

Lowick Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2036

Regulation 14 (Pre-Submission) Version (April 2022)

LOWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022 -2036



Regulation 14 (Pre-Submission) Version – April 2022

Lowick Parish Council

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FOREWORD

The Lowick Neighbourhood Plan is intended to be a blueprint for the future of the village. Unlike previous Parish Plans, it will become part of the Development Plan for this area for the next 16 years. What is built in the village and the parish will be based on it.

It is intended to safeguard the heritage of the village, while encouraging growth and development. It looks to preserve the character of the community as a good place to live and work, whilst increasing and supporting local decision-making.

The basis for the plan was inspired by the Localism Bill introduced by the Government in 2011. It has been drawn up by local people and Lowick Parish Council after extensive consultation. We hope you have seen our exhibitions and had a chance to contribute your ideas.

It will shortly be scrutinised by an Examiner who will approve it, or return it for further work. Then it will be put to a local Referendum, and will become our planning policy, if a majority approves.

The Planning Group thanks everyone who has worked to produce the parts of the plan and its policies, and especially our Consultant, Jenny Ludman, who has been instrumental in steering the plan towards completion.

In this document you will find details of the policies and planning proposals we have agreed. If you wish to comment, this can be done quickly via the website at <https://lowickplan.com>. You can also comment via e-mail to lowickparish@outlook.com, or post your comments to **John Huddart, Lowick Parish Council, 5 Cheviot View, Lowick, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 2TY**. A hard copy of the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents, including the Environmental Report, is available for viewing at **St John the Baptist Church, Lowick** [open all day, and only not viewable during Church Services], and a **Drop In Stall will be open at the Jubilee Fete, on Lowick Common on Saturday June 4th, 1.45pm – 4.15pm**, where you can view documents, and speak to members of the Parish Council about the Neighbourhood Plan.

The consultation on this Regulation 14 version of the plan formally commences on **Thursday 5th May 2022 for a period of 6 weeks, ending on 9th June 2022**. We will then review all comments and submit a final version of the Plan to Northumberland County Council, who will carry out a further consultation before the plan is examined.

John Huddart - Chair of Lowick Parish Council and Lowick Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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Policies Map 2: Inset map showing:

Settlement boundary (Policy L3)

Lowick Historic Core (Policy L14)

Community and Recreational facilities (Policy L1)

Local Green Spaces (Policy L2)

Coastal Mitigation areas (L6)

Circular Walk [L9]

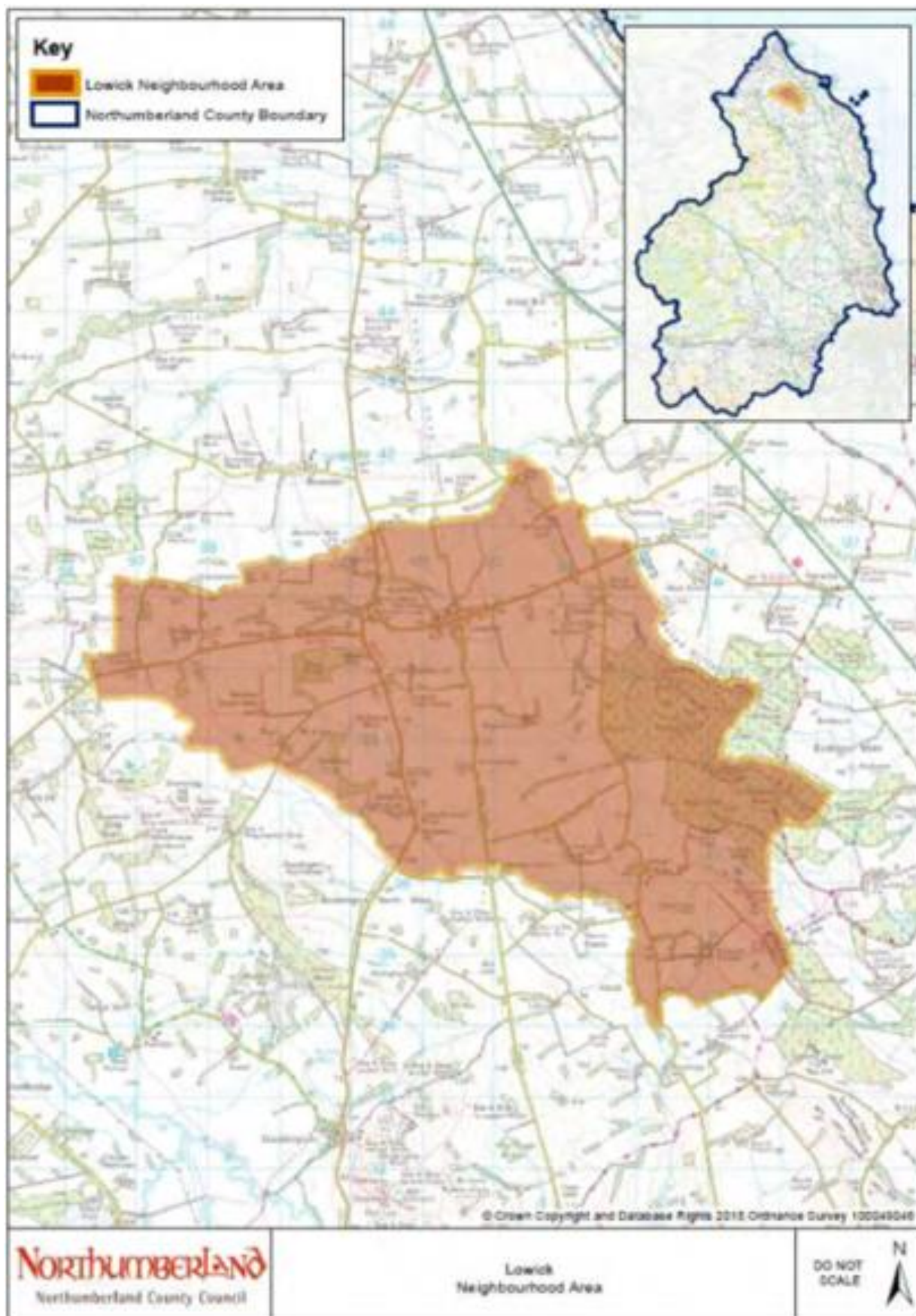
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan is the Lowick Neighbourhood Plan and policies in this Plan will be used to determine planning applications in the Parish of Lowick [hereafter, the Neighbourhood Area], alongside other policies in the Development Plan.
- 1.2 The Lowick Neighbourhood Area, designated for the purposes of 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 comprises the Parish of Lowick only. Northumberland County Council formally designated the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area on the 19th of June 2015.
- 1.3 The Lowick Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) has been prepared by a Steering Group comprising members of Lowick Parish Council, and other residents in the Neighbourhood Area. There has been input from Northumberland County Council planners and other stakeholders, and the group have commissioned a chartered planning consultant to support the group with the technical aspects of writing the Plan. This is the Regulation 14 (pre-submission consultation) version of the Plan.

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Map showing Lowick Neighbourhood Area

Why have a Plan for Lowick?

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- 1.4 The Lowick Neighbourhood Plan will have locally specific planning policies which will provide clear guidance as to what kind of development will be supported in the Plan area, and what development will not. It gives spatial clarity for development, by defining a settlement boundary for Lowick. It also identifies a 'historic core' for the village, locally valued green spaces and community facilities and it identifies land with permission for housing development.
- 1.5 The settlement boundary incorporates land that has planning permission for housing, including the land to the east of the village which was given outline planning permission for 24 houses in 2018.

