

Acomb Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

April 2018

Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement

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1.0 Introduction

This statement sets out how the Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), hereafter referred to as ‘the Regulations’, and how the basic conditions of neighbourhood planning and other considerations have been met as prescribed by Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The statement has been prepared by Acomb Parish Council as the qualifying body for the designated neighbourhood plan area.

Below is a brief introduction to Acomb Parish and why the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared. This is followed by a ‘summary of compliance’ statement indicating how the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in line with the Regulations and the 1990 Act. The remaining sections of the document provide evidence as to how the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.

1.1 Why Acomb Parish needs a Neighbourhood Plan

Acomb Parish is a rural parish located in the Tyne valley near the market town of Hexham. Acomb is the main village in the parish. The hamlet of St John’s Lee is close to Acomb, and there are a number of other smaller farmsteads in the parish. Acomb village is surrounded by green belt, and there are therefore limited opportunities for development here.

Acomb has a number of community facilities, and an active employment site with a number of small businesses.

At the time of the 2011 census, Acomb Parish had a population of X although this number will increase significantly when the Garden House Bank development of some X new homes is completed.

One of the key issues the Parish wanted to address in the Neighbourhood Plan, was the lack of service and facilities in the settlements. They wanted these settlements to, wherever possible, have the means to be more self-sustaining. There is therefore an emphasis on policies to promote services, facilities, and business expansion.

This has been the background to the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. All information about the Plan is available on the Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan website at www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk

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2.0 Legal Requirements

All the documents required by part 5, paragraph 15 of the Regulations are included in the submission for the Neighbourhood Plan. The requirements include provision of the following:

A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates

A policies map has been submitted with the neighbourhood plan, showing detail in relation to relevant policy in the neighbourhood plan.

A Consultation Statement

A separate Consultation Statement has been submitted with the neighbourhood plan, which details the consultation that was carried out through the process, and how it informed the development of the neighbourhood plan. The document contains details of the persons and bodies consulted about the neighbourhood plan, it explains how they were consulted, and it summarises the main issues and concerns raised by people who were consulted. It also describes how these concerns have been considered and subsequently addressed in the neighbourhood plan.

The proposed neighbourhood development plan

The Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2017 – 2032) has been submitted.

A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act; (otherwise known as the Basic Conditions statement)

This statement is known as the Basic Conditions Statement and is the subject of this statement. The basic conditions are identified in part 3.0 of this statement.

An environmental report prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; or where it has been determined under regulation 9(1) of those Regulations that the plan proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for that determination.

The Parish Council sought a screening opinion from Northumberland County Council as to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan would be required. The County Council concluded that they would not, and the 'negative' screening opinions are submitted with this statement as part of the submission documents.

2.1 The draft Plan is Being Submitted by a qualifying body

This draft Plan is submitted by Acomb Parish Council which, as the qualifying body, is

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entitled to submit a neighbourhood plan for its own parish. The Plan has been prepared by the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which was given delegated authority under a clear terms of reference to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group consists of local representatives from Action4Acomb, local residents and parish councillors.

The parish of Acomb is entirely within Northumberland County Council. A Neighbourhood Area application was submitted under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (part 2 section 6) to Northumberland County Council and was approved on 17th November 2015.

Copies of the Neighbourhood Area designation documents are available on the website.

The whole of Acomb Parish was formally designated as a neighbourhood area.

2.2 What is being proposed is a neighbourhood development plan

The plan proposed relates to planning matters only (the use and development of land) and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).

2.3 The proposed neighbourhood plan states the period for which it is to have effect

The submission draft Plan identifies the period to which it relates as 2017 to 2032.

2.4 The policies do not relate to excluded development

The neighbourhood plan does not deal with excluded development such as county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.5 The proposed neighbourhood plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and there are no other neighbourhood development plans in place within the neighbourhood area.

The neighbourhood plan proposal relates to the Parish of Acomb, which is the neighbourhood area and to no other area. There are no other neighbourhood plans relating to that neighbourhood area.

