'.

protected from all non minerals and non waste related development.

Planning permission will not be granted for non-minerals or non-waste related development

- a. That would result in the loss of established minerals related infrastructure and waste management sites unless it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure no longer meets the current or anticipated future needs of the minerals, building and construction industry or the waste management industry; and
- b. That is proposed in the vicinity of existing minerals related infrastructure or waste management sites unless it can be demonstrated that it will not prevent or prejudice the current operation or future use of the minerals related infrastructure or waste management site.

10.17 County Durham contains an established network of minerals^(ix) and waste^(ixi) related management infrastructure. Such facilities are considered essential to the continued operation of the minerals and construction industry, and to the collection, management and disposal of waste in County Durham. They will be safeguarded and protected from all non minerals and non waste related development unless it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure no longer meets current or anticipated future needs.

10.18 While many of these facilities are located within the open countryside, within operational quarries or upon established industrial estates, there remains a risk that the future operation of some facilities

could be compromised if new non-minerals or waste development is permitted in close proximity to this infrastructure. For proposals within the vicinity of important minerals and waste infrastructure we will consider whether the environmental and amenity impacts of the permitted minerals and waste operations are compatible with the proposed non-minerals and waste development.

10.19 The majority of minerals in County Durham are currently transported by road. It is recognised that this is unlikely to change to a significant degree due to the nature of mineral working, and the limited extent of the rail network. If the use of the rail network is to be increased, links to existing or potential workings need to be protected from inappropriate development. Any proposal which would breach an unused rail alignment via permanent development will not be acceptable. In order to encourage the sustainable transport of minerals a number of rail alignments and existing or proposed rail transshipment facilities will be safeguarded. Temporary rail transshipment facilities operating under time limited planning permission will not be safeguarded.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)
- Waste Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

Earlier consultation supported the proposed approach to safeguarding mineral related infrastructure and waste sites. Although some

ix Important mineral processing facilities include brick works, coated road stone plants and the kilns for the production of calcined material at Thrislington Quarry, secondary aggregate recycling facilities and concrete plants

ixi Important waste management infrastructure in County Durham includes household waste recycling centres (HWRCs), recycling and treatment facilities, waste transfer stations and landfill sites

respondents suggested additional mineral related infrastructure which should be safeguarded.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA of the Issues and Options supported the need to safeguard rail facilities and alignments on the basis that safeguarding rail facilities and alignments will contribute to improving the sustainability of the minerals industry in County Durham. SA is in agreement with the need to safeguard secondary aggregates recycling facilities and concreting plants. Safeguarding such facilities will help to ensure that potential conflict between residential areas and minerals processing and recycling facilities is avoided. It will help to ensure that facilities are available for use within the County, reducing the need for additional transportation of minerals outside of the County for processing etc, reducing environmental impacts and costs to minerals operators. Safeguarding of secondary aggregate facilities shows support for encouraging recycling of aggregates/reducing use of primary aggregates. The SA advised that we need to ensure that facilities and infrastructure which support the minerals sector are not compromised by non mineral development.

Alternative Options not Chosen

It was not appropriate for the Plan to consider alternative spatial options for safeguarding.

The NPPF says...

In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should safeguard: existing, planned and potential rail heads, rail links to quarries, wharfage and associated storage, handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport by rail, sea or inland waterways of minerals, including recycled, secondary and marine-dredged materials; and

existing, planned and potential sites for concrete batching, the manufacture of coated materials, other concrete products and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material (paragraph 143). The National Planning Policy Framework does not address waste. New waste policies will be published in the forthcoming National Waste Management Plan for England.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- None

Question 52

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

Meeting the Need for Primary Aggregates

Policy 53

Meeting the Need for Primary Aggregates

The Council will make sufficient land available for mineral working to enable a steady and adequate supply of primary aggregates to be maintained.

In making decisions on proposals for new aggregate workings the Council will seek to maintain a crushed rock aggregate landbank of at least ten years and maintain a sand and gravel landbank of at least seven years. Proposals for further working will not be permitted where the crushed rock or sand and gravel landbank is significantly in excess of the landbank unless:

- a. The site is allocated as a strategic site within the Local Plan or a non-strategic site in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document; or
- b. The proposal contributes to meeting the identified need for carboniferous limestone (7.2 million tonnes of carboniferous limestone in the period to 2020 and a further 9 million tonnes in the period beyond 2020) and that this identified need has not been subsequently met by new permissions, and new working does not add significantly to the total landbank of permitted reserves in the County; or
- c. The Annual County Durham Local Aggregate Assessment identifies a need for further working that cannot be met by either strategic allocations within the Local Plan or non-strategic allocations within the Minerals and Waste Policies and

Allocations Development Plan Document or by existing planning permissions, and new working does not add significantly to the total landbank of permitted reserves in the County; or

- d. Working would prevent the sterilisation of mineral resources and mineral extraction in advance of other development which is either subject to planning permission or allocated in the County Durham Plan (in accordance with Policy 58 (Safeguarding Mineral Resources)); or
- e. The proposal is acceptable as a borrow pit and would provide aggregates in proximity to a specific construction project; and
- f. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment and amenity of local communities in accordance with other relevant policies of the Plan.

Location of Working for Specific Minerals

Magnesian Limestone

During the Plan period to 2030, no new or extended magnesian limestone workings will be permitted for either aggregate or agricultural lime production.

Carboniferous Limestone

In order to meet the identified need for further carboniferous limestone working, priority will be given to proposals for major new sites and extensions to existing sites in locations outside - and which do not adversely impact upon - the North Pennines AONB.

Major new sites or major extensions to existing sites within or adjacent to the North Pennines AONB will be subject to the most rigorous

examination and will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, and where there is an overriding need for the mineral which can not be met from alternative sites or locations outside of the AONB and which is sufficient to outweigh the need to conserve the area.

Small scale extensions to existing quarries and limited reworking of former carboniferous limestone quarries that are in need of restoration within or adjacent to the North Pennines AONB will be carefully considered. Proposals should conserve the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside, wildlife and cultural heritage, avoid adverse impacts on recreational opportunities and provide substantive landscape, biodiversity and/or geodiversity benefits upon restoration.

Dolerite

If an alternative supply of dolerite to that currently available at Force Garth Quarry is required to enable a steady and adequate supply, proposals for mineral working will only be permitted provided that there is a need for the mineral which cannot be met from other existing permissions within County Durham or alternative sources elsewhere.

Sand and Gravel

If further working is necessary towards the end of the Plan period, in order to enable a steady and adequate supply of sand and gravel and maintain the sand and gravel landbank in excess of the minimum seven year period, then proposals for further basal permian sand extraction from beneath the floor of existing magnesian limestone quarries will be prioritised, followed by the lateral extension of existing magnesian limestone quarries, or via extensions to other sand and gravel sites outside of environmentally important areas.

Scale of new Aggregate Working

10.20 County Durham is a major source of aggregate minerals in North East England producing a range of types of crushed rock aggregate including magnesian limestone, carboniferous limestone, dolerite and sand and gravel. Although production has fallen in recent years, as shown in Table 13, due to the recent economic downturn, the scale of County Durham's contribution to meeting regional need has in the past been significant. Accordingly, we recognise that ensuring a continued supply of aggregates from County Durham is essential to the functioning of the North East economy.

Table 10 Scale of Crushed Rock and Sand & Gravel sales 2005 to 2010 (thousand tonnes).

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
County Durham Crushed Rock Sales	3,777	3,384	3,559	3,036	1,920	2,056
Crushed Rock Sales from North East England	5,740	5,652	5,689	5,079	3,379	3,462
County Durham Sand and Gravel Sales	431*	391*	221*	183	199	164
Sand and Gravel Sales from North East England	1,360	1,305	1,037	926	757	757

Source: North East Regional Aggregates Working Party, Annual Aggregates Monitoring Reports. *Includes estimated sales of 20,000 tonnes per annum from North Gare in Tees Valley.

10.21 Government guidance requires that we should plan for a steady

and adequate supply of aggregates and requires the preparation of an Annual Local Aggregate Assessment. This will be a key document, which will underpin our future approach to the future supply of aggregates as set out in the Plan, providing the evidence base for future decisions on planning applications.^(ixii) While our first Annual Local Aggregate Assessment has yet to be produced, significant work has already been undertaken to consider the scale of future aggregate working for which provision should be made through the Plan.

10.22 The starting point for our assessment on future demand and supply of aggregates has been the Government's National and Local Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2005 to 2020 (September 2011). These guidelines require that County Durham must make provision for 59.4 million tonnes of crushed rock and 5 million tonnes of sand and gravel over the period to 2020. To achieve this scale of provision County Durham's quarries must be able to produce a maximum of 3,712,500 tonnes of crushed rock and 312,500 tonnes of sand and gravel per annum. Given the time horizon of the County Durham Plan, which runs to 2030, our forecasts have used these annual figures to calculate an overall total aggregates requirement. Residual need has been calculated after taking into account that the demand for minerals from 2005 to 2010 has already been met by sales during this time period and by deducting the extent of permitted reserves as at 31st December 2010. In addition the contribution of additional permitted reserves emanating from planning permissions issued since 1st January 2011 has also been taken into account.

10.23 As a result Table 14 sets out the current position in relation to primary aggregate supply. It identifies that over the period 1st January 2011 to 31st December 2030 we will need to make sufficient land available to enable the production of a maximum of 74,250,000 tonnes of crushed rock (comprising magnesian limestone, carboniferous limestone and dolerite) and 6,250,000 tonnes of sand and gravel. It also identifies that

taking into account the extent of permitted reserves on 31st December 2010, and additional permissions issued since that date, that there are more than sufficient permitted reserves within County Durham aggregate mineral sites to meet future need over the plan period to 2030.

Table 11 Total Aggregates requirement calculations (All figures in tonnes)

	Crushed Rock	Sand and Gravel (tonnes)
County Durham's sub-regional aggregates apportionment 2005 – 2020 ⁽¹⁾	59,400,000	5,000,000
Requirement 2021 – 2030 ⁽²⁾	37,125,000	3,125,000
Requirement 2005 to 2030.	96,525,000	8,125,000
Adjustment to take into account that provision has already been met for 2005 to 2010.	- 22,275,000	-1,875,000
Total Requirement 2011 to 2030	74,250,000	6,250,000
Permitted Reserves 31.12.10 ⁽³⁾	135,204,550 (equivalent to a landbank of 36.4 years)	3,482,900 (equivalent to a landbank of 11.1 years)
Additional Permitted Reserves due to planning permissions issued since 31.12.10	16,350,000	5,166,800
Permitted reserves 31.12.10 + Additional Permitted Reserves due to planning permissions issues since	151,554,550 (equivalent to 40.8 year)	8,649,700 (equivalent to 27.7 year)

ixii The requirement to prepare an Annual Local Aggregate Assessment was set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, published 28th March 2012.

	Crushed Rock	Sand and Gravel (tonnes)
31.12.10	landbank)	landbank)
Residual Need to be met by allocations or permissions to 2030	None. (Surplus of 77,304,550 tonnes)(Equivalent to 21 year landbank at 2030)	None (Surplus of 2,399,700 tonnes) (Equivalent to 8 year landbank at 2030).

1. Source: National and Local Aggregate Supply Guidelines September 2011.
2. Calculations based upon ten times the annual requirement of the current sub regional apportionment i.e. 3,712,500 tonnes of crushed rock and 312,500 tonnes of sand and gravel.
3. Source: North East Aggregates Working Party Annual Aggregates Monitoring Report 2010.

10.24 Despite the overall healthy quantitative position we have also sought to consider the ability of County Durham's aggregates sites to achieve the scale of production that will be required to meet our crushed rock and sand and gravel sub-regional apportionment and to produce the range of types of crushed rock aggregate and sand and gravel aggregate that County Durham has traditionally produced. Taking into account the contribution of existing permitted reserves to meet future demand, it is expected that over the Plan period to 2030, the future need for sand and gravel, magnesian limestone aggregate and dolerite will be met through the working of existing permitted reserves. Accordingly, with the exception of permitting proposals to extend the duration of working at existing quarries to allow the full recovery of permitted reserves, there will be presumption against any new or extended sand and gravel, magnesian limestone aggregate and dolerite workings. It is expected that over the Plan period to 2030 the future need for carboniferous limestone will be met from a combination of existing permitted reserves and new workings. Accordingly, proposals to enable the winning and working of a further 7.2 million tonnes of carboniferous limestone in the period to 2020 and a further 9 million tonnes in the period beyond 2020 will be permitted.

Magnesian limestone

10.25 Magnesian limestone underlies most of East Durham and has traditionally been divided into the lower, middle and upper magnesian limestone. The most commercially important part is the lower magnesian limestone series, which outcrops along the escarpment of the East Durham Limestone Plateau between Pittington and Shildon. Within this part of the plateau there is a long history of quarrying which, together with both past and current quarrying activity has had a significant impact upon the area. The cumulative environmental impacts of past working was recognised by the Minerals Local Plan (December 2000) which sought to prevent further impacts by establishing a comprehensive approach to the planning for future magnesian limestone, providing for recognised needs whilst minimising the impact of past and present working. With the exception of two allocations at Thrislington Quarry, to provide high grade dolomitic limestone, the Minerals Local Plan sought to prohibit any further new or extended magnesian limestone workings.

10.26 By scale of production, magnesian limestone is the most important mineral worked in County Durham today. Prior to the current economic recession approximately 2.5 million tonnes of magnesian limestone was extracted from County Durham's nine permitted magnesian limestone quarries and used for aggregate purposes every year. More recently we estimate that production of magnesian limestone for aggregate uses has fallen to approximately 1.1 million tonnes. This decrease in production is considered to be mainly as result of the economic downturn and a subsequent reduction in demand for primary aggregates rather than any shortage of available permitted reserves. In addition, the County's magnesian limestone quarries are also recognised as an important source of non-aggregate material. A process of calcination is used at the kilns at Thrislington Quarry to process up to 400,000 tonnes of high grade dolomitic limestone to produce a high grade product for use in the steel industry (see Policy 54, (High Grade Dolomite)). In recent years between 300 and 400 thousand tonnes of agricultural lime, which is used to correct the

acidity of soil, has been produced at four quarries as a secondary product.

10.27 Through work to prepare the Plan we have developed a comprehensive and robust evidence base which has enabled us to establish the overall composition of the crushed rock landbank on a resource basis. It also includes the distribution of permitted reserves across all crushed rock quarries within the crushed rock landbank and the contribution that crushed rock quarries have made to past sales in recent years. Consideration of the composition of the crushed rock landbank has enabled us to identify that a significant proportion of the County's crushed rock landbank lies within the County's nine magnesian limestone quarries. At the end of 2010 permitted reserves of magnesian limestone aggregate were estimated to be approximately 106 million tonnes. However, the extent of permitted reserves have now increased further following the issue of the planning permission to extend Thrislington Quarry east of the A1(M).^(lxiii) Consideration of the distribution of permitted reserves across individual crushed rock quarries has also enabled us to identify the extent of permitted reserves within individual sites and the potential of contribution of each site to the future supply of magnesian limestone aggregate.

10.28 It is apparent that a number of magnesian limestone quarries that have made a significant contribution to sales of magnesian limestone aggregate are due to cease extraction following the exhaustion of their existing permitted reserves. In line with their existing planning permissions (Aycliffe Quarry in 2014 and Bishop Middleham Quarry in 2015). We consider that the scale of remaining permitted reserves and the potential productive capacity of remaining sites should still enable the future need for this mineral to be met from existing quarries. However, in order for the remaining quarries to meet future predicted need, it will be necessary for:

- During the first half of the Plan period two quarries may require the time period for extraction to be extended. The planning permission at Thrislington Quarry west of the A1(M) planning permission requires extraction to cease in January 2015 and Coxhoe Quarry in September 2018.^(lxiv); and
- The scale of extraction at a number of magnesian limestone quarries to increase over and above current levels including potentially from currently inactive sites. Should further production be necessary, it is recognised that magnesian limestone aggregate may potentially be obtained from Hawthorn Quarry following the agreement of new modern working and restoration conditions by the Council under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995.