What evidence have we used to prepare the Plan?

- 1.6 The community have been consulted about the issues that are important to them. The main issues identified were:
- preserve and enhance the special qualities of the Lowick Historic Core and the many listed buildings in the Parish;
 - support high quality and sustainable design in the neighbourhood area;
 - have enough of the right type of housing for young families to live in the area and for older people to remain in the area;
 - retain and improve on local community facilities and valued green spaces in Lowick village;

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- support the rural economy by supporting local business and promoting tourism
- 1.7 These, and other issues were raised during a series of consultations and have resulted in a set of planning policies that seek to ensure that future development in the Neighbourhood Area will reflect the views of the local community. Issues raised which were not 'town planning' issues have been included in a list of 'community projects' which will be taken forward by Lowick Parish Council. These community projects are listed at the end of the Plan.
- 1.8 Other sources of evidence have come from evidence produced by Northumberland County Council to support the Northumberland Local Plan. This evidence can be found on Northumberland County Council's website where there is detailed evidence in relation to landscapes, housing, recreational space and the local economy. A list of this evidence is included in Appendix B. All these documents, as well as the results of the public consultation, and a list of Topic Papers on specific local topics, form the Evidence Base for the Plan.

What consultation has taken place?

- 1.9 Throughout the process, the Steering Group has engaged with the local community, through consultation events, and newsletters, and have consulted and engaged with local residents, local businesses, landowners and other local groups and organisations. There is also an active website www.lowickplan.com which has given opportunities for comments to be made on the Plan at any time throughout its development.
- 1.10 A final questionnaire was sent out and an open day was held in June 2018. Following responses to that, the final copy of this plan was drafted in 2019. Due to the Covid pandemic, the production of the plan went on hold for a period of time. The Parish Council are now in a position to carry out this consultation on the Regulation 14 draft plan.
- 1.11 More detail on the consultation undertaken is provided in the Community Consultation Statement which will be submitted with the Plan for examination.

What happens next?

- 1.12 Once this Pre-Submission consultation has finished, the Steering Group and Parish Council will review all comments made and make amendments to the Plan, as necessary. The Plan will then be submitted to Northumberland County Council, who will consult on the Plan for a further 6 weeks. Following this, an examiner will be appointed, and the Plan will undergo a rigorous examination process. Following recommendations from the examiner, the Plan may be further modified before proceeding to referendum.

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2 LOWICK INTO THE FUTURE: VISION AND OBJECTIVES:

Our vision:

By 2031, Lowick will be a Parish with a balanced, sustainable community and a mix of people of all ages. Local facilities and services will be maintained and enhanced. Local character and heritage will be the inspiration for new development which will be well integrated into the village. Lowick and the wider parish will be an even more attractive place to work, live and visit.

- 2.1 Many of the key themes identified in the Lowick Parish Plan in 2004 still resonate today. The desire to maintain Lowick as a strong community, with a good mix of young and old people was a particularly strong theme. Lowick has a high number of services and facilities in comparison to most villages in adjoining parishes, and the community in Lowick are proud of this, and want to maintain these services and facilities, and in so doing, support a strong rural economy. In order to do this, there is a recognition that new development will be required, in order to sustain the village.
- 2.2 There is a strong sense of history in Lowick, which has a high proportion of listed buildings in the historic core. There was a strong desire to use this local character as an inspiration for new development, in order to encourage locally relevant design.
- 2.3 Highly valued in the parish, is the natural environment, and the spaces and places that are important for biodiversity and recreation. All these things contribute to a vision for Lowick:
- 2.4 To deliver the vision, a number of objectives have been identified and are explained below:

Objective 1: Community Facilities

To protect our most highly valued community facilities and encourage the provision of new community facilities to increase the sustainability of Lowick

- 2.5 Lowick village has a number of services and facilities that are highly valued by the community, and there is a strong desire to see these services and facilities retained. These community facilities have been identified through a detailed audit which is included in the evidence base documents supporting this Neighbourhood Plan. The list has been developed through community consultation, and these are listed in a specific policy to protect those facilities.

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Lowick Village Store - a much valued community facility

- 2.6 Lowick has a number of outdoor recreational facilities, including the football field (which is located some way outside the village), a play area and other green spaces within the settlement which are worthy of designation as Local Green Spaces as set out in paragraph 101 of the NPPF. The small hamlet of Holburn also has an identified Local Green Space.

Objective 2: Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Landscape

Lowick will grow in such a way that respects the special landscapes around it, incorporates biodiversity into new development and respects the special qualities of the area.

- 2.7 The Neighbourhood Area is close to the Northumberland Coast AONB and Northumberland Heritage Coast and the landscape around Lowick is highly valued. To the west of Lowick village is an area of high landscape value (known as the Kyloe Hills and Glendale Area of High Landscape Value) and to the east of Lowick is an area of Intermediate Landscape Value.
- 2.8 Lowick is not within the Northumberland Coast AONB but is in an area of Landscape Value as defined in the Berwick on Tweed Local Plan. It also sits within Landscape Character Type 16: 'Open Rolling Farmland' (16b) as identified in the Northumberland County Council Landscape Character Assessment (2010).
- 2.9 There is more information about landscape types in the landscape characterisation work carried out by Land Use Consultants in 2010.

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- 2.10 A key objective for many residents was a desire to retain what is special about the area in which they live. People in Lowick highly value the biodiversity, peace and tranquillity, and beautiful landscapes and countryside in the surrounding area. In order to retain these special landscapes, and the special feel of the village, a settlement boundary is proposed, which will allow for some small-scale infill development, but will prevent further major development in the village.
- 2.11 Lowick has absorbed a significant amount of new development over recent years, and although the village want to support new housing for local people, they do not want further large-scale market housing development on the periphery of the village during the period covered by this Plan.
- 2.12 The aim is therefore to retain the special setting of Lowick within the landscape, and to ensure that new development in the Neighbourhood Area secures a net-gain for biodiversity and has special regard to the need to reduce lighting and accommodate biodiversity within the development.
- 2.13 There are a number of protected areas in the Plan area. These areas have the highest level of protection under EU legislation and consist of the Holburn Lake & Moss Ramsar Site, the Holburn Lake and Moss SSSI and SPA. Ford Moss SAC and SSSI are just outside the Neighbourhood Area boundary.
- 2.14 National Planning policy (paragraph 179) states that plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats. Local wildlife-rich habitats have been identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence paper '*Sites of Natural History Interest in the Lowick Parish Area (June 2019)*' details the evidence for determining these sites.

Objective 3: Accessibility

To make the Neighbourhood Area more accessible to all, we will work to improve access to public transport, improve cycle ways and public rights of way and make Lowick a safer place to walk and cycle. We will also seek to improve the provision of better mobile telephone communications and to maintain and improve broadband speeds from all providers.

- 2.15 Consultation in the Parish revealed that most people felt there was a real need to improve the local environment for walking and cycling. In particular, access to the Community Orchard is difficult, as the only way to reach it is by walking along the main road, meaning that many people choose to drive as the safest option.
- 2.16 Given Lowick's position close to the Northumberland National Park, and the Northumberland Coast AONB, there are increasing numbers of visitors to the area, who would like to take advantage of the cycle routes and walking routes to reach nearby visitor attractions.
- 2.17 Local businesses and residents feel that improved broadband speeds and improved mobile telecommunication is needed in the Neighbourhood Area to support local businesses as well as provide services for residents and visitors.