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3.0 Basic Conditions

A Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the Basic Conditions if:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan,
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations, and (the prescribed condition is that the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

3.1 Have appropriate regard to National Policy

This section tests the policies in the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan against relevant policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) [NPPF], relevant information contained in National Planning Practice Guidance and against the identified strategic (saved) policies in the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) and the Tynedale Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (2007). A list of these strategic policies is shown in Appendix A.

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to the 12 core planning principles contained in paragraph 17 of the NPPF which are outlined below:

para 1: be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;

The Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in close collaboration with the local community (further information on consultation undertaken is contained in the Consultation Statement). The Plan seeks to provide specificity and certainty to developers, whilst being pro-active in encouraging the right kind of development for the area.

para 2: not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan has been a creative exercise – evidence gathering and characterisation work to incorporate locally specific policies, particularly in relation to local design and incorporate local specificity from the Conservation Area Appraisal for Acomb, by adding policy context to seek to improve the character and quality of the built

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environment in the village. This, in conjunction with policies to protect local green spaces, community facilities and recreational areas, along with policies to provide housing to meet local needs, all contribute to improving the future of Acomb as a place to live.

para 3: proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. 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. 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;

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan takes a pro-active and supportive approach to sustainable economic development in the Plan area. The Plan seeks to lend support to local businesses, and specific business areas are identified for protection for employment use, as well as a policy to support other uses related to those existing uses. The Plan does not allocate sites for housing, as the whole Parish is in the green belt. The Plan does support the provision of new, small-scale infill housing within the settlement boundary of Acomb. The Plan has been informed by a detailed Housing Needs Assessment that was commissioned for Acomb in 2016.

para 4: always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

Policies in the Plan seek to secure high quality design that reflects the special character of Acomb. The Plan also seeks to allocate Local Green Spaces and recreational areas (Policy 1), which are important for the quality of life for residents in the village. Policy 10 seeks to protect amenity for existing residents in new development.

para 5: take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan overall seeks to support the rural community in Acomb Parish, through policies to protect and enhance local community facilities, a policy to support the re-development of the village hall, and policies to support new housing to meet the needs of people in the area.

para 6: support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);

The Plan does not cover renewables as a policy area. It does however require sustainable design measures including SuDS where appropriate in new development, and does have a policy with regard to flooding, which has been a significant issue in the parish.

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para 7: 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 this Framework;

Land allocations in this neighbourhood plan are for employment sites and these allocations are in areas of lesser environmental value and seek to maintain those uses on those sites. Infill development within the built-up area of Acomb is also encouraged in the housing policy.

para 8: encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;

See above. The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan supports infill development within the settlement boundary. There are a number of brownfield sites within the settlement boundary.

para 9. promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);

The neighbourhood plan contains policies to protect some areas as local green space (Policy 1). These areas are considered important by the local community, in most cases, for their wildlife and recreational value. Evidence supporting their designation is contained in the evidence base documents.

para 10. conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;

Policies in the plan seek to conserve heritage assets. In particular, Policy 8 seeks to preserve and/or enhance the special character of the Acomb Conservation Area as defined in the Acomb Conservation Area Appraisal document, and Policy 9 seeks to ensure that non-designated assets are taken into

para 11. 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;

The Plan seeks to improve footpaths and cycle-ways, to facilitate means of transport other than the car.

Policy 5 seeks to ensure that development at Howford Quarry incorporates improvements to the access road.

para 12. take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

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This is a key area that the Plan seeks to address, and was a key issue identified in community consultation. The Plan therefore seeks to support the provision of new and extended community facilities, and in particular supports the retention of the existing, or provision of a new village hall.

Policy 1 supports the retention of local green spaces, and recreational areas for community benefits.

3.2 Contribute to the Achievement of Sustainable Development

The NPPF states a presumption in favour of sustainable development. According to the NPPF, 'sustainable' means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. So sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF further defines the role different sectors make to defining 'sustainable development'.

an economic role - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring 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

a social role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing 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 supports its health, social and cultural well-being

an environmental role - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan has a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Vision and set of objectives identified in the Plan clearly promote sustainable development. The Vision for the Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan is:

Value, protect and promote the Parish of Acomb, by respecting its heritage, appreciating its current community and being aspirational when planning for future generations, ensuring Acomb Parish continues to be a thriving, safe and attractive place to live and work

The objectives then go on to cover all aspects of sustainable development, covering the social, economic and environmental dimensions.