10.29 Should the market require it, we accept that a number of sites will need to increase their scale of production in order meet pre-recession levels of production. Nevertheless we recognise that, provided it is within the limits required by existing planning permissions, it is for individual operators to determine the level of production they wish to aim to achieve from their existing permitted reserves, in light of market conditions. In such circumstances the Council will not normally permit new working while significant permitted reserves remain to be worked within existing quarries. Through work to monitor the Plan and prepare our Annual Local Aggregate Assessment we will monitor the scale of production of magnesian limestone aggregate and, if it is established that the County's magnesian limestone quarries are unable to meet the scale of demand placed upon them, we will determine why and if necessary identify further provision.

10.30 Through a previous call for new mineral sites we received two proposals from Tarmac Northern Ltd for extensions to Coxhoe Quarry

lxiii This permission enables the recovery of 29 million tonnes of magnesian limestone of which it anticipated that 11,350,000 tonnes will be used for high grade purposes, with the remainder of the mineral allowed by this permission being used for a combination of aggregate purposes and for agricultural lime. Annual production being anticipated at up to 400,000 tonnes of high grade material, 700,000 tonnes of aggregates and 100,000 tonnes of agricultural lime.

lxiv It is also noted that the time period for mineral extraction at Crime Rigg Quarry ends in December 2021.

and West Cornforth Quarry, a proposal from Sherburn Stone Co to extend Witch Hill Quarry and a proposal from W&M Thompson to extend Bishop Middleham Quarry. Given the extent of permitted reserves of crushed rock and in particular magnesian limestone we do not consider that it will be necessary to allocate extensions to any of these sites. However, we do recognise that scope may exist for operators to propose surrendering existing permitted reserves in exchange for new permitted reserves, if such proposals arise we will consider each proposal on their merits taking into account all relevant policies of the Plan.

Agricultural Lime

10.31 Agricultural lime which is used to correct the acidity of soil is produced from a number of magnesian limestone quarries in County Durham. This material is often the fines, which remain after magnesian limestone and high grade dolomite have been crushed and screened to meet specifications for aggregates or other markets. It can also be produced from specific upper horizons of the lower magnesian limestone succession which are unsuitable for aggregate purposes, as part of mineral workings to extract magnesian limestone aggregate. However, unlike aggregates, there are no targets which require the production of agricultural lime on a regional or sub-regional basis and only very limited information is available on production. Available evidence has shown that agricultural lime has been produced in County Durham, as a by-product, where the primary purpose of extraction or the main product produced at individual quarries by volume has been for aggregates and/or high grade dolomite production^(lxv). This approach appears to have worked well in County Durham allowing the productive use of material which otherwise would not have been used other than in site restoration.

10.32 Two mineral operators have proposed extensions to two existing magnesian limestone quarries in order to enable the production of

agricultural lime, for both the domestic and export markets. Both proposals would also require the extraction of significant quantities of aggregates, approximately 250,000 tonnes per annum from each quarry extension. Given the extent of existing permitted reserves of magnesian limestone within the County and taking into account known reserves which remain available for agricultural lime production, allowing proposals for further magnesian limestone workings would undermine the approach of the Plan and would lead to a supply of magnesian limestone aggregate, in excess of that which is required to maintain a steady and adequate supply of aggregates. Permitting additional new or extended magnesian limestone workings would increase the impact of mineral working on the environment and amenity of local communities and potentially lead to undesirable cumulative impacts. We are also aware that there are other existing or potential sources of supply from magnesian limestone quarries in the North East, and from other quarries elsewhere in the Country and no evidence to indicate a shortage of this product in England. Accordingly, no specific provision will be made for agricultural lime through the Plan.

10.33 Nevertheless we recognise that there are likely to be continued opportunities, for existing operators if they chose to do so, to continue to produce agricultural lime from existing magnesian limestone quarries, some of which are not currently producing agricultural lime. Accordingly, we will encourage operators at existing magnesian limestone quarries to make best use of magnesian limestone to produce agricultural lime using suitable material, either from fines or softer horizons of overburden which would otherwise be discarded as waste or used in restoration. We will also favourably consider proposals for revised schemes of working which would enable the utilisation of material which would otherwise be used in site restoration.

lxv In 2007 it is estimated that approximately 2,500,000 tonnes of magnesian limestone aggregate was sold from County Durham's quarries compared to approximately 321,000 tonnes of agricultural lime.

Carboniferous limestone

10.34 Carboniferous limestone naturally occurs in West Durham and outcrops fairly continuously along the sides of Weardale above Frosterley and to the south of Barnard Castle along the A66. Although similar in some respects to magnesian limestone, carboniferous limestone often differs in some of its physical properties. In particular, it tends to be harder and more durable than magnesian limestone and therefore suited to more heavy duty uses, for example in road building and sea defence works. By volume it is the second most important mineral worked in the County today. Prior to the current economic downturn approximately 900,000 tonnes was extracted from County Durham's four active quarries every year. Using more recent information provided by operators we now estimate that production of carboniferous limestone for aggregate uses has fallen to approximately 600,000 tonnes in 2010, due to the economic downturn and a resulting reduction in demand for primary aggregates, rather than any current shortage of available permitted reserves.

10.35 Planning to maintain supplies of carboniferous limestone is a major challenge. For many years no information has been available on the extent of permitted reserves or sales^(ixvi). However, through work to develop a evidence base we have been able to identify the overall contribution that the County's existing carboniferous limestone sites make to overall crushed sales and the extent of remaining permitted reserves within individual site. We estimate that only approximately 10.76 million tonnes, (approximately 8% of the County's overall crushed rock landbank) lies within the County's five remaining carboniferous limestone sites.

10.36 While we acknowledge that it is difficult to forecast with any certainty the future scale of production, we are of the view that without additional provision the majority of existing permitted reserves of carboniferous limestone will become exhausted during the Plan period (circa 2024). Accordingly, on the basis of current information and in order to ensure that County Durham can seek to maintain production at pre-recession levels, sufficient land will need to be permitted to enable the extraction of a further 7,200,000 tonnes of carboniferous limestone. In the second half of the Plan period, we forecast that a further 9,000,000 tonnes of carboniferous limestone will need to be permitted to meet longer term need. Through the annual Local Aggregate Assessment we will review our forecasts for further provision and seek to maintain a steady and adequate supply of this mineral.

10.37 While a proportion of future permitted reserves and sales may become available should new modern working and restoration conditions at Harrow Bank and Ashy Bank Quarry^(ixvii) in Weardale be issued, it is clear that significant new provision is required. Through a previous call for new mineral sites we have received a proposal from Aggregate Industries for a 14ha extension to Heights Quarry. This quarry, while located within the North Pennines AONB, is a key carboniferous limestone quarry of importance to the supply of carboniferous limestone in County Durham being able to supply up to 390,000 tonnes of mineral per annum. While this site has planning permission to 2042, a significant proportion (approximately 3.4 million tonnes) of the 4.1 million tonnes of existing permitted reserves is covered by deep overburden. In recognition of the need to maintain supplies and in order to ensure the continued supply of carboniferous limestone over the Plan period we intend to allocate a small

ixvi Up until 2002 the North East Regional Aggregates Working Party's Annual Aggregates Monitoring Reports contained information on the extent of permitted reserves and sales for carboniferous limestone.

ixvii In May 2007 Tarmac Northern Ltd submitted an Environmental Statement and a revised schedule of working and restoration conditions to the Council, proposing to work part of this site in order to extract 3,750,000 tonnes of carboniferous limestone from 30 ha of the 76.4 ha permission area over a 15 year period. Further information has been requested before the submission can be progressed. Once a revised schedule of working and restoration conditions have been issued then the reserves subject to the new scheme of working and restoration conditions will be considered as part of the County's crushed rock landbank. Please note that Tarmac Northern Ltd have previously advised the Council that this site contains nearly 9.5 million tonnes of carboniferous limestone. It is assumed that Tarmac Northern Ltd would seek to work the remaining reserves in future years.

14ha extension containing 5.7 million tonnes as a strategic site in the Plan. Should a new planning permission be granted it would replace part of the existing permission which is constrained by deep overburden. We also received a proposal from Sherburn Stone Co. to rework a former mineral site known as Washpool Craggs in Weardale, due its size this proposal will be considered through work to prepare the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD.

10.38 Minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur and a significant proportion of the carboniferous limestone resource, particularly in Weardale, lies either within or adjacent to the North Pennines AONB. Environmental impacts should be a primary consideration in assessing any proposal for mineral extraction within or adjacent to the AONB. Any working that may be permitted in the AONB, even where a specific need is identified will need to pay particular attention to the environmental sensitivity of the AONB in their working and restoration proposals. In addition large parts of West Durham are designated as Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation designated under the EU Wild Birds Directive or EU Habitats Directive. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

10.39 Through earlier work to prepare the Plan a number of spatial options relating to where new working could be guided were considered. Following consultation and sustainability appraisal, the preferred approach to future working is a mixture of two options. The preferred approach will have the effect of seeking to guide where possible proposals for major new carboniferous limestone quarries and major extensions to existing quarries to locations outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity designations, whilst also enabling appropriate small scale extensions to existing quarries within the AONB and the reworking of quarries in need of restoration provided

proposals provide substantive landscape, biodiversity and geo-diversity benefits.

Dolerite

10.40 Dolerite is found as intrusions into the carboniferous limestone rocks in the west of the County. It is exceptionally hard and durable and therefore an important source of aggregate for the top wearing course of roads which have to withstand heavy volumes of traffic. It is also used as a concrete aggregate and in the construction of sea defences. Currently, there is only one quarry producing dolerite in the County, Force Garth Quarry in Teesdale. In addition there are also three dormant dolerite quarries (Park End, Crossthwaite and Middleton Quarry) where working could theoretically resume, subject to permitted reserves remaining and the agreement of new modern working and restoration conditions by the Council under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995.

10.41 In considering how future supplies of this mineral can be maintained, given the extent of permitted reserves at Force Garth Quarry, (estimated at approximately 19 million tonnes within the current working area and recent sales approximately 250,000 tonnes per annum), more than sufficient permitted reserves of this mineral exist to meet the long term needs of this mineral without the grant of any further planning permissions in the long term. However, the majority of the Force Garth permission is designated as part of the Moor House-Upper Teesdale Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and North Pennines Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Habitats and EU Wild Birds Directive. The periodic review of the permission under the Environment Act 1995 is being undertaken but determination of this has been delayed due to the need to undertake separate assessment, under the Conservation of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Until these various processes are complete we cannot be confident that the site will continue to operate as it has in the past. Similarly, given that Park End, Crossthwaite and Middleton Quarries lie adjacent to the Moor-House Upper Teesdale SAC

and North Pennines Moors SPA further working at these sites would also require a separate assessment under the Conservation of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

10.42 The entirety of the Dolerite resource lies within the North Pennines AONB and large areas of the resource being designated as part of the Moor House-Upper Teesdale SAC and North Pennines Moors SPA. In locational terms, therefore options for identifying new areas of working for this mineral within County Durham are extremely limited. The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been designated for its national importance and contains extensive areas of near wilderness landscapes and smaller scale traditional agricultural landscapes, both of which are extremely sensitive to change. Environmental impacts should therefore be a primary consideration in assessing any proposal for mineral extraction within or adjacent to the AONB. Any working that may be permitted in the AONB, even where a specific need is identified will need to pay particular attention to the environmental sensitivity of the AONB in their working and restoration proposals. The Moor House-Upper Teesdale SAC and North Pennines Moors SPA are of international importance, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

10.43 Given these circumstances, we recognise that if it were not possible to extract dolerite in County Durham it is possible that the need for this mineral would have to be met from quarries outside of County Durham, and if this was to occur it will also be necessary for the Council to reconsider our forecasts for future provision, through our Annual Local Aggregate Assessment.

Sand and gravel

10.44 There are two main types of sand and gravel worked as an

aggregate in County Durham:

- Basal permian sand which outcrops at the foot of the magnesian limestone escarpment and then extends at depth under the overlying magnesian limestone; and
- Fluvial and glacial sand and gravel which is more widespread in its occurrence.

10.45 The Plan must seek to maintain the future supply of sand and gravel over the Plan period. In contrast to earlier work which predicted a shortfall in provision and forecast that significant new planning permissions would be necessary to meet predicted need for sand and gravel, information available now suggests that there is no need to identify additional resources. This is partially due to:

- A reassessment of permitted reserves at Thrislington Quarry by the site operator;
- Granting of planning permission for new working including an extension to Crime Rigg Quarry, and resolutions to grant planning permission for an extension to Old Quarrington & Cold Knuckles Quarry and a new site at Low Harperley east of Wolsingham; and
- A new scheme of working and restoration conditions being issues under the Environment Act 1995 to a site known as Hummerbeck near West Auckland.

10.46 Taking into account the additional permitted reserves which have, or will become available following the issue of these planning permissions, we now believe that more than sufficient sand and gravel will be available to enable County Durham to meet the County's sub-regional apportionment to 2020, and forecast need to 2030, whilst maintaining a minimum seven

year sand and gravel landbank at 2030. Through the Annual Local Aggregate Assessment we will monitor the extent of the sand and gravel landbank and if necessary identify further provision. Currently, we do not expect the need for further provision until towards the end of the Plan Period. However, we recognise that there may be instances where further working may be justified in order to allow the prior extraction of sand and gravel in advance of other development which is either subject to planning permission or allocated in the Plan. In addition we also recognise that there may also be instances where it is necessary to extend the period of working at existing sites in order to allow the full recovery of permitted reserves.

10.47 Lafarge Aggregates has proposed two new areas of sand extraction within Thrislington Quarry as new allocations. Similarly, a proposal has been made for the reallocation of the existing Minerals Local Plan Area of Search at Hummerbeck, near West Auckland. However, given the extent of permitted reserves we do not consider that there is a need for any new allocations for sand and gravel working.

Aggregate Landbanks

10.48 Controlling the supply of aggregate minerals is necessary in order to ensure that mineral resources are properly managed and efficiently used, whilst ensuring that the impact of mineral working on the County's environment and the amenity of local communities is minimised. The Plan seeks to control the supply of crushed rock and sand and gravel to that which is sufficient to enable County Durham to maintain a steady and adequate supply of aggregates. This will be achieved by making provision, where necessary, via allocations, and by maintaining at least a minimum seven year sand and gravel landbank and a minimum ten year crushed rock landbank throughout the plan period to 2030.^(lxviii)

10.49 The maintenance of both the crushed rock and sand and gravel landbank will largely be achieved through existing permitted reserves. However, in making decisions on the adequacy of our landbanks we will have regard to the latest available information as published in the annual County Durham Local Aggregate Assessment. This is considered as a reasonable method of ensuring continuity of supply. Through the annual County Durham Local Aggregate Assessment we will consider:

- Whether County Durham's existing crushed rock and sand and gravel quarries can achieve the annual scale of production that would be needed to meet County Durham's sub regional apportionment of the Governments current National and Local Aggregate Supply Guidelines. Meeting this in full would require County Durham's sand and gravel and crushed rock quarries to have the ability to produce up to a maximum of 312,500 tonnes of sand and gravel and 3,712,500 tonnes of crushed rock aggregate per annum;
- The actual annual level of production against that which would be required to enable County Durham's aggregate quarries to meet its sub regional apportionment of the current National and Local Aggregate Supply Guidelines. Where actual production is lower than the required production we will consider why this is the case. Currently production of both crushed rock and sand and gravel is significantly below that which would be required to meet our sub-regional apportionment. This trend if it continues beyond the short term, is likely to result in existing permitted reserves lasting longer than originally anticipated and is likely to require the period of working at a number of sites to be extended in order to enable the full recovery of minerals. However, we understand that the recent fall in aggregate production is because of the current economic downturn, rather than any shortage of permitted reserves or any known constraints on the

lxviii In essence a landbank is a stock of permitted reserves with planning permission for mineral extraction. It includes all aggregate sites with planning permission for future working but does not include currently dormant sites where a new scheme of modern working and restoration conditions are required under the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 or the Environment Act 1995. The minimum length of the landbank reflects the time that is needed to obtain planning permission and bring replacement operations into full production.

availability of consented permitted reserves;

- The location of permitted reserves relative to the main market areas. Although, the principal determinant on the location of permitted reserves is geology, we consider the location of existing permitted reserves is well related to the main market areas which County Durham's aggregates sites serve including markets in Tyne & Wear and in the Tees Valley;
- The nature and qualities of the aggregate such as suitability for particular use. In this respect we will seek, where possible, to ensure that aggregate quarries can supply the range of aggregate minerals that have been traditionally produced; and
- Whether there is any evidence that permitted reserves lie within sites which are unlikely to be worked and if so we will invite the industry to consider the voluntary prohibition or revocation of such permissions. However, on the basis of current information we believe that mineral operators intend to work all existing permitted reserves.