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Objective 4: Housing

To ensure we have a truly sustainable community we will seek to ensure there is enough housing to meet the needs of all sectors of our community, particularly young families and first-time buyers

- 2.18 Lowick is a Parish with a population of 552 people (at 2011 census). Most of the population in the neighbourhood area is concentrated within the settlement of Lowick. There are a number of other isolated dwellings and farmsteads in the countryside around. The only other settlement in the Neighbourhood Area is Holburn, which is hamlet, and is in the 'open countryside' in planning terms.
- 2.19 There were 16.6% of dwellings with 'no residents' in the Parish (Census 2011) amounting to a total of 50 homes in the Neighbourhood Area. The threshold of 20% is generally considered to be one at which a policy intervention to prevent further new-build development being sold off as second homes is appropriate. The Northumberland Local Plan proposes a threshold of 20%, meaning that planning applications submitted after the figure has reached 20% will be for principal occupancy only.
- 2.20 The Northumberland Local Plan includes an assessment of the indicative housing requirements for all designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas. The indicative requirement for Lowick is 25 dwellings over the 20-year plan period (2016 – 2036). This figure is contained in Policy HOU3.
- 2.21 The Lowick Neighbourhood Plan defines a settlement boundary for Lowick, to accommodate existing planning permissions and recently approved housing development, and to accommodate enough land to meet the housing requirement over the Plan period. More information on this is contained in the background 'housing report' which forms part of the evidence base for the Plan.
- 2.22 The issue of housing in Lowick is similar to many other rural villages in Northumberland. There is a strong desire to encourage enough housing to allow young families to stay in the village, whilst avoiding large scale major development which 'swamps' the settlement and can have a negative impact on local character.
- 2.23 A suitable policy to outline what kind of housing is likely to be appropriate is included in the Neighbourhood Plan. This policy seeks high quality design, and a mix of housing to meet the needs of people in the local area.
- 2.24 A Housing Needs Assessment was carried by CAN out to establish in detail what the local housing needs are in Lowick. The housing need was low, with only 9 respondents to the questionnaire identifying a housing need. Of these 9 respondents, 7 were willing and able to buy property on the open market. This suggests a low affordable housing need within the village. The Housing Needs Assessment concludes that this may be because the affordable housing need is being met by affordable housing already in the village,

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although it could also be as a result of people in need having moved away from the area in order to meet their housing need.

- 2.25 National Planning policy allows for rural exception sites to be delivered in rural areas where there is an identified local housing need. It is considered that this national planning policy will allow for a small housing scheme to be provided should a local need be identified in the future to justify bringing such a scheme forward.
- 2.26 In view of the evidence in relation to housing, it is not proposed to identify new sites, but to support infill development on the few sites that are available, and seek to secure high quality housing development in any Reserved Matters applications that are submitted on the sites that have gained outline approval on the northern edge of the village.

Objective 5: The Local Economy

To support our community and businesses, we will provide opportunities for and support a more vibrant and diverse local economy including tourism in Lowick village and surrounding areas

- 2.27 Pay rates for the area are known to be lower than the national average and that of Northumberland overall. Median gross weekly pay for residents in England was £508, In Northumberland it was £474 and in the district of Berwick Upon Tweed, it was £386 (2011 ONS via Nomis Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings). This demonstrates the potential for lower levels of disposable income to stimulate the local economy and a greater reliance on visitors and tourists.
- 2.28 The job market in the local area is seasonally driven by tourism and agriculture. Employment demand rises during April to October; peaking during the summer holidays and harvest times.

Table 1: Current Local Employers in Lowick

Public Houses	20 (+5 Seasonal)
Shop	3
Garage	6
Grain Silos	6 (+6 Seasonal)
Country Park	6 (+ local contractors)
Farms	5
B&B	2
Trades	4
Professional	3 (+ contractors)
Business Support	5
Art and Crafts	1 (internet)
Education	11

- 2.29 The current employment mix supports the point that employment is centred on

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agriculture and the leisure industry.

- 2.30 Tourism makes up 11.8% of Northumberland's economy, 2.7% higher than the national average and contributes £665 million to the economy.
- 2.31 Lowick is a tourist destination driven by people visiting the local attractions of North Northumberland and the North Northumberland Coastline. Visitors utilise the variety of Bed and Breakfast Businesses and Holiday Let accommodation within Lowick during their stay. These businesses receive visitors primarily from the UK but also international. Whilst the businesses within Lowick undoubtedly serve its resident population too, it is clear that the service industry businesses are heavily dependent upon the influx of seasonal tourist visitors. This is vital for the economic stability of those businesses with revenues greatly increasing in the peak months vs. off peak. The increasing level of second home ownership in Lowick is creating an ongoing challenge to off peak trading for all businesses that rely on resident population to generate revenue. Most of the local businesses support a much broader catchment than that of Lowick alone having said that. The hospitality businesses show that they draw customers from a local catchment and up to a radius of about 30 miles. Other trades and services that support the local community experience a trading catchment of circa 10 miles. Whilst the broader trading catchment is drawing further business and visitors to Lowick for the hospitality and retail businesses, local professional services and trades rely on a broader catchment and must travel to their clients to support their business performance.
- 2.32 The Barmoor Country Park has around 200 residents for some parts of the year peaking during the summer season. The said residents whilst in many cases owners, are not permanent residents to the area due to the nature of the tenancy. The Country Park brings a significant increase in population to the local area over the course of a year and the primary purpose of those visits is for recreation and holidays.
- 2.33 A facilities audit was completed in June 2018, which identified the current offering for Lowick and also highlighted future opportunities and needs for economic and social benefit to the area. The primary opportunities for economic development clearly relate to the tourism industry of North Northumberland.
- 2.34 Lowick itself has a number of small businesses and shops and facilities that all contribute to the local economy.
- 2.35 Tourism is clearly a large part of the economy, due to the proximity of the beaches, local heritage and beautiful landscapes of the Northumberland Coast. There are a number of holiday homes and businesses running tourism accommodation.
- 2.36 The Pilgrimage Routes of St. Cuthberts Way and St. Oswald's way run through and close to the Parish. The number of visitors to see the routes has increased and local initiatives are underway to improve access to and publicise the existence of these routes.

Objective 6: Heritage, Character and Design

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Preserve and enhance the character of the village of Lowick and identify local buildings which are of special local interest. Identify a historic core for the village and ensure that new development in that area reinforces local character. Support and encourage new building which promotes good design standards and shows originality if required.