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There are 6 objectives, all of which seek to deliver sustainable development, through the protection of local green spaces, and community facilities, seeking to support measures to reduce the impact of flooding in the parish, reducing the negative impacts of road traffic and improving local off-road networks, supporting the provision of small-scale housing in the village, supporting local business, and preserving and enhancing the special character of the conservation area, and ensuring that new design comprises high quality design.

It is considered that this Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.

3.3 Be in General Conformity with Strategic Local Policy

The Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan lies entirely within Northumberland County Council. On 1st April 2009, Northumberland County Council became a unitary authority, and therefore the Local Planning Authority for the area. Northumberland County Council has yet to produce a Local Plan for the County, and so the current Development Plan for the area is the Tynedale Local Plan 2000 (saved policies) and the Tynedale Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2007).

Paragraph 074¹ of the National Planning Practice Guidance gives an explanation of what is meant by ‘general conformity’ as follows:

‘When considering whether a policy is in general conformity a qualifying body, independent examiner, or local planning authority, should consider the following:

- *whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with.*
- *the degree, if any, of conflict between the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal and the strategic policy.*
- *whether the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal provides an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining that policy.*
- *the rationale for the approach taken in the draft neighbourhood plan and the evidence to justify that approach.’*

Paragraph 075² of the National Planning Practice Guidance also defines strategic policies, referring to NPPF paragraph 156 and stipulating that the basic conditions statement should:

‘..address strategic policies no matter where they appear in the development plan. It does not presume that every policy in a Local Plan is strategic or that the only policies that are strategic are labelled as such.’

¹ (Reference ID: 41-074- 20140306)

² (Reference ID: 41-075- 20140306)

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In this case, Northumberland County Council has written to the qualifying body (Acomb Parish Council) to state which policies they consider to be ‘strategic’ for the purpose of meeting the basic conditions. Appendix B contains the identified Strategic policies from these Plans.

Each policy in the plan has been tested against the relevant strategic policies. This section will summarise the relevant strategic policies in relation to each policy in the Neighbourhood Plan and assess whether the policy is in conformity. The conclusion section at the end of each policy analysis seeks to summarise why it is considered that the policy is in accordance with strategic policy:

Policy 1: Local Green Spaces

Proposed Policy 1 is shown below:

Policy 1: Local Green Spaces

The following Local Green Spaces have been identified in Acomb Parish and are shown on the Policies Map:

Acomb Tennis Courts and Play Area(G1)
Uncultivated land south of Playing Field (G2)
The Gaps (G3)
Millersfield Play Area (G4)
Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk (G5)
School Common (G6)

Proposals for new development in these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted except in very special circumstances, and where they are directly related to the function of the land as a Local Green Space

The following site is designated as ‘community and recreational’ land and is shown on the Policies Map:

Acomb Playing Field (including Pavilion) (CR1)

Proposals for new development in this space (CR1) must not involve the loss of Acomb Playing Field. Proposals for the re-development of the Pavilion, or for the provision of alternative or enhanced community facilities, will be supported on this site providing the remainder of the existing playing field is retained as part of any proposal.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Relevant policy in the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007) is policy NE1 and NE2. These strategic policies seek to protect and enhance the character and quality of the landscape and manage the relationship between development and the natural environment. Policy NE2 refers to areas of strategic green space as shown on the Proposals Map. None of these areas is within the Neighbourhood Area.

Relevant policies in the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) are policies LR3 and LR8. Policy LR3 seeks to prevent the net loss of public or private playing fields, parks, children’s play areas

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or amenity open space. Policy LR8 allocates particular sites (not of which are in the Neighbourhood Area).

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 76 of the NPPF states that local communities through neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. Paragraph 77 presents a set of criteria that should be applied when deciding whether a piece of land is suitable for designation as a local green space. The Acomb Local Green Spaces identified fulfil this criteria and the spreadsheet and supporting information demonstrate how special these local spaces are. In addition, they meet the criteria set out in the NPPF:

- They are in close proximity to the community they serve,
- They are demonstrably special because of their recreational value,
- The space is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

General Conformity of Policy 1: Policy 1 is considered to be in general conformity with strategic policy for the reasons set out above.