10.50 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that mineral planning authorities should ensure that a large landbank bound up in very few sites does not stifle competition. However, we are of the view that County Durham is no different to many other parts of the Country where following many years of merger and acquisition the County's aggregate sites are now in more limited ownership than in the past. Currently there are 15 crushed rock sites (including 3 which produce sand) operated by nine different companies and 5 sand and gravel sites (including the 3 which also produced crushed rock) operated by four companies. Although

we do accept that within the crushed rock landbank there are some mineral commodities only worked by a small number of operators and in some sites there are extensive permitted reserves, there is no evidence that the concentration of permitted reserves is stifling competition and distorting the price of aggregates in the North East Region.^(lxix)

10.51 Mineral working can sometimes last for a number of years but remains nonetheless a temporary use of land. Quarries do close following the exhaustion of their permitted reserves. New permissions are not normally granted where significant permitted reserves remain to be worked in other sites and where more than sufficient permitted reserves are available to meet forecast need over the Plan period. In these circumstances we consider that permitting new aggregate working on competition grounds while significant unimplemented permissions exist would have implications for the sustainable use of minerals, it would undermine the ability to control working and limit permitted reserves to that required to meet forecast need. Crucially permitting additional aggregate working could delay the full working and restoration of other existing sites in the County, which have not been worked due to the production of aggregates elsewhere, and lead to an increased environmental and amenity impacts.

10.52 The maintenance of landbanks for the Plan period and beyond will depend on the availability of consistent, reliable and, where necessary, publicly available information of sufficient detail to enable the Council to come to a considered judgement on the adequacy of the landbank. In order to ensure a robust and credible evidence base for future decision making all new planning permissions and reviews of existing permissions under the Environment Act 1995 will be conditioned to require the annual submission of information detailing the extent of remaining permitted

lxix We note that the decision by the Competition Commission on the proposed joint venture between Lafarge Aggregates and Anglo American (the owners of Tarmac Northern Ltd) was announced in May 2012. The requirement for Tarmac Northern Ltd to divest interest in Coxhoe Quarry will help ensure that the ownership of the sites within the crushed rock landbank are diversified and will provide opportunities for other existing operators and potentially new operators within County Durham. However, in the long term we will have regard to the results of the Competition Commission investigation into the supply or acquisition of aggregates, cement and ready-mix concrete in Great Britain and any ensuing future advice from CLG on this matter.

reserves and sales.

Key Evidence Base

- National and Local Guidelines for Aggregates Provision 2005 - 2020 (2011)
- North East Aggregates Working Party Annual Aggregates Monitoring Report 2010 (2012)
- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

Scale of Aggregate Working

You told us that...

Earlier consultation provided an opportunity for comment on the scale of future aggregate working. However, no specific comments were provided by the minerals industry or their trade organisations on this matter.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

It was not appropriate to undertake Sustainability Appraisal on the overall scale of aggregate provision.

Alternative Options not chosen...

It was not appropriate to identify options for the overall scale of aggregate provision. However, Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken on a number of different spatial options for different types of aggregate minerals.

The NPPF tells us that...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by preparing an annual Local Aggregate Assessment, either individually or jointly by agreement with other mineral planning authorities. They should also participate in the operation of an Aggregate Working Party and take the advice of that Party into account when preparing their Local Aggregate Assessment. Provision should take the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search and locational criteria as appropriate taking account of published National and Sub National Guidelines on future provision which should be used as a guideline when planning for the future demand for and supply of aggregates (paragraph 145).

Landbanks

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on what landbanks we should define in the County Durham Plan. Earlier consultation supported the identification of individual landbanks for different types of crushed rock, and sand and gravel. Options chosen and comments received are detailed in the Statement of Consultation which accompanies the County Durham Plan. Having considered these representations, we expressed our intention in December 2010 to identify separate crushed rock landbanks for magnesian limestone, carboniferous limestone and dolerite, and a single sand and gravel landbank. At that time we stated that we were minded to continue to identify a single sand and gravel landbank because we understood that the County's three existing sand and gravel sites (in 2010) contained sand both suitable for concreting and building and asphaltting purposes. However, having considered matters further we have concluded that it is not currently possible to identify individual landbanks for different types of crushed rock aggregate due to the current uncertainty over the availability of the required information and the future ability of County Durham to maintain supplies of

dolerite.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA of the Issues and Options recommended that landbanks are required for both sand and gravel and crushed rock. SA advised that both alternative options (defining a single sand and gravel landbank, and the alternative option of defining specialist sand and gravel landbanks for both concreting and building and asphaltting sand) scored similarly against social, environmental and economic objectives. However, defining a single sand and gravel landbank will provide greater flexibility in terms of meeting the apportionment. SA advised that defining specialist crushed rock landbanks would help prevent mineral resources such as carboniferous limestone from becoming exhausted over the plan period and would safeguard related employment.

Alternative Options not chosen...

Earlier consultation supported the identification of specialist crushed rock landbanks for dolerite, magnesian limestone and carboniferous limestone, and specialist sand and gravel landbanks for both building & asphaltting sand and concreting sand, (Options C and D). Specialist landbanks have not been identified for the reasons set out in the "You told us that...." section above.

The NPPF tells us that...

We should use landbanks of aggregate minerals reserves as an indicator of the security of aggregate minerals supply and to indicate the additional provision that needs to be made for new aggregate extraction. It advises that we should make provision for the maintenance of landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, whilst ensuring that the

capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is not compromised. It advises that longer periods may be appropriate to take into account of the need to supply a wide range of aggregates, locations of permitted reserves, locations of permitted reserves in relation to markets, and productive capacity of permitted sites. It advises that we should ensure that a large landbank bound up in very few sites does not stifle competition. It also advises that mineral planning authorities could calculate and maintain separate landbanks for aggregate materials of a specific type or quality which have a distinct and separate market (Paragraph 145).

Magnesian Limestone

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on if additional magnesian limestone working was necessary which locations should be guided to? Comments received supported all options, Option B which stated, extensions to existing sites should be considered prior to considering new sites, was favoured by the majority of respondents, followed by, Option C which stated, the Core Strategy should provide explicit locational guidance which seeks to locate new working away from the Escarpment edge in order to minimise visual and landscape impacts, and then by, Option D which stated, the Core Strategy should provide explicit locational guidance which seeks to prevent further working in the vicinity of Thrislington Quarry, Cornforth Quarry and Bishop Middleham Quarry in order to confine the scale of activity to that currently planned and limit any further concentration of mineral working in this locality. Few respondents favoured Option A, which stated, extensions to existing sites and proposals for new quarries should be considered wherever the mineral occurs.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA of the Issues and Options recommended a combination of Options (Options B,C, and D). A combination of options is required as Options A and B considered whether existing sites should be prioritised before new sites or not, whereas Options C and D considered which locations on the magnesian limestone escarpment new working should be directed away from. SA advised that Option A should be discounted, as the Minerals Technical Paper 2010 states that significant quantities of magnesian limestone remain to be extracted from existing quarries over the plan period. As a result considering proposals for extensions and new sites wherever the mineral occurs may exceed the identified need for magnesian limestone extraction causing unnecessary negative impact. SA recommended noted in relation to Option B that, although by their very nature extensions to mineral sites will have adverse environmental and social effects, this option enables better management of the distribution of magnesian limestone extraction and the associated effects. SA recommended that both Option C and D would have positive effects in terms of reducing the adverse effects of minerals working on the East Durham Limestone Plateau and would compliment the objectives of the County Durham Landscape Strategy. SA recommended that Option D also addresses issues of cumulative adverse effects on the communities and the environment that minerals working in the vicinity of Thrislington quarry, Bishop Middleham quarry and Cornforth Quarry has had in the past.

The NPPF tells us...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates (paragraph 145).

Agricultural Lime

You told us that...

The Technical Consultation Report 'Towards a Minerals Delivery

Strategy for County Durham', consulted on the approach of the County Durham Plan to agricultural lime. With the exception of two mineral operators (Sherburn Stone and W&M Thompson) who are promoting extensions to existing magnesian limestone quarries and strongly disagreed that there was no need to make provision for the extraction of agricultural lime, all other respondents including the Mineral Planning Association agreed there was no need to make provision. Both Sherburn Stone and W&M Thompson wish to produce and export agricultural lime to the continent (Denmark, Germany and Benelux countries) and advise that their proposals would be advantageous for employment in and the economy of County Durham and benefit the UK balance of payments. They argue that provision should be made in the Plan for agricultural lime, that it is an industrial mineral and therefore unlike aggregates there is no requirement to consider or assess need for the mineral. They argue that the only matter which requires being addressed is whether manufacture and export can be taken without an unacceptable impact on the environment. They also argue that the product which could be produced at both Bishop Middleham and Witch Hill Quarry would be superior in quality to that produced elsewhere in County Durham and that it can not be assumed that all agricultural lime produced as a by-product of the extraction of magnesian limestone for crushed rock aggregate and high grade dolomite at Thrislington Quarry and by Tarmac at their quarries will be suitable for export to mainland Europe. Sherburn Stone also argue that an extension to Witch Hill would provide a replacement site to that which is worked at Hart Quarry in Hartlepool.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA has not been undertaken on options for agricultural lime. However, SA has been undertaken on magnesian limestone (see above).

Alternative Options not chosen...

None.

The NPPF says...

Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation, (paragraph 142). When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction, including to the economy (paragraph 144); Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates: by using landbanks of aggregate minerals reserves principally as an indicator of the security of aggregate minerals supply, and to indicate the additional provision that needs to be made for new aggregate extraction and alternative supplies in mineral plans; making provision for the maintenance of landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, whilst ensuring that the capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is not compromised. Longer periods may be appropriate to take account of the need to supply a range of types of aggregates, locations of permitted reserves relative to markets, and productive capacity of permitted sites (paragraph 145). Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals (paragraph 146).

Carboniferous Limestone

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on what spatial approach should be taken to the location of new carboniferous limestone

working. Earlier consultation generally supported major extensions to existing quarries or new quarries only being located outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity concerns. There was also support for considering proposals for small scale extensions to existing quarries and the reworking of former carboniferous limestone quarries which have not been restored properly, if their restoration provide substantive landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity benefits. Natural England emphasised that the North Pennines AONB and international and national nature conservation designations should be avoided for all major minerals extraction activity. Other responses indicated that in some cases small scale extensions to existing quarries could be accommodated within the landscape of the AONB whilst delivering significant gains for biodiversity in the long term; that there are many abandoned and un-restored mineral extraction and processing sites which could be restored following associated mineral extraction thereby providing opportunities to minimise visual impact and create new habitat whilst preserving geological interest; and that the Habitats Directive should be considered. The comments which have been received have been taken into account in preparing the policy.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA of the Issues and Options recommended Option C which was, Major extensions or new quarries should only be located outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity designations, and the Core Strategy should also consider proposals for small scale extensions to existing quarries and the reworking of former carboniferous limestone quarries which have not been restored properly, provided proposals provide substantive landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity benefits.

Alternative Options not chosen...

Extensions to existing sites and proposals for new quarries should be considered where the mineral occurs (Option A).

The NPPF tells us...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates (paragraph 145). As far as practicable, provide for the maintenance of landbanks of non-energy minerals from outside of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (paragraph 144).

Dolerite

You told us that...

The Technical Consultation Report 'Towards a Minerals Delivery Strategy for County Durham', consulted on the approach of the County Durham Plan to dolerite. Natural England have advised the Council of the need to undertake a section 63 review (review of existing decisions and consents) of all mineral permissions under the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. We have therefore sought to address Natural England's comments through undertaking a bridging assessment for all mineral permissions, which considers potential impacts upon Natura 2000 in the period up until existing consents are subject to periodic review under the Environment Act 1995.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Existing sites have not been subject to sustainability appraisal.

Alternate options not chosen...

No alternate options were proposed for future dolerite working. This was due to our previous view that the need for this mineral could be met by existing permitted reserves at Force Garth Quarry. Unlike other forms of development minerals can only be worked where they

naturally occur.

The NPPF tells us...

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks. (paragraph 115). Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of: the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy; the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated (paragraph 116). Proposed development on land within or outside Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs (paragraph 118); The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined, (paragraph 119). as far as is practical, provide for the maintenance of landbanks

of non energy minerals from outside National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage sites, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas, (paragraph 144).

Sand and Gravel

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on the spatial approach to sand and gravel working. Responses to this consultation supported a range of approaches to guiding new sand and gravel working over the plan period including considering proposals to deepen existing magnesian limestone quarries where basal permian sand lies beneath the existing quarry floor at accessible depths (Option A), laterally extend existing magnesian limestone quarries where basal permian sand lies at accessible depths (Option B), allow new magnesian limestone sites where basal permian sand lies at accessible depths (Option C), and consider new fluvial or glacial quarries wherever the resource occurs (Option D), or in locations outside of environmentally important areas in close proximity to markets, (Option E). Options chosen and comments received are detailed in the Statement of Consultation which accompanies the County Durham Plan. The responses we have received have been taken into account in preparing the proposed approach as described in the policy and this will guide our approach to permitting new working when new working is required.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The County Durham Plan should seek to minimise effects by prioritising extraction from existing sites (basal permian sand) that will not significantly contribute to cumulative effects on the East Durham Limestone Plateau before considering working of new basal permian or fluvial/glacial sites.

Alternative Options not chosen...

The proposed approach provides flexibility by providing locational guidance to enable new working in a variety of locations. Option D allowing new sand and gravel sites, to work fluvial or glacial sand and gravel wherever the resource occurs has been rejected.

The NPPF tells us...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates (paragraph 145).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process
- The preparation of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Crushed Rock sales per annum
- Crushed Rock landbank (years)
- Crushed rock extent of permitted reserves (per calender year)
- Sand and gravel sales per annum.

- Sand and Gravel landbank (years)
- Sand and Gravel extent of permitted reserves (per calendar year)

Question 53

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

- investment in new kiln equipment is proved necessary; and
- there will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment or the amenity of local communities in accordance with other relevant policies of the Plan.

The area of high grade dolomite east of Thrislington Quarry, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be protected from all mineral working unless there is a need for high grade material which cannot be met through the use lower grade material or higher grade material from existing planning permissions.

Future Provision for Non Aggregate Minerals

Policy 54

High Grade Dolomite

It is expected that over the Plan period to 2030 supplies of high grade dolomite will be met from existing permitted reserves at Thrislington Quarry and its extension east of the A1(M). Proposals for the further working of high grade dolomite will only be permitted where:

- It can be demonstrated that existing permitted reserves are insufficient to maintain a 15 year stock of permitted reserves, or a 25 year stock of permitted reserves where substantial

10.53 Thrislington Quarry and the area to the immediate east is understood to be one of only two areas in Great Britain which contains dolomite^(lxx) of sufficient quality to be used in the steel industry.^(lxxi) A process of calcination (burning) is used to produce a high grade product. Following the issue of planning permission for an extension to Thrislington Quarry on land to the east of the A1(M) in July 2011 over a period of 32 years, more than sufficient high grade dolomitic limestone is now permitted to meet long terms needs. Accordingly, it is not anticipated that any further permissions to work this material are likely to be required over the life of the County Durham Plan. However, in recognition of the possibility of further mineral being required beyond the Plan period an additional 'high grade dolomite reserve' will be specifically safeguarded and protected.

10.54 The National Planning Policy Framework advises that minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals. It recommends that a stock of permitted reserves

lxx Limestone is a rock composed of the mineral calcite, whose principal chemical component is calcium carbonate. Most limestones contain some magnesian carbonate, and where this becomes significant (between 5 and 15%) the rock is described as magnesian limestone. Where the proportion is in excess of 15% the rock is commonly known as dolomite.

lxxi The Magnesian Limestone Escarpment Local Plan (July 1986) recognised the importance of the reserves at Thrislington Quarry and identified the area to the east of the existing quarry as the only area in Great Britain, other than the Whitwell in Derbyshire, containing dolomite of suitable quality for use in the steel and chemical industries.

should be provided to support the level of actual and proposed investment required for new or existing plant and the maintenance and improvement of existing plant and equipment. For the cement industry it recommends a 15 year period to maintain existing plant, and a 25 year period to support a new kiln. We consider that it is reasonable to adopt these periods for other minerals whose primary processing requires substantial investment in kiln equipment.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

Responses to earlier consultation agreed with our view that once planning permission is issued to work the extension east of the A1(M) that more than sufficient high grade dolomitic magnesian limestone will be permitted to meet long term needs and supported our approach to specifically safeguard the existing 'high grade dolomite reserve' to meet longer term needs beyond 2030.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper did not include any options for high grade dolomitic limestone. This issue was subject to consultation within the Technical Consultation Report 'Towards a Minerals Delivery Strategy for County Durham' in order to ensure that we had satisfactorily made provision for minerals of national importance.