- 2.37 There has been a settlement in or near the village of Lowick for over 2000 years, but the present built environment presents little physical evidence from the majority of that time. As has been demonstrated by document research, medieval Lowick existed and featured a church, homes, forts and farms. Its oldest significant feature is the Roman road, and later, we may conjecture, those journeying between Lindisfarne and the religious community at Melrose passed this way, at the crossroads of the Roman and Saxon routes. 6 miles from Holy Island, 8 from Wooler and 8 from Berwick, Lowick was a likely stopping place for pilgrims and travellers. Buildings to rest and give thanks, then.
- 2.38 There is mediaeval stonework in and around the Church of St John the Baptist, a structure largely rebuilt in the 19th Century. Its features exemplify some of the finest architectural work in the community – as the builders constructed its roof, windows and arched transition between nave and choir.
- 2.39 We can date many of our homes and cottages to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and it is this period that gives our village its character and moulds its current “shape”. Essential to this are the simple single storey cottages that line the Main Street. These represent the village’s “industrial” past as a mining community, whose workforce extracted local reserve of coal and limestone for the production of lime. The evidence of at least 8 limekilns, and many quarries, litter the country round about. Near the Doll’s House probably shows what these cottages were once like. In Lowick itself they have been modernised, extended, joined with neighbours, and sometimes brutally demolished. These, largely ignored by planners and heritage architects, are at the centre of the village’s “industrial” heritage. The policy of the Plan is to preserve and protect their legacy.
- 2.40 In the 20th century, modern bungalows have mimicked their form, and have continued the “tradition”, whilst taking up more space for gardens and parking. These cottages were kept to the north of the Main Road, hemmed in by the agricultural land behind. Their large garden plots, once useful to the householders, are now filled with bungalows.
- 2.41 The other side of Georgian Lowick is better represented and has changed little. From chapels and houses for wealthier residents, farmers and property owners, we have, at the western end of the village what could be suggested is the core of the village’s more attractive structures – offering more style and elegance, as they were meant to do, and to convey their owner’s status and good taste.
- 2.42 The wealth of the Victorians – in all aspects of the local economy – has also provided buildings that convey the lives and interests of their first owners. The Church, with its obvious indebtedness to the Sitwells as the local aristocracy, is first among equals, and its new rectory. To it is added the power and wealth of two more Christian sects – the Catholics and Methodists [the Presbyterians and Anglicans having already established

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themselves] contribute places of worship and meeting halls. Local agriculture contributes a magnificent terrace of cottages opposite the stone-built steading and Georgian Farmhouse. Elsewhere, space was found for 3 schools, which have been re-purposed in modern times. To these are added a score of houses that reflect the rise of domestic Victorian virtues – two story, stone built and with more space for families. Some of these show the existence of farmhouses, others terraced houses for the needs of a local economy built on rural and industrial profits.

- 2.43 Today, the many businesses and shops, together with inns and public houses, that also supported a busy working community, have been reduced considerably. The butchers, undertakers, haberdashers, police station, bakers and stores have been reduced to a shop and two popular pubs. Little sign of the vanished enterprises remain – although some of their buildings do.
- 2.44 This is our heritage, and apart from improvements [to space, amenity and current tastes] have survived, and presents a picture that many generations of local people would recognise, enjoy, and call home. This is also the image that the casual visitor receives, and which gives our community both character and quality, in the buildings it inhabits.
- 2.45 Of the past 100 years, building has continued, often occupying discrete infill sites behind the ribbon of the Main Street. A major addition, and a welcome replacement for many of the insanitary and poorly cared for houses that recent research reveals existed, was the result of the large programme of council house building of the mid 20th century. Constructed on two new streets to the north of Main Street, these are the century's chief legacy, providing social, and genuinely affordable, housing for working people. Built in two styles and at different times, these are now largely privately owned.
- 2.46 There are a number of listed buildings and places of historic interest within the Neighbourhood Area. Barmoor Castle is Grade II* listed. Part of the existing structure dates to medieval times many of which sections still survive. It is here that the Earl of Surrey in charge of the English Army stayed before the Battle of Flodden in 1513 and also after the battle.
- 2.47 Barmoor Castle is on the Historic England 'Buildings at Risk' Register and its condition is described as 'very bad'. A grant was offered by Historic England in 2011 towards a package of project development works. That work, which included the preparation of a conservation plan and condition survey, is helping to inform discussions about the site's future.
- 2.48 Lowick village has a core area which has a significant number of designated heritage assets (listed buildings) and non-designated heritage assets. It does not however have a designated conservation area. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a 'historic core' for Lowick, in order to ensure that development in this area has special regard to the historic importance of the area and in particular to the setting of the many listed buildings.
- 2.49 There are a number of buildings in the Neighbourhood Area which are not designated, but which are nevertheless of historic interest. All the buildings in Lowick have been surveyed and a number of them have been identified as of significance locally. The full

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survey can be seen at: <https://lowickplan.com/buildings-and-monuments/>

- 2.50 There was a strong desire in the Neighbourhood Area to not only encourage good design, but also to support innovative design and in particular design which contributes to the sustainability of buildings. There was a desire not to prevent good, sustainable modern design, in an attempt to encourage development which respects local vernacular. Sustainable design means not only reducing the carbon emissions of the building, through incorporation of renewables, but also considering biodiversity, dark skies, water conservation, etc.
- 2.51 There are a number of buildings within the village of Lowick that could be converted to provide additional residential accommodation. The conversion of buildings throughout the Neighbourhood Area is supported as a way of delivering additional housing.

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3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Plans must pass a series of tests prescribed in legislation through the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). These tests are collectively known as 'The Basic Conditions'. The basic conditions require that neighbourhood plans:
- Are prepared having regard to national policy and guidance;
 - Are in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan;
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
 - Are compatible with European Union obligations on environmental impact and human rights;
 - Does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8, Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- 3.2 How the Plan meets these requirements is set out in detail in the Basic Conditions Statement which is submitted with the Plan to Northumberland County Council

Northumberland County Council Local Plan [adopted March 2022]

- 3.3 One of the Basic Conditions is that the Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies contained in the development plan. The Northumberland Local Plan has now been adopted by Northumberland County Council, and forms the Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Area. The Lowick Neighbourhood Plan gives local detail to existing strategic policies in the Northumberland Local Plan. The Northumberland Local Plan defined settlement boundaries for those villages that were not in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. As Lowick is producing a Neighbourhood Plan, a settlement boundary for Lowick is defined through policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and a boundary has not been defined in the Northumberland Local Plan.
- 3.4 A number of evidence-based reports have been commissioned to assist with the production of the Northumberland Local Plan. Some of these evidence-based reports have also been used to inform the Lowick Neighbourhood Plan. These reports are referred to in Appendix B.

National Planning Policy

- 3.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) and National Planning Practice Guidance provide the most up to date planning policy and advice from central Government on neighbourhood planning.

Sustainable Development

- 3.6 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The meaning of sustainable development for planning purposes is contained in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. In essence the aim is to secure net gains across economic, social and environmental objectives. The promotion of, and support for, sustainable development is at the heart of the community aspirations in Lowick.

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- 3.7 Support for sustainable development is reflected in the vision for the Neighbourhood Area. This is further expressed in the objectives for the Area. The vision and objectives for the area are set out later in the Plan.

Environmental Impact and EU Obligations

- 3.8 Directive 2001/42/EC relates to the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This is often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these regulations that the plan must be compatible with to meet the Basic Conditions.
- 3.9 A request for a screening opinion to determine whether the Plan required SEA has been submitted to Northumberland County Council. The County Council confirmed in their screening opinion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was required. An Environmental Report has been produced by NCC and is consulted on alongside the pre-submission draft Plan. The plan has been amended to incorporate the recommendations included in the Environmental Report. This report had four recommendations, including the addition of two policies

READING THE LOWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 3.10 **It is essential that this Neighbourhood Plan is read as a whole document.** All policies should be read alongside all other relevant policies in the Lowick Neighbourhood Plan, and other Plans that form part of the Development Plan for the area. This means that any proposal should be assessed and considered in accordance with the Development Plan as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.11 There is very limited 'cross-referencing' within the policies because the Plan has been written to be read as a whole document.
- 3.12 Before each policy, is explanatory text. This text consists of descriptive and explanatory matter in respect of the policies. The text is relevant to the interpretation of each policy to which it relates. **Although the supporting text is not policy, it does assist with clarifying what the policy is trying to achieve, and the intention of that policy.**

4 PLANNING POLICIES

Community Facilities and Local Green Spaces

- 4.1 Policy L1 sets out planning policy in relation to community facilities identified in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.2 The policy applies to registered Assets of Community value as well as community facilities that have not been registered. All the facilities named in the policy have been identified by the local community as being of value, and therefore contribute to the sustainability

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and cohesion of the village.