Policy 2: New and extended community facilities

Proposed Policy 2 is shown below:

Policy 2: Community Facilities

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

Acomb First School
Acomb Hair Salon
Acomb Methodist Chapel and Hall
Acomb Pavilion
Acomb Village Hall
Acomb Village Shop and Post Office
Fish and Chip Shop
Little Oaks Community Nursery
Public Houses in Acomb
St. John Lee Church and Hall

Proposals involving 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 the village, or in another suitable accessible location within the plan area. There will be a strong presumption against the loss of the last shop, public house, or village hall in Acomb.

Proposals for the provision of new community facilities, or proposals to extend and/or improve existing community facilities will be supported within the settlement of Acomb.

In addition to the policy, the specific community facilities referred to are shown on the policies map.

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Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Policy CS1 in the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy relates to ‘Community Service and Facilities’. It seeks to retain local shops and other essential community services and facilities, especially where there are no accessible alternatives. It also seeks to address deficiencies in services and facilities and facilitate improvements in their level of provision, quality and accessibility.

Policy TM1 in the Tynedale Local Plan seeks to protect existing tourist facilities and/or community facilities by ensuring that development proposals involving the loss of an existing community facility will only be permitted where the developer can demonstrate that the facility is no longer viable and no longer serves the need of the community in which it is located. Policy TM2 (which has not been identified as ‘strategic’) seeks to enhance existing facilities.

A ‘facilities audit’ was carried out by the neighbourhood plan steering group, to assess the value to the local community of the facilities referred to specifically in this policy. This audit is included in the evidence base documents.

National Planning Policy Framework

This policy is in general accordance with the thrust of the NPPF, particularly with regard retaining services and supporting sustainable communities in paragraphs 17 (Core Principles – last bullet point) 69, and 70. Policy 69 states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Policy 70 states that planning policies should plan positivity for the provision and use of community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities. It states that policies should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community.

Policy 2 is considered to be in general conformity with strategic policy.

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Policy 3: Flooding

Proposed Policy 3 is shown below:

Policy 3: Flooding

Proposals which will contribute to the reduction of the risk of flooding and flood alleviation in the Plan area will be supported. Such proposals must take into account landscape and historic environment impacts, and include, where feasible, natural methods of controlling flood risk, such as tree planting and other land management proposals that will help reduce the risk of flooding in the Acomb Plan area.

Proposals for new development in Flood Zones 2 and/or 3 within Acomb must demonstrate that the Sequential Test has been applied, to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.

Proposals in Zones 2 and 3 that have passed the sequential test must demonstrate, through a Flood Risk assessment, that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk.

All proposals should demonstrate that they will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and that any future development is not at risk from flooding, or that mitigating measures have been put in place to ensure that it can be flood resilient.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Policy GD5 in the Tynedale LDF refers to Flood Risk. This policy was drafted prior to the NPPF, and strategic policy with regard to flooding has changed. Nevertheless, Policy GD5 states that the potential implications for flood risk will be taken into account when meeting development needs, and states that developers will be expected to carry out an appropriate assessment of flood risk. It states that development will not be permitted if it is likely to increase the risk of flooding or reduce the capacity of flood plains to store flood water or increase the number of people or properties at risk from flooding.

The Tynedale Local Plan (2000) does not have saved policies on flooding.

NPPF

The NPPF has more specific and up to date policy on flooding, and it is this policy that has informed the local context for Policy 3. There are areas in Acomb that are brownfield sites that could be suitable for development but are also in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The policy seeks to ensure that if and when these sites come forward, that a full assessment is made of likely risks, based on the latest guidance contained in national planning policy.

Paragraphs 99 – 104 contain national planning policy with regard to flooding. Policy 3 contains the key aspects where relevant to the context in Acomb, to ensure that proposals for development have applied the Sequential Test set out in paragraph 100, and, where development in a Flood Risk zone is unavoidable (due to constraints elsewhere in the parish due to green belt designations), that it must be able to demonstrate that it will not

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increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and that future development can be designed so it is not at risk from flooding itself.