Alternate Options not chosen...

Due to the limited occurrence of dolomite of sufficient quality to meet

the needs of the steel industry there were no alternative spatial options which could be considered.

The NPPF says...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals by providing a stock of permitted reserves to support the level of actual and proposed investment required for new or existing plant and the maintenance and improvement of existing plant and equipment (paragraph 146).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- None

Question 54

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

Policy 55

Brick making raw materials

Proposals for new workings to meet the raw material needs of

Todhills, Eldon and the Union Brickworks will be permitted where:

- a. They are required to maintain a stock of permitted reserves and that this need cannot be met from an existing permission.^(lxxii)
- b. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment or amenity of local communities in accordance with the other relevant policies of the Plan.

The provision of reserves from dedicated on-site pits will be preferred. Accordingly, where planning permission is granted, planning conditions or agreements will be used to restrict the use of the brick making raw material to the associated brickworks.

Proposals for new working which are intended to serve brickworks outside of County Durham and Gateshead will only be permitted where:

- c. They are required to maintain a 25 year stock of permitted reserves and this need cannot be met from an existing permission;
- d. It can be demonstrated that production cannot be maintained from a sequentially preferable site closer to the brickworks; and
- e. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment or amenity of local communities in accordance with the other relevant policies of the Plan.

10.55 County Durham is an important source of brick making raw materials including coal measures mudstone, glacial clay and fireclay. Bricks are produced at two locations in County Durham (Eldon and Todhills) and are based primarily on coal measures mudstone won from dedicated clay pits adjacent to the brickworks, supplemented by supplies of fireclay from surface mined coal sites. A third brickworks, the Union Brickworks operated by Istock Brick Ltd, is at Birtley in Gateshead, although the quarry (Birtley Quarry) which supplies the brickworks lies within County Durham.

10.56 Ensuring continued supply of brick making raw materials is essential in ensuring that the County's brick works can continue to produce the construction materials necessary to deliver new built development both in the County and in the wider region. We will therefore seek to maintain supplies of coal measures mudstone to meet the long term supply requirements of both Eldon and Todhills Brickworks and will work with Gateshead Borough Council under the duty to cooperate to meet the supply requirements of the Union Brickworks for glacial clay. However, in accordance with the existing pattern of working, in making future provision our preference is that further reserves should be obtained wherever possible from dedicated on site pits adjacent to the brickworks. This is considered important in order to help minimise and restrict environmental impacts.

10.57 Following the grant of planning permission in 2008 to extend Eldon Quarry, sufficient brick making raw materials exist to meet the long term requirements of Eldon Brickworks to at least 2040 and provide a landbank in excess of the minimum 25 year period. However, the situation at Todhills and Union Brickworks is different. Long Lane Quarry currently meets the operational needs of Todhills brickworks but is due to cease mineral extraction in 2018 and so cannot provide a 25 year landbank or meet longer term needs. Similarly, Birtley Quarry is due to cease mineral

lxxii Provision will be made to maintain a minimum supply of feedstock equivalent to a 25 year stock of permitted reserves for each brickworks.

extraction in 2019 and cannot provide a 25 year landbank or meet longer term needs.

10.58 In order to meet the long term needs of Todhills Brickworks a strategic area of search is proposed to be allocated south of Todhills brickworks, (Policy 60 (Strategic Area of Search to the south of Todhills Brickworks)). Available information suggests that this would provide more than sufficient brick making raw materials to meet its long terms needs.

10.59 In respect of Union Brickworks, Ibstock Bricks has proposed that further brick clay could be obtained by deepening the existing clay pit. In addition it is understood that clay of suitable quality for brick manufacture at Lamesley is currently safeguarded in the Gateshead Unitary Development Plan.^(lxxiii) It is recognised potentially that further provision may be needed from within County Durham if deepening of the existing quarry or an alternative site in Gateshead is not available.

10.60 In addition to meeting the needs of the County's two existing brickworks and the possibility of assisting in meeting the needs of the Union Brickwork's, interest in sourcing brick making raw materials from County Durham to meet the needs of other brickworks in the region can not be discounted. Given that it is generally desirable that brick making raw materials should be extracted as close as practicable to the brickworks that it supplies, to reduce costs and the environmental and social impacts of transportation of clay from the pit(s) to the works, proposals must demonstrate that no sequentially preferable sites exist closer to the intended brickworks where the material is to be used.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

Responses to earlier consultation broadly supported the approach to brick making raw materials. Responses emphasised that provision should be made for brick clay and shale through dedicated sites adjacent to brick works and that fireclay with the correct technical properties for brick manufacture should be extracted in conjunction with surface mined coal. A number of responses also supported the identification of a strategic area of search for brick making raw material extraction at Todhills.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Due to the existing permissions at Long Lane, Eldon and at Birtley Quarry and only one site being proposed as an allocation for future extraction to meet the long term needs of Todhills Brickworks it has not been possible to SA alternative spatial options. SA has, however, been undertaken on the proposed strategic area of search at Todhills. The SA recommendation for this site concluded that this site will support the continued operation of the brickworks over the plan period and beyond. The SA also considered that a consistent supply of bricks will be required to deliver the proposed development in the County Durham Plan.

Alternative Options not chosen...

None.

The NPPF says...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals by co-operating with neighbouring and

lxxiii The potential of this area for brickmaking raw materials was recently confirmed by the Newcastle Gateshead One Core Strategy Draft Plan September 2011 which states that "The one workable deposit of brick clay is believed to exist to the south of Team Valley in Gateshead."

more distant authorities to co-ordinate the planning of industrial minerals to ensure adequate provision is made to support their likely use in industrial and manufacturing processes; encouraging safeguarding or stockpiling so that important minerals remain available for use; providing a stock of permitted reserves to support the level of actual and proposed investment required for new or existing plant and the maintenance and improvement of existing plant and equipment, at least 15 years for secondary (clay and shale) materials to maintain an existing plant and at least 25 years for brick clay materials to support a new kiln; take account of the need for provision of brick clay from a number of different sources to enable appropriate blends to be made (paragraph 146).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- None.

Question 55

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

Policy 56

Surface Mined Coal and Fireclay

Proposals for the extraction of coal and/or fireclay will not be granted planning permission unless:

- a. They are environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or
- b. They provide national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the adverse impacts of the proposal. In assessing such benefits particular regard will be had to:
 - i. The contribution of the proposal towards the comprehensive reclamation of areas of derelict or contaminated land, or the remediation of coal mining legacy issues;
 - ii. The avoidance of the sterilisation of mineral resources in advance of development which is either subject to a planning permission or allocated in the County Durham Plan (in accordance with Policy 58 (Safeguarding Mineral Resources)); and
 - iii. The need for supplies of fireclay to meet the ongoing needs of local brickworks.

In order to minimise the environmental impacts of surface coal extraction and provide certainty, the piecemeal working of surface mined coal sites will not be permitted.

10.61 County Durham contains extensive areas of land which are underlain by coal, and for many years has been an important source of both deep mined and surface mined coal.^(lxxiv) Like many other coalfield areas, the deep mined industry in County Durham declined during the second half of the 20th Century and the last two deep mines closed in 1993.^(lxxv) However, during the same period large areas of the exposed coalfield within County Durham were worked by surface mined methods. Despite this long history of working the British Geological Survey still believe that large coal reserves still remain within County Durham.

10.62 Unlike other minerals such as aggregates where quantitative targets have been provided, past Government guidance^(lxxvi) has been clear that it is not for the planning system to set limits on the scale of production. Instead for new surface mined coal working it has been for individual operators to determine the level of output they wish to aim for in light of market conditions and for Councils to determine the acceptability of individual projects through the development management process. Nevertheless, over the plan period we do not consider that the scale of surface mined coal working will significantly increase over existing levels. Instead we expect that the scale of extraction will be relatively steady with no more than a small number of sites operating at any one time and that as one site closes operators may wish to open another.

10.63 In locational terms, we believe that the extent of past surface mined coal working, when combined with other planning constraints across the exposed coalfield, mean that there is now only limited potential for further acceptable surface mined coal sites to be found. However, we will seek to provide a measure of certainty by considering the sites that have been proposed by a number of operators as potential surface mined coal allocations through our work to prepare the Minerals and Waste Policies

and Allocations DPD. In addition the Proposals Map which accompanies the County Durham Plan will also identify the extent of the exposed coalfield and the key environmental constraints across the County. This will enable mineral operators to identify which areas are least environmentally constrained as part of their work to identify potential areas for new working.

10.64 A major issue of concern in County Durham is the exposed coalfield coincides with the most densely settled and populated part of the County and many communities and the local environment in parts of the exposed coalfield have suffered from the cumulative impacts of a succession of sites over many years. Such impacts have been compounded by the unpredictable, transient nature of surface coal mining and the re-working of previously restored sites.

10.65 Within the exposed coalfield there are large areas which have in the past been recognised for their landscape value and previously designated as Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLVs). While the County Durham Plan does not intend to retain these local designations, the landscape value of many of these areas has been confirmed through the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment and the County Durham Landscape Strategy. Although a few small areas within these former areas of landscape value have been worked previously the greater part of these areas remain undisturbed by such mineral working. The sensitivity of some of these areas is such that many of them, for example the Derwent Valley, have previously enjoyed protection from all working. We consider that such areas of high landscape character are particularly vulnerable to surface mined coal working.

10.66 We acknowledge that the nature of modern surface coal mining

lxxiv Within County Durham the coalfield chiefly covers area east of the Pennine Uplands. The west of the coalfield, where the seams lie close to the surface or actually outcrop is known as the exposed coalfield. Further east the, the coal measures are overlain by a thick overburden of rock to form the concealed coalfield.

lxxv The last two deep coal mines in County Durham, Easington and Seaham/Vane Tempest ceased production in 1993.

lxxvi Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3 (MPG3) 'Coal Mining and Colliery Disposal', March 1999.

involving the movement of large amounts of material makes it a particularly suitable method of addressing contaminated and/or derelict land. Although only limited amounts of derelict land remain within the coalfield, there may be scope to allow new working as a means of reclaiming such land without the public expense that would otherwise arise. It is also possible that new areas of dereliction may arise during the Plan period which require reclamation. In assessing any such applications it will be important to ensure that the area proposed for extraction fairly and reasonably relates to the extent and nature of dereliction. Similar benefits may arise in allowing surface mined coal extraction where it would enable the reclamation of contaminated land. The amount of contaminated land within the exposed coalfield area is not currently known. However, since 1997 several schemes have successfully addressed areas of contamination. As with derelict land it will be important to ensure that any area proposed for extraction fairly and reasonably relates to the extent and nature of contamination.

10.67 The avoidance of unnecessary sterilisation of minerals, wherever possible, will help to reduce pressure on other sources of supply, and will help to ensure that mineral reserves are not, in effect, wasted. Such benefits from prior extraction of coal should be realised, wherever they can be accommodated in an environmentally acceptable manner, provided that the ensuing development is not prejudiced or delayed significantly. Ideally, in order to avoid potential problems of delay, any potential surface coal working should be included in an overall programme for the development.

10.68 Extensions to surface mined coal workings, or a series of proposals in the vicinity of particular communities, add to the impacts from sites, and prolong the uncertainty and disruption for those affected. These problems are compounded by the difficulties of achieving the most appropriate restoration for an area in overall terms from a series of fragmented proposals. Given their short life, relative to other kinds of mineral extraction, piecemeal workings of this kind should be avoided,

and an outline of any proposed future workings in an area should be included in the original application. In some circumstances, and in consultation with local communities, it may be possible to agree in advance a programme of working sites in an area to achieve their exploitation in an acceptable manner. Where previously unforeseen circumstances, for example unexpected geological faulting, lead to an application for an extension, any such proposal will be considered under Policy 56 (Surface Mined Coal and Fireclay Policy).

Fireclay

10.69 Surface mined coal seams generally occur in conjunction with other minerals, notably fireclay and brickclay. In the interests of sustainable development, the efficient use of mineral resources is desirable and it is important that the opportunity to work these other minerals commercially is fully explored and exploited. The co-ordinated working of mineral deposits can reduce the need to extract minerals elsewhere and prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of valuable mineral resources.

10.70 The brickworks operating in County Durham have particular requirements for fireclay resources which are best provided by local supplies. Where fireclay is extracted, it is important that priority is given to local brickworks to utilise the resource so that current production and employment levels are maintained. It is recognised that the local brickworks may not be able to use the fireclay produced (at any given time) for various reasons and it is imperative that fireclay supplies are not wasted. When this occurs, the resource should be utilised by other brickworks throughout the region and country.

10.71 In the event that no brickworks can utilise the fireclay resource, every effort should be made to avoid the unnecessary wastage of the mineral by the stockpiling or storage of the mineral for future use. This would accord with the principles of sustainable development. It is recognised that there is the potential to store or stockpile fireclay both on and off-site, above and below ground, but that each of these options have

particular problems. Extensive testing of the characteristics and firing qualities of the fireclay will need to be investigated by the operator prior to any decision on its subsequent storage, stockpile or replacement in the void. This is a matter which will need to be assessed on an individual site basis and would be subject to planning conditions and/or obligations attached to any planning permission. This approach should provide fireclay to assist in meeting local, regional and national demand for this mineral.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

Following consultation on the approach to surface mined coal in the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper further consultation occurred in December 2010 via the 'Energy Minerals' Technical Consultation Report and a revised approach has been developed. The Preferred Option seeks to take on board the range of responses received to both consultations and in addition incorporates our policy approach to the winning and working of Fireclay. The wide range of comments received and our responses to each representation are detailed in the Statement of Consultation.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The SA of the Issues and Option recommended that local options regarding surface mined coal should be developed.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper did not include any options for surface mined coal or fireclay. This was because we did not consider that there were no realistic alternative options relating to surface mined coal nor any justification for departing from the

provisions of national policy as set out in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3 (MPG3) 'Coal Mining and Colliery Disposal' and Policy 44 'Opencast Coal' of Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East. Detailed discussion on whether there are any realistic options for surface mined coal extraction were addressed in the 'Energy Minerals' Technical Consultation Report.

The NPPF says...

Mineral Planning Authorities should indicate any areas where coal extraction and the disposal of colliery spoil may be acceptable and provide for local coal producers to extract separately, and if necessary stockpile fireclay so that it remains available for use (paragraph 147). Paragraph 149 sets out the national policy test for surface mined coal extraction.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process
- The preparation of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- None

Question 56

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

Policy 57**Natural Building and Roofing Stone**

Where further permitted reserves are required in order to maintain an adequate and steady supply of natural building and roofing stone, proposals for new sites will be permitted where:

- a. It can be demonstrated that need cannot be met from existing mineral permissions; and
- b. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment and amenity of local communities in accordance with the other relevant policies of the County Durham Plan.

Where a need for further working can be demonstrated, priority will be given to proposals for major new sites and extensions to existing sites in locations outside, and which do not impact, upon the North Pennines AONB.

All new planning permissions and reviews of existing permissions under the Environment Act 1995 will be conditioned to require the annual submission of information detailing the extent of remaining

permitted reserves and sales.

10.72 Natural building and roofing stone is a traditional building material that has been extensively worked in County Durham for many years for a variety of purposes including general walling, building, paving, roofing and high quality architectural building stone. The sandstones of Carboniferous age (Namurian sandstone) are recognised as the principal building stone resources in County Durham.

10.73 Planning to maintain supplies of natural building and roofing stone is a major challenge. Unlike other minerals where recent information on production and permitted reserves is available, only very limited information is available from individual sites. For many years the Office of National Statistics (ONS)^(lxxvii) provided the only consistent source of information. Unfortunately, no information on the scale of production is available since 2007 and in previous years information on the scale of production has not been consistent.^(lxxviii) However, it is understood that the overall normal scale of production is between 20-30,000 tonnes per annum and with the exception of two sites (Cat Castle Quarry and Dunhouse Quarry), most of County Durham's natural building and roofing stone quarries are all relatively small scale operations, with the overall scale of production being no more 500 to 2,500 tonnes per annum.