- 4.3 Many of the facilities in Lowick are also businesses (for example, the public houses, the garage and the shop) but also serve an important community function. Other facilities are outdoor recreational facilities which are also highly valued in the community:
- 4.4 The football field, which was once set apart from the village, but will now be directly adjacent to village following the grant of planning permission on this eastern boundary, is highly valued by the community. This has been secured for the community through the grant of planning permission at the east of the village. Under the terms of this agreement, the Football Club will receive a long-term lease and will be permitted to expand the range of sporting activities that take place on the site. There may also be scope to provide buildings for community use on this site.
- 4.5 The Community Orchard, which is some way out of the village, is an important space which is highly valued by residents. It is relatively new and has included the planting of a number of fruit trees. There is also an area for picnics and a seating area. The Community Orchard is privately owned, and although valued by the community, is not allocated as a Local Green Space in the Plan.
- 4.6 There is strong support for the provision of new facilities within Lowick, and also for the protection and improvement of existing facilities. This policy seeks to protect the facilities identified in the body of the policy. Where a change of use is proposed affecting one of the identified community facilities, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the use is no longer required, no longer viable, or demonstrate that there is an alternative similar facility within the village. To demonstrate that a facility is no longer required, this could be carried out through a public consultation event, for example. To demonstrate that a facility is no longer viable, the applicant would be required to market the facility as an ongoing concern for a period of time (at least 6 months), at a realistic price, to demonstrate that the facility cannot be taken over by another owner and run as a going concern.
- 4.7 The policy supports the provision of new community facilities. Public consultation revealed significant support for new facilities, particularly for a tennis court and a bowling green. The provision of clubhouse at the Lowick Football Field is also needed.

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POLICY L1: COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN LOWICK

The following community facilities are of significant value to the local community and are shown on the Policies Map:

CF1: Lowick Village Hall
CF2: Lowick Village Shop
CF3: The Black Bull Public House
CF4: The White Swan Public House
CF5: Lowick Garage
CF6: Lowick First School
CF7: St. John the Baptist Church

Proposals requiring planning permission that involve the loss or change of use of any of these facilities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer required, viable, or if there is the provision of alternative equivalent facilities within or adjacent to Lowick village.

The provision of new community facilities in Lowick will be supported providing there is no unacceptable negative impact on local amenity and on highway safety.

The provision of a new clubhouse at the football field will be supported provided it accords with other policies in the Development Plan.

4.8 Policy L2 is about Local Green Spaces. Paragraphs 101 and 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework give local communities the opportunity to identify and protect areas of green space which are special to the local community. A number of criteria must be met, and most green spaces will not be suitable for allocation as Local Green Space.

4.9 In order for land to qualify as Local Green Space it must meet the following tests:

- Be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife and
- Be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

4.10 The sites listed in Policy L2 and shown on the Policies Map are designated as areas of Local Green Space, which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within Green Belts. This means that proposals for inappropriate development on these sites will not be allowed except in very special circumstances, unless they are directly related to the enhancement or enjoyment of the Local Green Space.

LGS1: The Common
LGS2: Lowick War Memorial
LGS3: Lowick Play Park
LGS4: Lowick Churchyard (deconsecrated)

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LGS5: Holburn Village Green

- 4.11 Lowick Common is an important space which is historically significant in the evolution of the village. It provides an important setting to the village and frames the approach to the village from the south, along South Road.



Lowick Common from the approach along South Road

- 4.12 Lowick War Memorial, and the green area around it, is designated as a Local Green Space, and is in the centre of the historic core of the village. The green area around the memorial provides an area for seating and quiet reflection.



Lowick War Memorial and green

- 4.13 The Play Park on land to the rear of the Main Street in Lowick is well used by local children and is designated as a Local Green Space. There has been significant investment in the

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play park, with additional equipment being purchased following an award from the Community Windfarm Fund. The area is well used and is an important recreational facility for young people in Lowick.



Lowick Play park

- 4.14 The area shown on the policies map in Holburn forms an important part of the village, where the spaces in the village are as important as the buildings. It is an area enjoyed by residents for its beauty, biodiversity and the setting it gives to listed buildings in the village. It is publicly accessible and has a right of way going through it. This land is designated as a Local Green Space.



Holburn Local Green Space

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POLICY L2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The sites listed below and shown on the Policies Map are designated as areas of Local Green Space which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt.

- LGS1: The Common
- LGS2: Lowick War Memorial
- LGS3: Lowick Play Park
- LGS4: Holburn Village Green
- LGS5: Lowick Church Yard (deconsecrated)

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Lowick Settlement Boundary and Housing

- 4.15 This Neighbourhood Plan defines a settlement boundary for Lowick village. The settlement boundary is shown on the Policies Map. The rest of the Neighbourhood Area is open countryside in planning terms, where development is restricted to those kinds of development that are appropriate as set out in National Planning Policy.
- 4.16 Lowick has already met and exceeded its housing requirement of 25 dwellings (identified by Northumberland County Council) for housing over the Plan period. This does not mean that the Neighbourhood Plan does not support the provision of new housing; however, it does mean that no new housing sites are allocated, and that the settlement boundary is drawn relatively tightly around existing development and land with approval.
- 4.17 Planning approval was given in 2018 for the development of 24 houses on land to the east of Lowick. This land has been included within the settlement boundary. Other recent infill development means that a total of 39 houses have now been delivered, or are committed, within the Plan period. Any further infill development will be classed as 'windfall' and will be supported providing it complies with Policy L3.

Table 1: Housing Provided in Lowick since 2016

Site	Number of Dwellings	Timescale
Land to the east of main street, Lowick	24	Approved 2017
Land to rear of 62 Main Street, Lowick	2	Approved 2017
Land at South Road, Lowick	8	Permitted 2014, implementation commenced, but not yet constructed
Land behind 85/87 Main Street, Lowick	2	Permitted 2016
Land North of Western House, 3 Main Street, Lowick	1	Permitted 2017
3 Cheviot View	1	Permitted 2018
The Causeway, Dryburn Road	1	Permitted 2017
Total	39	

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- 4.18 New housing within Lowick village can best be provided either within the settlement or through the delivery of 'rural exception sites'. The west end of Lowick is considered to offer the best location for any future rural exception housing.
- 4.19 'Rural exception sites' are defined in the NPPF and in the glossary of this plan. They are defined in the NPPF as: 'Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding'.

POLICY L3: LOWICK VILLAGE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

A settlement boundary is identified for Lowick and is shown on the Policies Map.

Proposals for development within the settlement boundary will be supported where they accord with policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

Land outside the settlement boundary will be treated as countryside whose intrinsic character and beauty must be recognised in all decision-making on development proposals.

New housing development outside the settlement boundary will be supported where it delivers affordable housing to meet an identified local need through rural exception sites which are well related to existing development and well connected to the village of Lowick. Proposals for isolated housing development in the countryside will only be supported where it satisfies the specific circumstances set out in national planning policy.