10.74 While it is impossible to quantify the scale of new working which will need to be permitted over the the Plan period, we will seek to ensure that sufficient provision is made to enable a steady and adequate supply of natural building and roofing stone to be maintained. Over the period to 2030 we expect that the County's existing natural building and roofing stone quarries will make a major contribution to meeting future needs for this material. However, it is recognised that further permissions are likely

lxxvii Mineral Extraction in Great Britain PA1007.

lxxviii The Office of National Statistics report Mineral Extraction in Great Britain PA 1007 reported that sales of natural building and roofing stone in County Durham were 26 thousand tonnes in 2003, 23 thousand tonnes in 2004, 7 thousand tonnes in 2005, 24 thousand tonnes in 2006 and 11 thousand tonnes in 2007.

to be required to ensure that permitted reserves are replenished as existing permitted reserves are worked in accordance with their planning permissions.

10.75 Given the scale of existing working in the County and the importance of protecting the environment of West Durham where the principal building stone resource is located, we will only permit environmentally acceptable proposals for small scale working. However, in order to avoid supply being substantially in excess of demand and minimise environmental impacts we will always require the applicant to demonstrate that the need for natural and building and roofing stone cannot be met from existing mineral permissions.^(lxxix) We will also require that consideration is given by existing operators to providing further permitted reserves via environmentally acceptable extensions to their own existing sites and only when this is not possible consider permitting wholly new sites. This approach will ensure County Durham can meet its own needs for natural building and roofing stone whilst making a continued contribution to meeting wider regional needs including the supply of high quality architectural building stone both within and outside of the region.

10.76 In considering proposals for new working we will take into account that natural building and roofing stone quarries are normally different in scale and character to aggregate quarries, in relation to the scale of operation and the levels of potential impacts. We will also seek to adopt a flexible approach in recognition of the the potentially long term duration of natural building and roofing stone sites reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites. Nevertheless, we do recognise that natural building and roofing stone quarries can raise environmental problems such as the production of large quantities of waste stone; the transport of stone by large articulated lorries; disturbance to residents due to the use of explosives; and the long-term nature of these quarries.

10.77 In broad locational terms the strategy of the Plan will be to minimise environmental impacts from new working. This will be achieved by guiding the majority of new working to the wider area surrounding Barnard Castle (known as the Dales Fringe in the County Durham Landscape Character Strategy).^(lxxx) We believe this area has the most potential to accommodate new natural building and roofing stone working, including those which require on site processing plant, without unacceptable adverse environmental impacts. Nevertheless, we do recognise that there may still be some scope for some further limited working within the AONB, in particular through proposals for small scale satellite quarries and time limited permissions that produce locally required material to permit the repair and construction of buildings in character with the local area. Such proposals will be very carefully controlled to ensure that they do not have adverse impacts upon the important qualities of the AONB and upon international or nationally important nature conservation designations.

10.78 Government guidance also requires us to consider allowing the small scale extraction of natural building and roofing stone at, or close to relic quarries where it would contribute to the repair of important historic buildings, provided that it does not compromise the requirement to protect designated sites. Once research identifying the location of these quarries is completed we will consider English Heritage's research and seek to identify their location and set out our policy approach to them in the future Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

lxxix This will require the applicant to provide evidence relating to the aesthetic and technical properties of the stone.

lxxx The County Durham Landscape Strategy can be downloaded here: <http://www.durhamlandscape.info/Pages/CountyDurhamLandscapeStrategy.aspx>

You told us that...

The Issues and Options stage consulted on what spatial approach we should take to new working? Earlier consultation supported the proposal to guide new natural building and roofing stone working to areas outside of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and international nature conservation designations and direct new working to the area centre around Barnard Castle (the Dales Fringe Area). The other responses emphasised the importance of ensuring the continued supply of natural building and roofing stone to repair and construct new buildings in sympathy with the landscape.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

SA of the Issues and Options recommended Option A which was to guide new working to areas outside of the North Pennines AONB and international nature conservation designations and direct new working to the area centred around Barnard Castle (the Dales Fringe Area). Option B has been discounted as it could bring about very negative environmental effects by not including specific locational guidance which directs minerals working away from areas that are likely to be most adversely affected. The social impacts of Option A (directing new mineral working to the Dales Fringe area which is more populated than the North Pennines) are able to be mitigated, unlike the permanent loss of high value biodiversity/geodiversity and landscape which may have resulted if Option B was taken forward.

Detailed policies may need to be included in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document to prevent the adverse cumulative effects of minerals working in the Dales Fringe area. Directing both Natural Building and Roofing Stone and Carboniferous Limestone (Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper Q53) working away from the North Pennines AONB is likely to concentrate working in the Dales Fringe which could potentially result

in cumulative impacts similar to those experienced on the East Durham Limestone Plateau if not carefully managed.

The NPPF says...

When considering planning applications, local planning authorities should consider how to meet any demand for small-scale extraction of building stone at, or close to, relic quarries needed for the repair of heritage assets, taking account of the need to protect designated sites; and recognise the small-scale nature and impact of building and roofing stone quarries, and the need for a flexible approach to the potentially long duration of planning permissions reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites (paragraph 144).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process
- The preparation of the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document.

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Following the granting of new planning permissions or the review of existing permissions under the Environment Act 1995 all new planning permissions will be subject to the requirement to annually submit information on remaining permitted reserves and sales of natural building and roofing stone.

Question 57

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

Safeguarding Minerals Resources**Policy 58****Safeguarding Mineral Resources**

Planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources, as shown on the proposals map, within a Mineral Safeguarding Area unless:

- a. It can be demonstrated that the mineral concerned is no longer of any current or potential value;
- b. The mineral can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the non-minerals development taking place without unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment or the amenity of local communities;
- c. The non-minerals development is of a temporary nature that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale the mineral is likely to be needed;
- d. There is an overriding need for the non-minerals development; and
- e. It constitutes exempt development as listed below:

'Exempt development' which would not be viewed as sterilising development within a Mineral Safeguarding Area include all development within urban areas under 1ha in extent and all applications for:

- f. Householder planning applications (relating to existing properties);
- g. Alterations or extensions to existing buildings and for change of use of existing buildings;
- h. Advertisement consent;
- i. Reserved matters including subsequent applications after outline consent has been granted;
- j. Prior notifications (telecommunications development, forestry, demolition);
- k. Works to trees;
- l. Temporary planning permission;
- m. Outside storage; and
- n. Open space (although not outdoor recreation facilities such as golf courses) and allotments.

Planning applications for non-mineral development within a Mineral Safeguarding Area must be accompanied by a mineral assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to it.

Unless it can be demonstrated that the non-minerals development

will be compatible with the permitted environmental and amenity impacts of existing mineral sites or that which is likely to ensue from the winning and working of minerals from allocated sites for future mineral working, no new non-minerals development will be permitted within 500 metres of the boundary of a hard rock site (where blasting is required) and 250 metres for all other mineral sites and allocations.

10.79 The County Durham Plan will safeguard deposits of minerals that are, or may potentially become of economic importance within the foreseeable future, from unnecessary sterilisation by surface development through the designation of Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs). MSAs are a new type of planning designation. Unlike other mineral planning designations which allocate land for development and where there is a varying degree of presumption that extraction may be appropriate, there is no presumption that resources defined in MSAs will be worked. The purpose of MSAs is not to preclude all other forms of development, but to make sure that mineral resources are adequately and effectively considered in land use planning decisions, (Strategic Objective 19). The broad extent of County Durham's Mineral Safeguarding Areas are shown in Appendix J and detailed boundaries are shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

10.80 County Durham's MSAs have been developed in accordance with guidance published by the British Geological Survey and by using mineral resource information provided by the British Geological Survey and the Coal Authority. The minerals that are to be safeguarded have been subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders. The proposed MSAs cover extensive areas of the County and will ensure that the safeguarding of mineral resources are effectively considered through work

to prepare the County Durham Plan and in the consideration of planning applications.^(lxxxii) In addition all existing active and dormant mineral sites and all operator proposed allocations for new mineral working have been included in the Mineral Safeguarding Areas. The mineral resources to be safeguarded are included in Appendix J.

10.81 In order to determine planning applications for non-minerals development within a MSA it will be necessary for sufficient information to be submitted by the applicant to allow a decision to be made. Other than for development viewed as exempt, most planning applications for non-minerals development within a MSA will need to be accompanied by an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the development (a mineral assessment).^(lxxxii) However, for some types of non-mineral development, it is recognised that the sterilising effect is negligible. Accordingly exemption criteria have been identified where a mineral assessment will not be required.

10.82 The prior extraction of safeguarded minerals will be encouraged in Mineral Safeguarding Areas where it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place as long as extraction can be achieved without unacceptable impacts and within a reasonable timescale which would not jeopardise the viability of the non-minerals development. In instances where planning permission is granted for prior extraction, conditions will always be imposed to ensure that the site can be adequately restored to a satisfactory after-use should the following development be delayed or is not implemented.

10.83 We also recognise that it will be important to safeguard the existing potential of County Durham's mineral sites to produce minerals.

^{lxxxi} Once information from English Heritage's Strategic Stone study becomes available we will consider safeguarding important 'relic' quarries. These are site containing natural building and roofing stone which do not have planning permission for mineral working but which could be needed in the future in order to repair of important heritage assets.

^{lxxxii} The requirement for a mineral assessment will be administered by including mineral assessments on the local list of information for mineral requirements. This will be based upon advice set out in Chapter 6 of the British Geological Survey Guide Mineral Safeguarding in England: Good Practice Advice, (2011).

Accordingly, proposals for non-minerals development within the vicinity of existing mineral sites and allocated mineral sites will always need to be considered in order to prevent the development of sensitive land-uses near to existing quarries and allocated minerals sites. Consideration will therefore need to be given to the environmental and amenity impacts that would occur through the winning and working of minerals in order to ensure the non-minerals development would not compromise the working of the mineral deposit.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)
- Coal Authority Coal Resource Plan (2009)
- British Geological Survey mapping data (2000)

You told us that...

Consultation on our emerging approach to mineral safeguarding was undertaken in July 2009^(lxxxiii) and again in December 2010^(lxxxiv). Comments received and our responses are detailed in the Statement of Consultation which accompanies the County Durham Plan. A wide range of responses were received, many of which which agreed with the proposed approach as described in this policy.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

The July 2009 report contained spatial options for safeguarding different minerals. These options were subject to Sustainability

Appraisal with the SA recommendation outlined in the December 2010 report. The approach outlined in the Preferred Options Report is broadly in line with all SA recommendations.

Response to SA Recommendations

We have included within the policy text, reference to safeguarding relic quarries once information from English Heritage's Strategic Stone study becomes available.

The NPPF says...

In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should define Minerals Safeguarding Areas and adopt appropriate policies in order that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development, whilst not creating a presumption that resources defined will be worked; and define Minerals Consultation Areas based on these Minerals Safeguarding Areas; set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practicable and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place, (paragraph 143). When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in mineral safeguarding areas where they might constrain potential future use for these purposes, (paragraph 144).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process.

lxxxiii Technical Consultation Report Identifying Mineral Safeguarding Areas & Safeguarding Mineral handling, Processing and Transportation Infrastructure in County Durham

lxxxiv Technical Consultation Report 'Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- None.

Question 58

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

Strategic Site at Heights Quarry

Policy 59

Strategic Site Allocation West of Heights Quarry

Proposals for the winning and working of carboniferous limestone from land west of Heights Quarry, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be permitted where it is in accordance with Policy 53 (Meeting the Need for Primary Aggregates), Policy 42 (International Wildlife Sites) and other relevant policies of the Plan, but will be subject to conditions and/or legal agreements which, amongst others, will provide specifically for:

- a. The surrendering of existing permitted reserves within the northern sector of the existing site (Heights Quarry) in exchange for new permitted reserves; and
- b. An acceptable scheme of phased working and restoration for both Heights Quarry and its western extension which seeks to

minimise significant adverse impacts and maximises and delivers a range of environmental benefits including landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures, and which specifically provides for the diversion and enhancement of the Weardale Way.

Proposals will also be required to consider the feasibility of the transport of mineral by rail using the Weardale Railway Line.

10.84 In order to assist in the steady and adequate supply of carboniferous limestone, a strategic site for future mineral working is identified to the west of Heights Quarry in Weardale. (see Appendix I). However, given the location of the strategic site allocation we recognise the importance of ensuring that proposals for its working and restoration in association with the existing quarry minimises significant adverse impacts to that which would be compatible with the environment and important qualities of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and maximises enhancement measures via site restoration. Proposals for working and restoration will therefore be carefully considered with great weight being given to decisions to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside, the conservation of wildlife and the cultural heritage and the need to avoid impacts on recreational opportunities, including that of the Weardale Way which will need to be diverted in order to enable the proposed strategic site to be worked. Similarly, given the proximity of the site to the North Pennine Moors SPA, which lies within 2km of the proposed site further assessment will be required to ensure that any noise and vibration emanating from blasting does not impact upon qualifying species. Although the habitat for the qualifying species is extensive in the North Pennines, if it cannot be ascertained that there would be no adverse effects on the SPA site integrity planning permission will normally be refused. However, it is considered that significant weight should be given to the need for mineral from this

site on the basis that:

- The continued extraction of carboniferous limestone from this quarry over the Plan period would make a significant contribution to the future supply of carboniferous limestone aggregate in County Durham (lxxxv),
- The carboniferous limestone aggregate that is produced at this quarry is required to supply the in-situ coated roadstone plant^(lxxxvi), and aggregate which is required to manufacture ready mixed concrete and high quality pre-cast concrete products;
- A strategic site allocation in this location would help retain existing direct and indirect employment associated with the winning and working of minerals; and
- The North Pennines has a long heritage and history of mineral working and that the legacy of mineral working has contributed positively to the landscape qualities and natural beauty of the North Pennines and provided significant opportunities for biodiversity and geodiversity.

10.85 It will be essential that any scheme of working is carefully designed to ensure that the highest environmental standards are achieved, through a phased programme of working and restoration which minimise significant adverse impacts upon the environment and the amenity of local communities and provides substantive environmental benefits including landscape enhancement and biodiversity enhancement measures.

Key Evidence Base:

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

Earlier consultation highlighted the employment benefits to the local economy of allocating this site, and the importance of this site to the supply of carboniferous Limestone for use in ready mixed concrete, as a dry aggregate and in the supply of asphalt. Comments also emphasised the need to consider any potential significant adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB, taking into consideration the objectives of the AONB management plan, and on the conservation objectives of the nature conservation interests adjacent and near to the site. Comments also emphasised how the restoration of the site could contribute to local BAP habitat targets, particularly given the proximity to the North Pennine Moors SPA and the high biodiversity value of the AONB generally.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Subject to detailed assessment of environmental and amenity impacts via a planning application and satisfactory arrangements to divert the Weardale Way social effects were not considered to be significant. The economic effects of the proposed strategic site were recognised as positive. The western extension has the potential to result in negative environmental effects which would need to be minimised and controlled throughout the working of the site. Some long term positive environmental effects in relation to landscape enhancement and habitat creation may be derived through the restoration of the

lxxxv Aggregate Industries the operator of Heights Quarry have advised the Council that Heights Quarry could produce up to 390,000 tonnes of carboniferous limestone per annum.

lxxxvi There are three coated roadstone plants in County Durham, these are located at Heights, Huland and Coxhoe Quarries. These plants are important for the maintenance and improvement of highways.

site. Further detailed assessment of environmental impacts, in particular, upon biodiversity, landscape, heritage matters and natural resources (soil, water and air) will be required through the submission of an environmental statement accompanying any planning application. SA also recommended a range of mitigation measures.

Response to SA Recommendations...

Policy 59 has been amended in accordance with SA recommendations, reference has been included to the requirement for proposals for mineral working to be in accordance with Policy 42 (International Wildlife Sites). Policy 59 has also been amended and wording changed from 'habitat creation' to 'enhancement' to demonstrate to the operator that restoration proposals should result in a net gain in biodiversity.

Alternative Options not chosen...