Proposals for rural business and economic development proposals, will be supported where they accord with policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

- 4.20 To ensure that we have a truly sustainable community we will seek to encourage housing that meets the needs of all sectors of our community. However, we particularly would like to encourage young families and first-time buyers who have a local need for housing.
- 4.21 There are two housing sites allocated in the village of Lowick. The first, is the remainder of a site that had been allocated in the old Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan but has not yet been completed. It is anticipated that the site could accommodate another 2 to 3 dwellings.
- 4.22 The land to the east of the village has outline planning permission for up to 24 dwellings. A detailed reserved matters application on this site will be considered in line with policy contained in the Lowick Neighbourhood Plan and the development plan.
- 4.23 There are a number of farm buildings within the village which are capable of conversion to residential accommodation. The Neighbourhood Plan supports such a conversion scheme, although the site is not 'allocated' for housing, as it is currently in agricultural

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use.

- 4.24 An area outside the western edge of the settlement boundary could be appropriate for an 'exceptions' site, which would deliver affordable housing for local people in Lowick. The land is not allocated for such, but it is anticipated that any 'exceptions sites' are most likely to be acceptable in this area.
- 4.25 This policy seeks to provide a set of criteria against which all new housing development within the settlement boundary of Lowick will be considered. This includes proposals for new development, and conversion schemes. It also will apply to development which currently has outline permission.

POLICY L4: DESIGN IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for new housing development, reserved matters applications for existing housing outline permissions, and conversion schemes of redundant buildings to housing will be supported subject to compliance with relevant policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

All new housing development must ensure that:

- a) suitable and safe access has been provided for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists; and
- b) high quality landscaping is incorporated; and
- c) a net-gain in biodiversity is achieved; and
- d) there is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents; and
- e) carbon reduction and low carbon building measures have been incorporated; and
- f) The impact of the scheme on Lowick's Historic Core and on any designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings has been fully assessed and mitigated.

Proposals which meet the standards set out in the Building for Life 12 will be supported.

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Biodiversity



Figure 1: Heath Spotted Orchid (to be found on Catton Ridge)

- 4.26 Biodiversity is important to residents in Lowick. The Neighbourhood Area contains sites of European and national importance, as well as sites of local interest which have been identified by the Steering Group. The European sites and sites of national importance are already protected through their designated status. There are, however, opportunities to restore and further improve the condition of these priority habitats.
- 4.27 There was also a strong desire within the community to ensure that new development delivers a 'net gain' for biodiversity and this is reflected in national policy in relation to biodiversity. To 'measure' the net gain, a supporting statement should be submitted to

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demonstrate how 'net gain' for biodiversity has been achieved.

4.28 Policy L5 identifies a number of other wildlife sites and wildlife corridors of 'local' biodiversity value. These are described below, but not shown on a policies map, because it is difficult to define precise boundaries. These sites have been identified as being of particular local biodiversity importance within the Parish because of the species that are found in them are detailed in the background report.

- Roadside verges on the Dryburn Road
- Lowick Mill Wood
- Kyloe Wood
- Catton Ridge
- Holburn Moss (although much of this area is already designated as SSSI and SAC)
- Church Lane (known locally as 'The Backsides')
- Quarry Ponds and Slagheaps (abandoned) providing small woodland and water habitats.

4.29 Within the village of Lowick, mature trees are considered to be important to the 'feel' of the village, and the policy seeks to ensure that were the loss of trees is unavoidable, then trees are re-planted. There are a number of species rich hedgerows in the village which provide an important biodiversity habitat.

POLICY L5: BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT

All proposals for development should protect and enhance biodiversity in the Plan area by:

- a) Protecting designated sites, protected species and ancient or species-rich hedgerows, trees, important roadside verges, grasslands, ponds, bogs and woodlands;
- b) Preserving ecological networks of woodland and water, and where feasible, enhancing the links between them;
- c) Protecting ancient trees or trees of amenity value in Lowick Neighbourhood Area;
- d) Promoting, where appropriate, the mitigation, preservation, restoration and re-creation of wildlife habitats, and the protection and recovery of priority species to achieve a net gain in biodiversity over the Plan period.

Proposals for development which involve the loss of hedgerows and/or mature trees will be resisted. Where loss is unavoidable, then as a minimum, the lost features must be replaced elsewhere on the site.

4.30 Policy L6 is about coastal mitigation, which is now being consistently sought throughout coastal Northumberland. The Habitats Regulations Assessment carried out on the draft Lowick Neighbourhood Plan concluded that the Plan is likely to have significant effects on European Sites. In order to mitigate these effects, two additional policies are proposed.

4.31 The first policy relates to reducing the potential impact of recreational disturbance on

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coastal sites. There are no coastal sites in the Neighbourhood Area, but parts of the Neighbourhood Area are within 7km and 10km of designated coastal areas, and so the policy applies to these areas.

POLICY L6: COASTAL MITIGATION

To ensure that the impacts arising from increasing levels of recreational disturbance on coastal Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European Sites can be addressed, all development within 7km of the coast that will result in a net increase in the number of residential units or tourist accommodation will be required to contribute to the Coastal Mitigation Service, or provide alternative mitigation of demonstrable effectiveness.

Within a zone, as shown on the policies map, extending between 7km and 10km from the coast, only major development will be required to make a contribution to the Coastal Mitigation Service, or provide alternative mitigation of demonstrable effectiveness.

All financial contributions required in accordance with this policy will be secured by way of a planning obligation under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, or any subsequent amending legislation.

4.32 Policy L7 is about water quality and Nutrient Neutrality in the Lindisfarne SPA/Ramsar. This second additional policy recommended by the Habitats Regulations Assessment (and the Environmental Report produced by Northumberland County Council) is a specific policy to address impacts from development on water quality, particularly in relation to development which cannot connect to the main sewerage network.

4.33 Budle Bay and Fenham Flats are less than 4km from the plan area, with watercourses discharging from the plan area into them. These are among the most sensitive sites in the County, with a number of internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites including; Lindisfarne SPA, Lindisfarne Ramsar, Lindisfarne NNR, Lindisfarne SSSI, Northumberland Marine SPA, Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast SAC and North Northumberland Dunes SAC.

4.34 The condition of European sites is assessed at the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) level by Natural England. SSSIs are constituents of European sites, so each SPA or SAC has several underlying SSSI designations.

4.35 Lindisfarne SSSI is currently assessed by Natural England as being in unfavourable condition. The condition assessment for this unit states that:

Poor water quality flowing into Budle Bay has resulted in the growth of the macroalgae Enteromorpha, which has a direct impact on the SAC mudflat and feeding habitat of SPA birds. Natural England are working with the Environment Agency to investigate sources of pollution and prevention measures. A Diffuse Water Plan is required to investigate pollution sources/pathways and to help achieve Favourable Condition of the site.

4.36 Further input of nitrogen resulting from development could potentially result in

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contributing to further harm of the interest features of those sites.

- 4.37 As such, Natural England has identified the catchment that feeds into the Lindisfarne Special Protection Area/Ramsar Site as one in which 'nutrient neutrality' is required for all new developments (March 2022). This includes all overnight accommodation including new homes, student accommodation, care homes, tourism attractions and accommodation.
- 4.38 Any new residential development that will increase foul water discharges will need to be accompanied by a nutrient budget. Tools to calculate this have been made available. Northumberland County Council will be developing a strategic mitigation scheme which may include new wetland habitats or work with farmers to reduce the amount of nitrogen entering the SPA. Developers will be able to buy credits from this to offset the additional nitrogen being produced by their developments.
- 4.39 Planning permission will only be granted where this shows that there will be no net increase in nitrogen entering the Lindisfarne SPA.

POLICY L7: WATER QUALITY AND NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

Any new residential development, tourism accommodation or any other type of development that will increase foul water discharges must be accompanied by a nutrient budget and a plan to offset any increases in nitrogen levels entering the Lindisfarne SPA and Ramsar Site.