None applicable.

The NPPF tells us...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates (Paragraph 145). As far as practicable, provide for the maintenance of landbanks of non-energy minerals from outside of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (paragraph 144).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of

this Policy:

- Extent of permitted reserves (tonnes)
- Annual sales (tonnes)

Question 59

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

Strategic Area of Search to the south of Todhills Brickworks

Policy 60

Strategic Area of Search to the south of Todhills Brickworks

In order to ensure that sufficient feedstock is available to provide and maintain a minimum 25 year stock of permitted reserves for Todhills Brickworks, a strategic area of search, as shown on the proposals map, is identified to the south of the brickworks.

Proposals for the winning and working of brick making raw materials within the area of search will be permitted where they are in accordance with Policy 55 (Brickmaking Raw Materials) but will be subject to conditions which amongst others will provide specifically for:

- a. The long-term economic future of Todhills Brickworks;

- b. The extent, date of commencement, and duration of workings;
- c. Such advance and preparatory works as are deemed necessary to safeguard the landscape, environmental, and residential amenities of the area; and
- d. An agreed scheme of phased working and restoration which seeks to enhance the site by delivering a range of environmental benefits including landscape enhancement and habitat creation measures.

10.86 In order to assist in the delivery of Policy 55 (Brickmaking Raw Materials), the approach of the Plan is to allocate a strategic area of search, south of Todhills Brickworks^(lxxxvii). This allocation (see Appendix I) will play a vital role in providing the long term feedstock for the adjacent brickworks once existing supplies of coal measures mudstone from the current planning permission (Long Lane) are exhausted^(lxxxviii).

10.87 The area of search would:

- Provide the necessary 25 year stock of permitted reserves for Todhills brickworks;
- Provide security of supply for the owner of the brickworks (Wienerberger) and a basis for future investment, thereby helping to guarantee its economic future;
- Ensure the production of bricks and other clay based products for

use in County Durham and the North East region; and

- Safeguard existing employment at the brickworks.

10.88 Any proposal for future working must ensure that impacts on the character of the landscape and on surrounding communities are minimised, and this is likely to be best achieved through a co-ordinated programme of screening, phased working and restoration which provides environmental benefits via landscape enhancement and habitat creation measures.

Key Evidence Base

- Minerals Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

Responses to earlier consultation generally supported the identification of a strategic area of search for the extraction of brick making raw materials at this location in order to meet the needs of Todhills Brickworks. Comments emphasised the need to ensure that views from and over the valley of the River Wear and surface water and groundwater resources are protected (via a hydro-geological risk assessment submitted as part of the planning application), and that the restoration strategy for the site should contribute to the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan habitat creation targets. The responses we have received have been taken into account in preparing the preferred options report and this will guide our approach to permitting new working when new working is required. The comments that were received are detailed in the Statement of Consultation which

^{lxxxvii} The County Durham Minerals Local Plan (December 2000) recognised the potential shortfall of permitted reserves at this brick manufacturing plant and allocated an Area of Search for additional brick shale extraction south east of the existing brickworks to meet longer term needs (Policy M11). This policy has been 'saved' until it is replaced by the provisions of the County Durham Plan.

^{lxxxviii} The current quarry which serves Todhills brickworks (the Long Lane site) was granted in 1999 and has permission for extraction until 2018.

accompanies the County Durham Plan.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) recommended that Todhills brickworks can be identified as a strategic site as it will support the continued working of the brickworks over the Plan period and beyond. A consistent supply of bricks will be required to deliver the proposed development in the County Durham Plan.

Response to SA recommendation....

None required. SA advises that the proposed allocation will secure the future operation of Todhills brickworks and local supply of bricks over the lifetime of the County Durham Plan and beyond. No alternative sites would be able to meet this identified need.

Alternative Options not chosen...

No alternative spatial options were proposed by the brickworks operator. Unlike other forms of development minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur. The proposed strategic area of search contains proven mineral resources and is a long standing Minerals Local Plan allocation which is located adjacent to the existing brickworks. The proposed site has also been subject to significant past investment by the brickworks owner, following the allocation of this site in the Minerals Local Plan, a pre-planting scheme was agreed with the Council to help in assisting to minimise and mitigate visual impacts.

The NPPF tells us...

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals by co-operating with neighbouring and more distant authorities to co-ordinate the planning of industrial

minerals to ensure adequate provision is made to support their likely use in industrial and manufacturing processes; encouraging safeguarding or stockpiling so that important minerals remain available for use; providing a stock of permitted reserves to support the level of actual and proposed investment required for new or existing plant and the maintenance and improvement of existing plant and equipment, at least 15 years for secondary (clay and shale) materials to maintain an existing plant and at least 25 years for brick clay materials to support a new kiln; take account of the need for provision of brick clay from a number of different sources to enable appropriate blends to be made (paragraph 146).

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Remaining life of permitted reserves (years) (details to be discussed with the owner of the brickworks).

Question 60

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

Providing for Waste Management Capacity

10.89 This section sets out how much waste capacity needs to be provided for, when it might be required, and where it should be located. Since our previous consultation in May 2011^(lxxxix) a national survey of commercial and industrial waste and a study of commercial and industrial waste arisings in the North East have been carried out^(xc). The planning system has also undergone radical change, although the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not address waste and current indications are that national waste policy will be published alongside the new National Waste Management Plan for England, now expected in 2013. The new 'Duty to Cooperate' is intended to address cross boundary issues. Furthermore detailed work has been commissioned by the North East local authorities^(xci), the results of which have informed revised calculations on waste capacity^(xcii). Table 15 sets out the estimated capacity available at present in the County.

10.90 The approach to waste management addresses the challenge of moving to more sustainable waste management through reducing waste sent to landfill, and meeting stringent targets for household waste recycling and composting of 50% by 2020; recovery of 75% of municipal waste by 2020 (both required by the Waste Strategy for England 2007) and a minimum 70% increase in non-hazardous construction and demolition waste recycling by 2020 (as detailed in the EU Waste Framework Directive). The outcome of the Council's procurement process for new Municipal Waste capacity, expected to be announced in Autumn 2012, will also have a significant bearing on the capacity gap. The approach retains sufficient flexibility to take account of the outcome of this process and wider uncertainties.

Table 12 Waste Infrastructure in County Durham by Site Type

Site Type	Not Operational (tonnes per annum)	Operational (tonnes per annum)	Total Capacity (tonnes per annum)
C&D recycling	20,000	175,000	195,000
Composting	85,000	233,220	318,220
Landfill (inert)	29,999	1,090,000	1,119,999
Landfill (non-hazardous)		491,960	491,960
Metal/ELV	102,499	432,624	535,123
Recycling	114,000	590,000	704,000
Special Waste Transfer		1,600	1,600
Clinical Waste Transfer		33,183 ⁽¹⁾	33,183 ⁽²⁾
Transfer	15,000	1,081,484	1,096,484
Treatment	98,000	772,308	870,308
Grand Total	464,498	4,901,379	5,335,877

lxxxix Technical Consultation Report 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy for County Durham' (May 2011) which consulted on waste issues including an assessment of waste capacity and options for a spatial strategy for waste.

xc North East of England Commercial & Industrial waste Survey 2010 (2011), for the North East Sustainable Resources Board (NESRB).

xci Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012.

xcii 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy for County Durham' (May 2011) set out the capacity in County Durham and the Capacity Gap for each waste type apart from Hazardous.

1. Does not include GSK, Harmire Road; (Company's own facility and below licence threshold).
2. Does not include GSK, Harmire Road; (Company's own facility and below licence threshold).

Source: Urban Mines (Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning, Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012).

Existing Provision for Waste

10.91 The three main waste types produced and managed in County Durham are:

- **Non-Hazardous Waste**, which consists of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and Commercial and Industrial (C&I) waste. "Municipal waste" traditionally meant waste managed by a local authority. The Landfill Directive defines municipal waste as waste from households as well as other waste which, because of its nature or composition, is similar to waste from households. This includes a significant amount of waste that is generated by businesses and not handled by local authorities. Therefore, the North East Study (Urban Mines, 2012) refers to WasteDataFlow recorded waste as ^(xciii). As they are similar in composition, C&I and MSW are termed "Non-hazardous waste" and are addressed together, on the basis that most waste facilities manage both MSW and C&I. Current estimates are that the County produces around 653,000 tonnes of Non-Hazardous waste per annum ^(xciv).
- **Construction and Demolition waste (C&D)**, which includes rubble, glass, wood, soils and plastics. Most C&D waste is 'inert'. C&D waste is the largest waste stream and it is estimated that the County

produced 957,194 tonnes of C&D waste in 2010^(xcv).

- **Hazardous Waste**, which contains material or substances potentially harmful to health or the environment, including oils and asbestos, batteries, fluorescent lighting etc. County Durham produces a small amount of Hazardous Waste, arisings totalling 26,526 tonnes in 2010. In 2009, 21,482 tonnes were deposited in County Durham, representing just under 2% of total deposits in the North East. In 2010, this rose to 22,461 tonnes, still only representing just under 8.5 % of the overall tonnage of hazardous waste deposited in the North East in 2010.
- It is also estimated that 647,000 tonnes of **agricultural waste** is produced per annum (1998 estimates, EA, 2000). Wastes are also produced from the County's **mineral workings**.
- **Low Level Radioactive Waste (LLRW)** comprises radioactive wastes other than those suitable for disposal with ordinary refuse. LLW consists largely of paper, plastics and scrap metal items that have been used in hospitals, research establishments and the nuclear industry. Very Low Level Radioactive Waste (VLLW) is a sub category of this and consists of the same kinds of materials with less radioactivity. Low volume VLLW can be disposed of with municipal, commercial or industrial waste. High volume VLLW can be disposed of to specified landfill sites and controls are necessary as specified by the environmental regulators.

xciii "Local Authority Collected Waste (LACW)" and the remainder of non-hazardous waste is referred to as commercial and industrial waste. This ensures consistency with previous work and with terminology used by National Government. For clarity and ease, this document refers to the two elements of Non-Hazardous waste as Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and Commercial and Industrial (C&I)

xciv Urban Mines Report, 2012

xcv EA figures - waste received has been used as a proxy for waste arisings

Future provision for Waste

Non-Hazardous Waste

10.92 The 2010 national survey ^(xcvi) shows a significant decrease in commercial and industrial waste generated in the North East of 48.7% (to 2,357,000 tonnes) between 2002-3 and 2009, the biggest fall of any English region. The Survey may be expected to reflect the particular economic conditions at the time (i.e. an economy recovering from recession), but does suggest that waste arisings are being decoupled from economic growth.

10.93 The North East Study of 2012 concentrated on commercial and industrial waste, but since many of the key facilities in the region process waste from both municipal and C&I sources, the Study also considered municipal waste arisings in order to produce a more precise forecast. Based on projections for C&I and MSW, the Study suggests that County Durham's current annual non-hazardous arisings (653,000 tonnes) will remain fairly constant throughout the Plan period, as shown on the table below. MSW is forecast to increase to almost 290,000 tonnes by the end of the Plan period, whilst C&I will decline to 346,000 tonnes ^(xcvii).

10.94 On the basis of strong policy direction and economic signals, residual waste solutions are likely to involve recovery of waste and therefore proposals for major new landfill capacity are unlikely to be needed or justified. Landfill will however inevitably remain a small but significant part of the long term waste management solution as there will always be a requirement for some waste to be disposed of to landfill which cannot be recycled or otherwise treated. Joint Stocks, near Coxhoe accepts municipal waste for disposal, whilst some of County Durham's

waste is also transported out of the County for disposal. Joint Stocks currently has spare capacity, although it is important that this is preserved as far as possible to maximise flexibility for planning waste management in the future ^(xcviii). With this in mind, it is important to conserve void space and to drive waste management up the waste hierarchy, with alternative technologies required to take up the capacity. The intention is therefore not to provide additional landfill capacity during the Plan period, but to continue to utilise existing available capacity, on the basis that it will diminish at a slower rate due to continued diversion and waste prevention.

Table 13 Projected Non-Hazardous Waste Arisings in County Durham over the Plan Period

Year	Projected Total Arisings (tonnes)
2010/11	653,000
2019/20	638,000
2029/30	636,000

Source: Urban Mines (Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning, Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012).

xcvi The national survey of commercial and industrial arisings 2010, undertaken by Defra.

xcvii The baseline decline is attributed by Urban Mines to the relative importance of industry in the County (55% of businesses industrial and 45% commercial as compared to 18% industrial in Newcastle-upon-Tyne). This differs from our original projections which indicated that both waste streams would grow.

xcviii The study suggests that Joint Stocks' landfill voidspace will end in 2028 (based on 2010 input rates). However this is very difficult to predict. Individual landfill data is commercially confidential. The Waste Technical Paper took a mean of several years waste input in order to estimate remaining capacity.

Table 14 Non-Hazardous Residual Waste Capacity Gap Over the Plan Period

Year	Projected Capacity Gap (tonnes)
2010/11	-36,000
2019/20	+9,000 (no deficit)
2029/30	- 90,000

Source: Urban Mines (Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning, Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012).

10.95 The findings of the North East Study are summarised in Table 17. Based upon the achievement of statutory targets, the study suggests that the current residual capacity shortfall of 36,000 tonnes per annum will disappear by the middle of the Plan period (2019/20) but reappear at the end (reaching -90,000tpa by 2029/30). Three alternative scenarios were also developed which modelled increased recycling (of 60% and then 70% for C&I) and landfill diversion targets (of 70% for C&I). Each of these shows a surplus capacity to varying extents. On this basis, assuming that statutory targets will be achieved as a minimum provides a "worst case" indication of capacity required.

Construction and Demolition Waste (Inert Waste)

10.96 The availability of reliable data on inert waste continues to be an issue in planning for future capacity. Significant volumes are managed on site at the point of arising, or on sites which are exempt from permitting by the Environment Agency and are therefore unrecorded. In 2008 arisings of C&D waste were estimated to total 1,066,097 tonnes^(xcix) Of this,

746,122 tonnes were landfilled (70%). This is used as the basis for projections in that it represents the "worst case" (summarised in Table 18). Current estimates show that arisings are actually falling, at least partly as a result of the economic situation. In 2009, arisings of C&D were estimated to be 987,464 tonnes^(c), of which nearly 71% was landfilled. In 2010, arisings were 957,194 tonnes, of which around 76% was landfilled. Growth of C&D waste arisings is projected to be flat throughout the Plan period.

Table 15 Projected C&D Arisings in the County Over the Plan Period

Year	Projected Construction & Demolition waste arisings
2009/10	1,066,097 tonnes
2019/20	1,066,097 tonnes
2029/30	1,066,097 tonnes

Source: EA Waste Interrogator 2008, inert waste received used as a proxy for arisings.

10.97 It is estimated that capacity at licensed recycling sites is around 800,000 tonnes per annum and ad-hoc recycling accounts for around 500,000 tonnes per annum. Combined inert landfill capacity is estimated to be between 6m and 12m tonnes (depending on source of data and conversion factor used). A 50% C&D recycling target would mean that between 374,000 tonnes and 533,000 tonnes per annum would be landfilled depending on recycling performance. Based on current capacity, and estimates of the scale of current and future ad-hoc recycling on exempt sites, no provision for further capacity for construction and demolition waste is required in the Plan. As inert waste is bulky and of relatively low

xcix EA Waste Interrogator 2008, inert waste received used as a proxy for arisings.

c EA Waste Interrogator 2009, (inert waste received used as a proxy for arisings).

value, a key driver for recycling is transportation cost, with landfills being used if closer. There is therefore a need for a wide distribution of facilities in order to encourage recycling, and policy to encourage recycling and re-use at sites. This is the approach of the Plan to recycled aggregates (Policy 51, (Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management)).

Hazardous Waste

10.98 County Durham is a relatively small producer of hazardous waste in regional terms and we consider that no additional capacity for hazardous waste is required in the County, a conclusion which is supported by The North East Study (Urban Mines, 2012). It also shows declining arisings against a current capacity of over 45,000 tonnes, as shown below.

Table 16 Hazardous Waste Arisings in the Plan Period

Year	Projected Hazardous Waste Arisings (tonnes)
2010/11	16,000
2019/20	15,000
2029/30	13,000

Source: Urban Mines (Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning, Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012).

Low Level Radioactive Waste (LLRW)

10.99 Only limited information is available on arisings, imports and disposal in County Durham. The policy on management of radioactive waste is being developed jointly by the Environment Agency and the Office

for Nuclear Regulation (an agency of HSE), but no data on arisings and their destinations is held by the EA. Indications are that arisings of LLRW in the region are relatively low and therefore given that there are no nuclear installations in the County no further specific provision will be made for this stream in County Durham.

10.100 In setting out all this data, it is important to recognise that this is a best estimate at the current time. We will update our assumptions on the capacity gap for all streams and will periodically review it.

Capacity Required

10.101 On the basis of current capacity, current and projected waste arisings, and a number of specific assumptions, the North East Study 2012^(ci) estimates that there is likely to be a small capacity gap in provision for non hazardous waste management towards the end of the Plan period (summarised in Table 17). No additional landfill capacity is likely to be required for non-hazardous waste during the plan period. However, this is a complex and rapidly changing picture and the results can only provide a best estimate based on the best available data. The position will be monitored on the basis of performance on recycling and recovery and procurement of residual waste capacity.

Policy 61

Waste Management Provision

Provision will be made to enable the appropriate sustainable management of projected levels of waste arisings throughout the Plan period to 2030.

Planning permission for new waste management facilities (excluding

ci Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012.

proposals to manage residual waste by landfill) will be granted where they:

- a. Contribute to meeting an identified need for the Plan period, based on factors including existing capacity;
- b. Contribute to the sustainable management of waste, in accordance with the waste hierarchy;
- c. Do not involve excessive provision of capacity which would result in unnecessary importation of waste into County Durham;
- d. Facilitate the provision of an accessible network of local waste management facilities or contributes to capacity where development will be concentrated within the main towns; and
- e. Accord with Policy 2 (Spatial Approach) and other relevant policies in the Plan.

10.102 Provision for future waste management in County Durham is based upon providing facilities to deal with the County's own waste arisings (net self sufficiency). As highlighted by the Sustainability Appraisal large scale importation of waste from outside the County is no longer feasible. Whilst in view of consultation responses making provision for all of County Durham's waste and, where appropriate, waste from elsewhere would provide greatest economic benefit and may be the most appropriate option in terms of flexibility and sustainability, providing for new strategic scale waste facilities for certain waste types may not be the most economic or sustainable solution if capacity is available in neighbouring areas. The Strategy is therefore based on the approach of making provision for all of County Durham's own waste which will allow management close to source.

However, whereas the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley authorities now have MSW contracts in place, the procurement of facilities to manage County Durham's MSW has yet to be completed. Therefore in the medium term it may be necessary to export waste where this is shown to be the most sustainable solution.

10.103 In line with Government guidance and the Waste Framework Directive, we are required to set out a strategy for the management of waste produced in County Durham and provide for the required capacity over the Plan period, on the basis of evidence, particularly the conclusions of the North East Study (2012) ^(cii). In the absence of strategic allocations, this Policy therefore sets out how we will address and support proposals for new capacity to manage waste arisings over the Plan period in a sustainable way.

Key Evidence Base

- EU Waste Framework Directive (2008)
- Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (2011)
- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (2011)
- Waste Strategy for England 2007 (2007)
- Survey of Commercial and Industrial Waste Arisings 2010 (2011)
- North East of England Commercial and Industrial Waste Survey 2010 for the North East Sustainable Resources Board (2011)
- Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for

cii Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning Authorities, Urban Mines, 2012.

the North East of England Waste Planning Authorities, (2012)

- Waste Technical Paper (2010)

You told us that...

The approach to provision for future (non-landfill) waste management facilities and the spatial strategy for waste have been informed by the consultation responses from the Issues and Options stage and those from the 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy' document, as well as the recommendations of Sustainability Appraisal.

In response to Question 42 of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, roughly an equal proportion preferred either making provision for all of the County's waste or achieving this whilst attracting waste from elsewhere to maximise the potential economic and employment opportunities in waste management. This indicates that County Durham businesses and residents are willing to take responsibility for their own waste.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us that...

Provision should be made for all of County Durham's waste, with some provision for management outside the County. This is because as detailed above large scale importation of waste from outside the County is no longer feasible. This option is likely to have a significant negative impact on other parts of the region by restricting their capacity to deal with their waste close to source. This would also be the case for Option C, which would give less control over the County's waste management and create fewer job opportunities in the County.

The chosen option encourages self sufficiency, allowing the County's needs to be met. It does not incur any significant increase in the level of waste transportation or land take, allowing waste to be managed

close to source. As discussed above, however, it may be necessary in the medium term to export waste, depending on the outcome of the Council's procurement process for municipal waste capacity. This is why the SA recommends a combination. It recommends that as part of such a strategy, waste from all streams could first be reduced/reused/recovered within County Durham to minimise the impact of transportation.

Alternative Options not chosen

- Make provision for County Durham's waste and as much as possible from elsewhere, in order to maximise economic and employment opportunities in waste management.
- Make provision for less waste than arises in County Durham, on the assumption that a significant proportion will be managed outside the County.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The allocation of sites in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD; and
- The Development Management process

The capacity gap will be kept under review for the Commercial & Industrial and Municipal Solid Waste streams (Non-Hazardous waste).

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this policy:

- Capacity of new development permitted by waste type and waste management technology

Question 61

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

The Spatial Strategy for Waste

10.104 The County's distinctive settlement pattern presents a challenge of how to deliver new waste development in some areas. However there is also the opportunity to build upon the County's existing diverse network of facilities.

10.105 The Technical Consultation Report^(ciii) consulted upon key locational principles for waste development and spatial approaches for each of the Delivery Areas. These have informed the spatial approach and the policy on the location of new waste facilities.

10.106 The spatial approach aims to guide development to appropriate places within County Durham. In responding to the pressures in the County (particularly reducing the continuing reliance on landfill), it is flexible and supports developing technologies or emerging solutions in other strategic documents such as the Council's Municipal Waste Management Strategy (MWMS). At the same time, it takes into account the need to protect sensitive areas and local communities.

10.107 The spatial approach for waste is based upon the five Delivery Areas in the Plan^(civ), recognising the characteristics and constraints of each Delivery Area and evidence from the ELR on suitable employment land to direct the broad strategy for waste management provision for each area. It should be noted, however, that waste is a strategic issue rather than a local one and that flows of waste are regional, sub-regional and national. Waste does not respect local authority boundaries and the Plan does not use the Delivery Areas as the basis for providing new waste capacity. Whilst the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD will allocate sites where it is considered that sites are needed and deliverable, the spatial approach retains the necessary flexibility to allow for development which meets the needs of the main towns but allows development to be considered where there is a need and where there is land to accommodate it. The focus remains upon the main settlements, whilst recognising the opportunities for co-location of facilities at existing or suitably located new waste sites and for smaller-scale facilities particularly in other settlements where they are well related to the transport network.

10.108 For the **North Durham Delivery Area**, the approach will be based upon its role as a major centre of population and industry. It will therefore be a focus for new waste development. The aim of the approach will be to maintain and develop an integrated waste network and support new recovery capacity in the area. For the **Central Durham Delivery Area**, the approach is based upon Durham City at its heart and as a focus for growth in the Plan period and therefore a major source of household, commercial and industrial waste arisings. It will be a key area for waste development. The East similarly contains major centres of population and industry. With the exception of the southern and western parts of the **East Durham Delivery Area**, which are rural in nature, it will be a key area for waste development. The **South Durham Delivery Area** contains major centres of population and industry, particularly in its west, including the

ciii 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy for County Durham' (May 2011)

civ The North Durham Delivery Area; Central Durham Delivery Area; East Durham Delivery Area; South Durham Delivery Area; and West Durham Delivery Area.

main towns of Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Crook. These areas are a major source of waste arisings and are therefore recognised as key areas for the location of new waste management development. The eastern part of the South Durham Delivery area is more rural in nature and therefore will not be a key location for new waste development. In all these areas, new waste development will be guided to suitable sites well related to the Main Towns and Smaller Towns and Larger Villages. In the **West Durham Delivery Area**, as it is rural in nature and has relatively low levels of waste arisings and population density it will not be considered a key location for new waste development. The existing limited network of facilities will be maintained in order to facilitate the collection and transfer of waste in the area to more centrally located recycling facilities. Where new or upgraded facilities are required, they will be guided to employment land well related to the main centres of population.

New Waste Facilities

Policy 62

Location of New Waste Facilities

Planning permission will be granted for well-designed waste facilities in appropriate sustainable locations where they:

- a. Are well related to the Main Towns and Smaller Towns and Larger Villages (in line with Policy 2 Spatial Approach));
- b. Are located on appropriate previously developed land or on land identified for general industrial uses except on the sites referred to in Table 21 (Employment sites not appropriate for waste development); or are waste development proposals which require an outdoor and/or rural location;

- c. Are well related to the transport network;
- d. Would not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the environment or amenity of local communities in accordance with the other relevant policies of the Plan;
- e. Take advantage of opportunities to be accommodated as part of an existing waste management facility, where this would not give rise to significant adverse cumulative impacts; and
- f. Take advantage of opportunities to use waste as a fuel, and to co-locate waste management facilities with potential users of recovered materials and heat, where feasible and where this represents a sustainable option.

In rural areas, planning permission will be granted for small scale waste facilities which support a connected network of facilities, where it can be demonstrated that they genuinely require a rural location and where they conform to other policies in the Plan.

10.109 It is important for the Plan to make provision for the sustainable management of waste arisings through a network of facilities, in line with the Waste Framework Directive and the principles of sustainable waste management. This Policy is the detailed expression of the spatial approach for waste and aims to locate new waste development within areas where it is anticipated that there will be increased growth, using the ELR to identify land suitable for future waste development. In accordance with PPS10, it encourages communities to take responsibility for their own waste and also seeks to encourage the co-location of facilities where feasible.

10.110 This approach updates that adopted in the County Durham

Waste Local Plan, reflecting the growth aspirations of the County. The criteria based approach of the Waste Local Plan has been proven to be very effective in recent years in delivering the capacity needed to support the diversion of waste from landfill, as demonstrated by the track record of permitted capacity and shown in Table 20 below.

Table 17 Total Waste Management Capacity Granted

Year	Capacity (tonnes)
2007/08	80,000 tonnes ⁽¹⁾
2008/09	321,000 tonnes ⁽²⁾
2009/10	211,600 tonnes ⁽³⁾
2010/11	227,400 tonnes ⁽⁴⁾

1. Comprising of transfer stations and materials recovery
2. The majority of which relates to recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion or Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT). Some Waste Transfer Stations (WTS) were also permitted
3. The majority of which was for recycling; composting; and waste transfer.
4. The majority of which consisted of recycling; composting; and waste transfer. Some metal recycling capacity was also permitted.

Source: Durham County Council Annual Monitoring Reports 2007/08 to 2010/11.

10.111 Each of the wide variety of waste facility types (including transfer stations; Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs); Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs); metal recovery facilities; composting sites; inert waste recovery and recycling facilities; aerobic and anaerobic digestion facilities and energy from waste plants) has its own locational requirements. However it is broadly true that, aside from landfill and uses which require an outdoor location, most waste development can, and should, be housed in buildings and will be located in industrial areas, in order to control effectively any visual and environmental impacts.

10.112 Modern, well designed and well managed waste facilities located in buildings are indistinguishable from other industrial uses and are generally capable of being located in defined urban areas on industrial estates. It is likely that new technologies will continue to emerge throughout the Plan period and therefore the approach needs to be flexible enough to accommodate this.

10.113 Based on the evidence from the ELR of available employment land in each Delivery Area, the approach maintains the necessary flexibility to provide for the Main Towns whilst still enabling suitably located sites in other areas to come forward where a need and opportunity is identified. However, the role and purpose of certain employment sites will not be compatible with waste management uses, and it is important to balance the proposed use with the land uses in the area. This will also help to deliver the aim of locating facilities with other similar uses. Table 21 below outlines the employment sites not considered appropriate for waste development, in line with this approach.

Table 18 Employment sites not appropriate for waste development

Site name and location	
Abbey Woods Business Park, Durham City	Heighington Lane/Aycliffe Prestige City
Aykley Heads Business Park and Aykley Heads Green Belt Land, Durham City	Hobson, Consett
Belmont Business Park, Durham City	Land South of West Auckland, Bishop Auckland
Belmont Industrial Estate and Extension, Durham City	Low Willington Industrial Estate
Berry Edge, Consett	Mount Oswald Business Park

Site name and location	
Bowburn North, Durham City	Mountjoy Science Park
Bowes Business Park	NETPark, Sedgefield
Bracken Hill Business Park, Easington	Number One Industrial Estate, Consett
Bracks Farm Business Park, Durham City	Peterlee North West (part)
Consett Business Park	Peterlee South West (part)
Dawdon	Project Genesis, Consett
Drum Industrial Estate	Seaham Grange Industrial Estate
Durham Science Park	Shaw Bank, Barnard Castle
Elvet Waterside, Durham City	South Church Enterprise Park, Bishop Auckland
Former Ice Rink, Durham City	South of Bowburn Road (Tursdale)
Green Lane Industrial Estate, Spennymoor	South of Seaham
Greencroft, Consett	Spectrum/Foxcover, Easington
Greenfield Industrial Estate and Extension, Bishop Auckland	St Helen Auckland Industrial Estate and Extension, Bishop Auckland
Harmire Enterprise Park, Barnard Castle	Villa Real, Consett
Hawthorn	Whitehouse Business Park

10.114 Developments such as composting; certain farm-related schemes

(apart from activities such as in-vessel composting and anaerobic digestion); landfill and landraise, and some of the more traditional non-landfill waste management methods need to be located outdoors. These have specific locational requirements and are exceptions to the Policy. Waste facilities which can be located on farms as part of farm diversification schemes should be assessed on their own merits. Whilst certain recovery facilities can be accommodated on farm sites, it is recognised that only a limited range of waste recovery operations are likely to be appropriate due to their specific impacts and locational requirements.

10.115 PPS10 requires that waste miles are minimised, alternative modes of transport to road are used and that self-sufficiency is a key principle where feasible. The NPPF requires that, where practical, encouragement should be given to development which supports reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduces congestion, and therefore requires the planning system to support sustainable modes of transport where reasonable. The majority of waste movements within the County are by road and whilst rail transportation may be feasible for certain sites and should be encouraged, this requires the availability of accessible rail heads. Policy 48 (Provision of New Transport Infrastructure) safeguards rail connections which have the potential to be used for the transport of waste. Where rail use is not feasible, impact upon the road network should be assessed and should be minimised by the use of the strategic road network.

10.116 A proposal for a waste facility at Thrislington Quarry is the only waste management proposal to have been put forward by the waste industry as a potential strategic allocation. The proposal is to manage a range of non-hazardous wastes as well as inert waste management activities (including recovery, recycling and composting and landfilling), with a potential capacity of 210,000 tpa. Whilst the site has strategic advantages, critical issues remain. Key amongst these is the potential impact on the adjacent Thrislington Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Thrislington Plantation National Nature Reserve (NNR), through the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). In line with Policy 43 (National and Locally Protected Sites and Species), proposals should be supported by sufficient information for the purposes of an Appropriate Assessment. Further information has been submitted but to date the proposal is still not specific in terms of the type and scale of development proposed, to the extent that would allow an adequate assessment, and demonstrate that any potential impacts or emissions from proposed waste operations at the site would not cause significant damage and undermine the integrity of the SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. This is fundamental to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. It is not therefore considered possible to make an allocation for a strategic waste site at Thrislington Quarry at this stage in the Plan. It may be however that, on the basis of further information, it is possible to make an allocation for waste development in some form and scale in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD.

10.117 The Policy addresses the obligations under the Waste Framework Directive to set out an integrated and adequate network of disposal installations, together with priorities for the location of new waste management facilities and the spatial approach for waste, reflecting Strategic Objectives 16 and 18 and promotes economic opportunities of the waste industry in line with parts of Objective 19.

Key Evidence Base

- EU Waste Framework Directive (2008)
- Waste Strategy for England 2007 (2007)
- Government Review of Waste Policy in England (2011)

- Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (2011) (and NPPF, insofar as it sets the context for waste development)
- Durham County Council Annual Monitoring Reports (2007/08 to present)
- Technical Consultation Report 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy' (2011)

You told us that...

The approach to each of the five Delivery Areas was consulted upon in the 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy for County Durham' technical consultation document. No clear consensus emerged on the approach the Plan should take to identifying locations for new (non landfill) waste facilities, but most preferred either maintaining the current pattern of facilities or using evidence of capacity.