Planning permission will only be granted where this nutrient budget shows that there will be no net increase in nitrogen entering the Lindisfarne SPA.

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Accessibility

- 4.40 Policy L8: seeks to ensure that any new development within the village of Lowick ensures that access is safe, and well-integrated to existing development, and in particular that pedestrian and cycle access is included. It is hoped that this will go some way to reducing the need to travel by car for short distances.

POLICY L8: ACCESSIBILITY

All new development in Lowick village must be well connected to local services and facilities in the village by incorporating safe pedestrian access, highway access and cycle access. New development which will attract visitors must include provision for cycle parking.

- 4.41 Policy L9: supports the provision of a safe route between Lowick village and the Community Orchard.
- 4.42 The Community Orchard is accessible by car, but not easily accessed by pedestrians or cyclists, as it is approximately 500m from the edge of the village and the road has no pavement. There is also support for improved walking routes within the Plan area to support local health initiatives and for the wellbeing of residents and visitors.
- 4.43 St. Oswald's Way and St. Cuthbert's Way both come close to the Plan area. Links between existing rights of way and these pilgrimage routes would improve access for walkers to and from the Plan area.

POLICY L9: CREATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS

The creation and improvement of footpaths and cycle ways in the Plan area will be supported along with the following specific proposals:

- a) A safe walking route from Lowick village to the Community Orchard as shown on the proposals map;
- b) Walking routes to and between local heritage sites and routes linking the pilgrimage routes of St. Cuthbert's Way and St. Oswald's Way with footpaths in the Parish where feasible.

- 4.44 Policy L10: supports the provision of good telecommunications and broadband. This has been found to be particularly important in rural areas for businesses to operate effectively. Public consultation has shown that there is support for the improvement of broadband infrastructure, both for residents, but also to help rural businesses and enterprises, and to help people to be able to work from home.
- 4.45 All new developments should ensure that fibre-optic connections are made available in all new development.
- 4.46 Many parts of the Neighbourhood Area have poor phone reception and 4G. In order to improve this, the policy supports the provision of better telecommunications equipment,

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but seeks to ensure that it has a minimal impact on local landscapes. To achieve this, it is always best to use existing buildings or other structures, in order to avoid a proliferation of masts. The church in Lowick is considered to be a suitable place to position a mast, should the opportunity arise.

POLICY L10: BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Proposals which secure the expansion of electronic communication networks and high-speed broadband along with improvements to connectivity will be supported.

In all cases, the applicant should demonstrate that they have explored the opportunities to erect apparatus on existing buildings, masts or other structures. They should also seek to ensure that the number of radio and telecommunication masts are kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network; and that any telecommunications development has been sited and designed to minimise the impacts on the local landscape.

Applications for new development should ensure provision is made for suitable ducting to enable more than one service provider to provide a fibre connection to individual properties from connection cabinets located on the public highway, or some alternative point available to different service providers.

The use of the St. John the Baptist Church in Lowick to provide a mobile telecommunications mast will be supported.

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Local Economy



- 4.47 Policy L11 supports the provision of small-scale employment enterprises, both within the settlement of Lowick, and elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Area. It supports home-working in the Neighbourhood Area, providing there is not an unacceptable negative impact on residential amenity.

POLICY L11: HOMEWORKING AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

Proposals for home working will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area where there is not an unacceptable impact on residential amenity or highway safety.

Proposals to expand existing businesses and services within the village of Lowick will be supported.

Proposals which provide local employment opportunities in the Neighbourhood Area will be supported, where they accord with policies elsewhere in the development plan.

- 4.48 Policy L12 is about rural enterprises and tourism related development in the Neighbourhood Area. There are a number of rural enterprises locally that are important to the local economy. Some of these are businesses that are situated within the village of Lowick itself, for example, the public houses, garage, shop, and other small businesses including self-employed people. Close to Lowick village is Barmoor Castle Country Park, which includes a caravan site and has the potential to expand as a visitor facility based on the historic interest of the site. This policy seeks to support these businesses whilst ensuring that environmental and historic assets are protected.

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POLICY L12: RURAL ENTERPRISE AND TOURISM

Support will be given for the expansion of rural enterprises including farm diversification proposals where there is not an unacceptable impact on the surrounding area in terms of residential amenity, highway safety, the setting of heritage assets, local landscapes and biodiversity.

Proposals for improvements to existing, and/or the provision of new tourist facilities and tourist accommodation will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area where they are well-related to existing infrastructure and development.

Subject to policies elsewhere in this Plan, proposals to improve public access to Barmoor Castle and the extension of the Barmoor Castle Caravan Park including the provision of camping facilities will be supported providing any landscape, heritage and biodiversity impacts can be adequately mitigated.

Proposals which result in the restoration of the Grade II* listed Barmoor Castle, will be supported where they comply with policies elsewhere in the Development Plan.

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Heritage, Design and Local Character



Farm cottages in the centre of Lowick

4.50 Policy L13 is about non-designated heritage assets. To inform this policy, a comprehensive survey of all buildings in the Neighbourhood Area has been undertaken. This survey has identified all buildings that are of historic significance that are not currently listed. These buildings and places are 'non-designated heritage assets' and are defined in Annex A of this Neighbourhood Plan. The full buildings survey is available on the [the Parish Council website: https://lowickneighbourhood.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/lowick-buildings-preview.pdf](https://lowickneighbourhood.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/lowick-buildings-preview.pdf)

4.51 Non-designated heritage assets are buildings or places which are not currently designated for their historic interest, but nevertheless have an important role to play in local heritage. There are a significant number of non-designated heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area, with most concentrated in the historic part of the village of Lowick.

POLICY L13: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The Neighbourhood Plan list of non-designated heritage assets are defined in Appendix A of this Plan. Development, including renovation or alterations affecting any non-designated heritage asset or its setting should be sensitively designed having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to the asset, and the significance of the heritage asset including its archaeological, historic and architectural interest.

4.52 Policy L14 is about the historic core of Lowick. An area has been identified as Lowick's 'Historic Core' and this will be treated as a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of making planning decisions in Lowick. It does not have the status of a

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conservation area, but it is considered to be important, and there are a number of designated heritage assets within Lowick's Historic Core.

- 4.53 The historic part of Lowick does not have 'conservation area' status. It was considered important however, to ensure that the historic core of Lowick is retained, particularly given that it is largely unspoilt by modern development which has tended to take place in a linear fashion away from the centre. These 20th century areas are excluded from the historic core.



Lowick 1899 [National Library of Scotland]

POLICY L14: LOWICK'S HISTORIC CORE

Development proposals within or affecting the setting of the historic core of Lowick as defined on the Policies Map must make a positive contribution to the significance of the historic character of this area and/or its setting. All proposals must consider carefully how the scale, height, design, landscaping, boundary treatment and materials complement the character of the Historic Core of Lowick. In the assessment of development proposals a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and impact on the significance of the historic core of Lowick as a non-designated heritage asset. In particular, the assessment of proposals will consider the following:

- the incorporation and retention of historic buildings, boundary treatments and traditional layout and use of space in the identified Historic Core of the village;
- the need to improve the quality of the public realm in the centre of the village around the Memorial Green;
- the setting of historic buildings in the village and the Historic Core that are designated and non-designated heritage assets as shown on the Policies Map;
- the use of traditional vernacular materials of buff sandstone, Welsh slate, brick types and careful modern design that complements historic character where relevant;
- careful consideration of detailing such as windows, doors, chimneys and water goods and avoiding the use of uPVC;

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- f) traditional frontages onto the street

Development of poor design that fails to preserve or enhance the character and quality of the historic core will be refused.

4.54 Policy L15 is about design. One of the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan is to achieve well designed places. The government's aim is to encourage communities to get more involved with design policies for their area.

4.55 In Lowick there is a desire to see more sustainable building taking place in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Schemes which incorporate high levels of energy efficiency and sustainable design will be given support, providing they comply with other policies in the Plan.

POLICY L15: SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE DESIGN

Schemes which demonstrate sustainable and innovative design will be supported. Sustainable and innovative design can be demonstrated by satisfying the following criteria:

- a) local context and character is respected in terms of scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping, means of enclosure and access; and
- c) appropriate landscaping is incorporated into any scheme, including the retention and provision of trees and hedgerows where they exist; and
- d) a Sustainable Urban Drainage system is incorporated or there must be an explanation as to why such a system would not be practicable; and
- e) measures have been incorporated to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; and
- f) opportunities have been taken where possible to incorporate embedded renewables, such as solar panels, heat pumps and other measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the building; and
- g) opportunities have been taken in the layout and building orientation to minimise energy consumption and maximise passive solar gain; and
- h) provision has been made for electric car charging infrastructure; and
- i) provision has been made for cycle storage and infrastructure provided to ensure good pedestrian and cycle access to new housing.

4.56 Policy L16 refers to the conversion of existing buildings. There are a number of vacant buildings in the Neighbourhood Area which could be converted to residential or other uses. This policy seeks to lend support to schemes which convert such buildings, provided special attention is given to retaining the significance of non-designated heritage assets.

4.57 Within the village of Lowick there is a complex of farm buildings which may come forward for conversion during the Plan period. These buildings are identified as non-designated heritage assets.

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POLICY L16: CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS

Conversion of redundant buildings of substantial construction will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area. Special regard should be had to the historic significance of any redundant buildings which are non-designated heritage assets.

This policy does not apply to steel framed modern farm buildings.

5 MONITORING, REVIEW and COMMUNITY PROJECTS

- 5.1 Effective monitoring by Lowick Parish Council is essential to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is truly achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Area. It also provides information to establish whether policies are effective, and whether there are changes needed to policies in the longer term.
- 5.2 The Lowick Neighbourhood Plan sets out the long-term spatial vision for the area with objectives and policies to deliver that vision in the period up to 2036.
- 5.3 Decision making on planning applications still rests with Northumberland County Council who have their own monitoring procedures in place. The Parish Council will, however, undertake its own monitoring to evaluate the level of progress being made towards delivering the vision of the Plan.

Review

- 5.4 Lowick Parish Council will endeavour to monitor the performance of planning policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. Where it is felt necessary, planning policies may be reviewed and updated in accordance with the Regulations.

Community Projects

- 5.5 A number of issues were raised by the local community that are not covered in this Plan. These matters will be taken forward by the Parish Council and are matters that were outside the remit of planning policy in a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.6 Monitoring will also seek to ascertain whether these Community Projects are being implemented.

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APPENDIX A:

List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets:

3 Main Street, Lowick
The Black Bull Inn
Lowick Farm Buildings, Lowick
The White Swan
Garden House, Main Street, Lowick
Garden Cottage, Main Street, Lowick
Nos.35, 37, 39 Main Street, Lowick: Georgian, group value, landmark status
Nos.10, 12, 14, 16 Main Street, Lowick
Well Close and The Commercial Inn, Lowick
Jubilee Chapel
Village Hall

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APPENDIX B:

Evidence and Supporting Documents:

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

National Planning Practice Guidance (as updated)

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Advice (NCC) (April 2022)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) of the Lowick Neighbourhood Plan [NCC] (April 2022)

Topic Paper 1: Settlement Boundaries (methodology and assessment)

Topic Paper 2: Housing in Lowick

Topic Paper 3: Local Green Spaces

Topic Paper 4: Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Topic Paper 5: Local Economy and Community Facilities

Topic Paper 6: Lowick Historic Core and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Background paper: Housing Needs Survey by Community Action Northumberland (CAN) (June 2019)

Summary of comments made at various Consultation Events

Lowick Parish Plan 2004

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Glossary of Terms

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Affordable Housing:

Affordable rented housing: Housing let by the local authority or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.

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

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The Neighbourhood Area is not within the Northumberland Coast AONB.

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Asset of Community Value: A local authority maintained list of buildings and land in its area that is of community value as set out in Section 87 of the Localism Act 2011.

Basic Conditions: The Localism Act (the Act) sets basic conditions that neighbourhood development plans or orders must meet. These are that the plan or order must: a) have appropriate regard to national policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, b) must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development c) must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area and d) must not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU and Human Rights obligations

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

Community Facilities: Local services and facilities that benefit the community, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Density (of development): The amount of building within an area of land. For housing it is expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

Designated Site: In this document, reference to Designated Sites should be taken to include European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Ramsar sites, European Marine Sites (EMS's) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Development: Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.'

Development Plan: The complete set of statutory land use policies and proposals for an area, used in making planning decisions. It includes adopted council development plan documents such as Local Plans, Core Strategies and Neighbourhood Plans.

European site: This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Environmental report: The report that documents the assessment of the draft Plan and accompanies the draft Plan for pre-submission consultation. The environmental report needs to contain certain information as set out in Schedule 2 to the SEA Regulations 2004.

Evidence base: The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development. Evidence base data is also gathered to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and is submitted to the Examiner along with the other Examination Documents.

Habitat: An area or natural environment in which an organism, species or population normally lives. Habitats take many forms and should not be considered in isolation as they are linked and overlap with each other.

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Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA): This is a general term which describes the full step-wise process required in making assessments of the impacts on European sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, including the steps of screening for likely significant effects and making appropriate assessments.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Heritage Coast: Areas of largely undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors. Northumberland's Heritage Coast stretches from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border, and is outside the Plan area.

Independent Examination: The process by which an independent person examines a plan document to ensure that it is 'sound' (in the case of a Local Plan) or meets Basic Conditions (in the case of a Neighbourhood Plan).

Infrastructure: The physical entities (for example roads, railways, sewers, pipes, telecommunications lines) that are necessary for communities to function and move around.

Landscape Character: The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

Landscape Sensitivity: Normally refers to the ability of the landscape to absorb development, in relation to valued aspects of its character.

Local Green Space: A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans.

Local Plan: The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area.

Material Consideration: A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): A Government document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Most recent version July 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): The Government published the latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021 and the National Planning Practice Guidance is regularly updated. Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities.

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Neighbourhood Plan: A Plan by a Parish or Town Council - the 'qualifying body' - for a particular neighbourhood area. Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan.

Northumberland County Council: The unitary authority for Northumberland as of 1st April 2009.

Permitted Development: Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed without the need to make an application for planning permission.

Planning obligation: [Policy] Planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of development which benefits local communities and supports the provision of local infrastructure. Local communities should be involved in the setting of planning obligations policies in a Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning obligation (Development Management): (Also known as Section 106 agreements) Obligations attached to land that is the subject of a planning permission. Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Rural exception sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Setting of a Heritage Asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Special Areas of Conservation: Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Areas: Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Bird Directive.

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems): A sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water in a manner that will provide a more sustainable approach than more conventional practices, such as routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse.

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Superfast Broadband: Superfast broadband speeds are headline download speeds of greater than 24 Mbps.

Sustainable development: Defined by the World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Also defined in the NPPF, paragraph 8, there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Sustainable transport modes: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.