In considering how the Plan should seek to encourage better integration to take advantage of co-location of facilities and particularly whether it should encourage a centralised network of large facilities or a decentralised network of facilities, you told us that you preferred the decentralised option, although again no clear consensus emerged.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us...

For options on the location of new waste facilities, a combination approach was recommended. This is the approach that we are taking, using a policy based on evidence of potential locations from the Employment Land Review together with maintaining the existing current pattern of facilities and providing a greater concentration of facilities around the larger towns in the County. The Policy is a detailed expression of the spatial approach for waste.

Potential Options considered but not selected:

The chosen approach aims to provide the most flexibility. It provides a combination of maintaining the current pattern of facilities; whilst providing the potential for a greater concentration of facilities around the County's larger towns (Durham City, Peterlee, Consett, Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland); and using evidence from the Employment Land Review to assess which main towns have potential to accommodate major new waste development to ensure deliverability. This also offers the opportunity to deliver a more decentralised network where a need is identified.

The option of encouraging a centralised network of large facilities which are capable of accommodating a full range of waste recycling and recovery facilities, supported by transfer stations was rejected, primarily on the grounds that it did not provide sufficient flexibility.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- New capacity permitted
- Permissions granted contrary to advice

Question 62

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

Landfill and Landraising**Policy 63****Landfill and Landraising**

Proposals for new landfill and landraising will be permitted only where they would not significantly adversely impact upon sustainable waste management in County Durham, and where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. There is a need for the facility, and there is insufficient existing capacity for the management of the waste stream; and
- b. The management of waste by options further up the Waste Hierarchy is not possible; or
- c. The proposal would bring environmental benefits such as the reclamation of registered contaminated land or previously developed land, within a short timescale, and without creating significant new capacity; and
- d. The proposal accords with Policy 2 (Spatial Approach) and other relevant policies in the Plan

10.118 Government policy is based upon prioritising waste prevention and reuse, valuing waste as a resource, with landfill diversion contributing to overall CO₂ reduction, in line with the Waste Hierarchy. However, whilst final disposal is the last resort there will always be residues which cannot be recycled or recovered and provision must be made for this capacity.

10.119 The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) terminates at the end of 2013/14. This only relates to MSW, not C&I. As yet there has been no clear message from Government regarding revisions to diversion targets to accommodate Commercial & Industrial waste, but Landfill tax is clearly now the main 'driver' for diverting waste from landfill. Targets for municipal waste are to recover value from 53% by 2010, 67% by 2015 and 75% by 2020. We anticipate therefore that only a small residual, non-recyclable fraction of the County's waste arisings will be disposed of by landfill into the future.

10.120 Total residual arisings are modelled to be around 361,000 tonnes currently. Assuming statutory targets are met, this volume declines to around 315,000 tonnes per year over the forecast period to 2030, according to the Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity for the North East of England Waste Planning Authorities study. Details of the study's findings are summarised in the Waste Technical Paper.

10.121 Capacity will be taken up by a residual solution which will not involve the provision (by allocations) of further landfill capacity within the County. However, it is also recognised that landfill can sometimes be an effective way of reclaiming derelict or contaminated land and restoring former mineral workings. Whilst planning permission for additional landfill capacity needs to be carefully controlled, there may be particular circumstances where, on a small scale, it may represent the most sustainable option.

Key Evidence Base

- EU Waste Framework Directive (2008)
- Waste Strategy for England 2007 (2007)
- Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011 (2011)
- Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management (2011) (and NPPF, insofar as it sets the context for waste development)
- Durham County Council Annual Monitoring Reports (2007/08 to present)
- Technical Consultation Report 'Towards a Waste Delivery Strategy', (2011)
- Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity For the North East of England Waste Planning Authorities (2012)

You told us that...

Whilst some preferred a combination of options, a clear preference for option D emerged.

The Sustainability Appraisal tells us...

We should provide for a combination of waste streams (Option D) on Landfill Capacity (Question 45 of Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper).

A key constraint on all options and landfill capacity is the proximity

of landfill to aquifers and ground water Source Protection Zones. A vital consideration in locating sites around the County.

Both hazardous and non-hazardous waste have some significant negative impacts, but most of these potential negative impacts will be mitigated by strict EU/ UK Government regulations relating to the environment, health and safety aspects of the site and waste transportation.

Interim projections suggested that there was no demonstrable need for further capacity for the recovery and disposal of hazardous waste because this is a specialist area and should be managed at a regional level. It may be advisable to retain some capacity for managing hazardous waste to avoid dependence on distant facilities that increase transport costs and impacts.

The recommendation for this option is dependent upon non-landfill waste management facilities/ networks being procured for the County and landfill capacity only being planned for the residual waste left after other treatment, or that cannot be otherwise managed.

Whilst the SA suggested landfill provision should be made for all streams, we believe it is preferable to make provision through the Development Management process for residual solutions which do not involve landfill.

Alternative Options not chosen

- Option A Provide further landfill for Non-hazardous waste only - This option could require an increase in land-take and waste transportation. It is not viable or deliverable to only have capacity for this one type of waste.
- Option B Provide further landfill for Inert waste only - No

significant change from current situation as current levels of inert waste (demolition and construction) are predicted to continue.

- Option C Provide further landfill for Hazardous waste only - It is not viable or deliverable to only have capacity for this one type of waste.
- Option D Provide further landfill to meet a combination of the above - Due to significant and increasing financial penalties (landfill tax), landfill is already, and will become even more expensive and unattractive and new sites are unlikely to come forward. This means that landfill capacity in the County is likely to decrease year on year. However, landfill will continue to be required in the County for some waste types that are not recyclable – this will include referred to in Options A, B and C. This is the key reason why Option D has been recommended.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management process

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Amount of landfill development approved (aiming for none, as currently)
- Numbers of developments approved by waste type
- Numbers of developments approved by waste management

type (aiming for moving waste up the waste hierarchy)

- Total waste managed by waste management method (aiming for decreasing landfill)

Question 63

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

Approach to allocating sites in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD

10.122 The Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper explained that the Core Strategy (now Local Plan) would only allocate new minerals and waste sites which are of strategic significance and central to the delivery of the strategy of the Plan. All other minerals and waste sites will be considered for allocation in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD.

10.123 Earlier in the process of preparing the County Durham Plan we undertook two calls for new minerals and waste sites^(cv). In preparing the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD, we will undertake a further call for sites. Through this Plan we have already sought to make decisions upon those sites which met our criteria for potential strategic sites^(cvi). However, any site which is not allocated in the main County

Durham Plan document may still be considered in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD, alongside any other non-strategic site. All potential non strategic site allocations will need to be in accordance with the key minerals and waste policies and other relevant policies of the County Durham Plan, and:

- Sites will need to be environmentally acceptable and in accordance with all relevant environmental policies in the County Durham Plan. As part of work to prepare this DPD all sites will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal and will be considered through Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- Sites will need to be demonstrably deliverable with a committed operator and/or agreement of the landowner (and owner of the mineral rights for mineral sites).
- For waste sites any opportunities for generating decentralised energy from waste, including contributing to district heating networks, are exploited.
- For surface mined coal sites, environmental acceptability will be the key test. For allocations the Council will not consider whether there may be any national, local or community benefits which could outweigh adverse impacts.
- For all aggregate minerals and brick clay sites, need will be assessed.

10.124 The location of new waste facilities (Policy 62) in the Plan addresses priorities for the location of new waste management facilities and the spatial strategy for waste, reflecting Strategic Objectives 16 and

cv The sites that have been proposed as potential allocations in the County Durham Plan and the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD are outlined in the Technical Consultation Report 'New Minerals and Waste Sites in County Durham' (December 2010).

cvi Consultation was undertaken on the criteria for strategic minerals and waste sites through the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper and the Technical Consultation Report 'New Minerals and Waste Sites in County Durham' (December 2010).

18 and promotes economic opportunities of the waste industry in line with parts of Objective 19.

11 Developer Contributions

Policy 64

Developer Contributions

All new development that provides additional housing, employment or retail floor space must contribute to the provision of physical, social and green infrastructure taking account of local or strategic needs. This will be achieved either on-site or off-site through legal agreements and/or through contributions to the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Developers must contribute to off-site infrastructure via standard CIL charges that are set out in the CIL Charging Schedule. The infrastructure priorities that will receive funding from CIL are listed in the Regulation 123 list. Infrastructure requirements for the whole County are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

Section 106 Agreements

Developers must contribute via a Section 106 Agreement towards individual infrastructure improvements that are necessary for the development to proceed, affordable housing need as set out in Policy 31 Addressing Housing Need and for infrastructure directly related to the application site and that contribution will be negotiated on a site by site basis depending on need and site viability.

Necessary infrastructure improvements will include contributions to Green Infrastructure and/or Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space in accordance with Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure).

Contributions, or payments in kind, will also be required on new developments or housing, where appropriate and viable, in order to provide Targeted Recruitment Training (TRT) for the benefit of the local community. Developers must negotiate contributions to TRT on all housing sites of 15 dwellings or over 0.5 ha or on retail or employment developments over 0.1 hectares, where appropriate. Detailed guidance on our approach to collecting contributions will be set out in the Affordable Housing and Developers Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.

Why should development contribute towards Community Infrastructure?

11.1 It is important to ensure that development proposals contribute to improvements in infrastructure capacity to cater for the additional needs they generate. When development takes place it, in many cases, makes additional demands upon infrastructure which can take many forms;

- Physical, such as roads, utilities and energy supply networks;
- Social, such as community buildings, education, health facilities, affordable housing and employment or training opportunities; and
- Environmental, such as areas for wildlife, sport and recreation.

11.2 It is considered fair that such development pays a share of the cost. By paying a contribution, developers will help fund the infrastructure that is needed to make development acceptable to communities and satisfy legal requirements.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

11.3 Legislation has tightened the legal tests to restrict the use of Section

106 agreements in planning applications to ensure they are mainly used for on-site infrastructure relating to the needs of a particular development site. At the same time the Government is encouraging the use of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to make the process of developer's contributions quicker and fairer for all developers and more transparent for both developers and the general public. The CIL will ensure that infrastructure that supports a number of development sites is not just paid for by an individual developer but rather shared proportionately by several developers.

11.4 This is particularly relevant for the delivery off-site infrastructure requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that supports the development ambitions set out in the County Durham Plan. The IDP is updated regularly, and provides the mechanism by which infrastructure requirements and their relative priority are identified by the Council in association with local communities and delivery partners. CIL money can only be spent on infrastructure priorities set out in the IDP. In addition to the IDP, we will publish a 'Regulation 123' list on our website which will list the specific projects that will benefit from levy finance. The following off-site infrastructure are examples of what projects could be funded through CIL:

- Strategic Green infrastructure;
- Biodiversity Management;
- Town Centre Improvements;
- Transport Infrastructure;
- Community Centres;
- Flood Defence Works;
- District Heat Networks;

- Arts and Cultural Provision;
- Biodiversity Management Plans;
- Health Facilities; and
- Education Facilities.

11.5 CIL rates are calculated across all developments and are mandatory, based on a proportionate and affordable sum to support 'wider' infrastructure. In the past, small scale development did not contribute towards the incremental increase of pressure on infrastructure. Since 2004, 15% of residential development in County Durham was automatically ruled out from making a contribution to local infrastructure or affordable housing as there was no policy in place to capture any contributions from sites of 10 houses or less. In practise, the majority of residential developments that were approved did not contribute financially towards the provision of strategic infrastructure. In areas like Teesdale and Weardale where many of the sites that came forward were on small sites, very few developments made a contribution to local infrastructure. The CIL charges will be based on net additional floor space (m²) created by new developments and as such developers will pay a proportionate amount based on the size of the proposed development.

11.6 The differential CIL rates and the Infrastructure Requirements are set out in the CIL Rationale & Preliminary Charging Schedule and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan respectively. Both documents sit alongside this plan are currently out for consultation. The CIL rates have been set at an appropriate level to reflect the commercial viability of development to ensure any charge does not deter development.

Community Spending

As part of the Localism Agenda, a proportion of the CIL receipts will go directly to the local community. This will be where the development is located so that the local community can spend this proportion of CIL receipts in their local area. The requirements for this have yet to be announced, however, unless the Government imposes an alternative arrangement, we propose different percentages of CIL receipts to be allocated to the local community depending on the different CIL Charging Zones:

- 20% of CIL receipts in the County Durham Zone;
- 10% of CIL receipts in the Durham City and Chester-le-Street Zone'
- 5% of CIL receipts in the Durham City Strategic Zone.

We propose a rate of 50% to go directly to the local community where the site developed is allocated in a Neighbourhood Plan. This will be on top of the spending in local areas from the County Council's proportion of CIL and from Section 106 receipts for site specific infrastructure (see below). We propose that Area Action Partnerships could be the appropriate mechanism to channel the CIL from sites not in Neighbourhood Plans and that Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums channel the CIL from sites in Neighbourhood Plans.

Section 106 Agreements

11.7 There will be occasions when there are site specific infrastructure requirements (that cannot be planned for in advance) without which a development should not be granted planning permission. In these situations it is inappropriate to use CIL money for infrastructure to unlock

an individual site so a Section 106 agreement will need to be agreed.

11.8 In particular, the impact of Affordable Housing contributions currently has a significant impact on the viability of individual development sites. Therefore, contributions to affordable housing must be negotiated on a site by site basis depending on need in the locality and the viability of the site. A Section 106 legal agreement will be the appropriate mechanism to secure affordable housing. As set out in the Affordable Housing Policy in chapter 7, Section 106 Agreements can also be used in relation to off-site contributions for affordable housing.

11.9 A section 106 agreement could also be used in order to subsidise a local bus route, pay for specific building materials and their maintenance, to pay for a junction improvement that is required because of the need generated by a single development site or to pay for green infrastructure required for a particular development site.

11.10 In relation to suitable alternative natural green spaces, Section 106 Agreements can be used to fund alternative areas for recreation with a view to reducing visitor pressure on the nearby protected sites. This contribution should link to the provision of other green infrastructure required by Policy 20 (Green Infrastructure) where green infrastructure cannot be provided on site. Local green infrastructure projects in proximity to development sites will be found in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Local Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan in 2013.

11.11 The Council will ensure that development is not charged twice for the same piece of infrastructure by listing on its website specific infrastructure that which will benefit from CIL.

11.12 New development should also recognise the need to support existing communities and achieve social progress by tackling social exclusion and ensuring continued levels of economic growth by expanding and raising skill levels in the local labour market. New development should therefore provide opportunities for people living in local communities,

especially those disadvantaged or otherwise outside the labour market and that may require measurable commitments on targeted recruitment and training. The provision of training opportunities for local firms during the construction and occupation of the development is also important. The Council may seek planning obligations in relation to targeted recruitment and training and use of local supply chains, including the agreement of targets and delivery processes and the provision of resources to assist in this.

11.13 Detailed guidance on our approach to collecting contributions will be set out in the Affordable Housing and Developers Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Supporting information will also be contained in our other SPDs particularly the Natural Environment. Drafts of these documents will be available in 2013.

Key Evidence Base

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Draft CIL Charging Schedule (2012)
- Targeted Recruitment Training charter

You told us...

- Every area has different priorities so the Infrastructure Delivery Plan should reference community priorities.
- The IDP will be fundamental and must be signed up to by all delivery partners including the development sector.
- The CIL will simplify developers contributions, enabling developers to predict their liability, producing certainty, increasing

fairness and proportionality while reducing delays in decision making.

SA told us...

- Use a combination of options 1 and 2 by introducing CIL and using Section 106 on a site by site basis.
- To dismiss the options of a standard formulae being used with Section 106 only.

Alternative Options not chosen...

We have not chosen to carry dealing with planning obligations on a scheme by scheme basis as the CIL is the best way to deal with strategic infrastructure and it is the way the Government suggest local authorities do so.

NPPF says...

- Local Plans should plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area.
- Supplementary planning documents should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery.
- The sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened.

Implementation and Monitoring...

This Policy will be delivered by:

- The Development Management team and their enforcement team

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this Policy:

- Spending of CIL revenue will be published on the Council Website.
- Spending on Infrastructure will be monitored in the IDP.

Question 64

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

To find out more about the County Durham Plan contact:

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Interactive Website: <http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning>

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