General Conformity of Policy 3: Policy 3 is in general conformity with strategic policy.

Policy 4: Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding

Proposed Policy 4 is shown below:

Policy 4: Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding

Proposals for speed reduction measures and safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the road network will be supported.

The development and improvement of safe cycling, riding and walking routes identified on the Policies Map, will be supported.

Provision of new links to connect existing footpaths and bridleways will be supported.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Policy GD4 in the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy refers to 'Principles for transport and accessibility'. The principles for transport and accessibility identified in Policy GD4 are to maximise conflict-free, sustainable access across the District, through the retention, management and maintenance of the existing transport network, its improvement where necessary and the integration of transport services. Also, to minimise the overall need for journeys while seeking to maximise the proportion of those journeys that are made by public transport, bicycle and on foot. There are no relevant policies identified in the Tynedale Local Plan.

NPPF

Paragraph 29 states that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also contribute to wider sustainability objectives. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how to travel. Although this is difficult in an area like Acomb, this policy does seek to improve cycling and walking routes which will have a benefit, if implemented, for recreational use, but will also make it easier for people to reach Hexham by foot and cycle and generally support the increased use of local footpaths and bridleways in the parish. Paragraphs 30 and 35 in the NPPF highlight the need to maximise opportunities for sustainable modes of transport.

General Conformity of Policy 4: Policy 4 is considered to be in general conformity with strategic policy.

Policy 5: Howford Quarry and Howford Lane

Proposed Policy 5 is shown below:

Policy 5: Howford Quarry/Howford Lane

Any proposal to intensify the use of Howford Quarry such that a material change of use will occur which requires planning permission, must demonstrate that:

- a) The proposals could be carried out without significantly increasing traffic movements along Howford Lane or;
- b) If a proposal would significantly increase the amount of traffic movements along Howford Lane, provision must be made for the safe access of pedestrians along Howford Lane as part of the scheme, to be secured through a S106 planning obligation prior to the development taking place to ensure financial contributions sufficient to secure the provision of additional infrastructure associated with highway improvements to Howford Lane to allow safe cycling and walking along this route, or direct provision of that infrastructure.

These improvements will be sought using planning obligations where it can be demonstrated that they are necessary, reasonable and directly related to the development for which permission is being granted and where their provision will not threaten the viability of the development.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Howford Quarry is identified in the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) in Policy NE13. NE13 states that proposals for limited infill development, re-use, partial re-use or redevelopment for employment uses on those developed sites in the Green Belt defined on the Proposals Map (one of which is Howford Haulage Site NE13.8) will be permitted. A set of criteria follow. Policy 5 seeks to supplement the existing criteria, by adding a set of locally specific criteria to seek improvements for pedestrian/cycling access along Howford Lane, which is already a dangerous road for current users due to the amount of lorries accessing the Howford Quarry site.

NPPF

The NPPF has no specific policy, however it does seek to support sustainable development in the widest sense. Part of this means ensuring that development does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment. Paragraph 32 states that all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people’.

Paragraph 173 of the NPPF also relates to viability and deliverability. The policy is specifically worded to ensure that deliverability and viability are key considerations in determining the level of contributions for transport infrastructure.

Policy 5 is considered to be in general conformity with strategic policy.

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Policy 6: New Housing

Proposed Policy 6 is shown below:

Policy 6: New Housing

Proposals for new small-scale housing developments and conversions in Acomb will be supported where they:

- a) Provide housing to meet local needs as identified in the Acomb Housing Needs Survey;
- b) Are well related to existing development and are of high quality design that reflects local character;
- c) Take opportunities to improve the visual amenity of the area and reflect local and vernacular design and materials;
- d) Do not impact negatively on the amenity of neighbouring properties;
- e) Take opportunities to reduce flood risk by incorporating SuDS into the design of the development; and
- f) Incorporate landscaping and boundary treatments that reflect the local area

On brownfield sites, subject to the provision of safe vehicular access and, where relevant, compliance with Policy 3, new housing development will be supported where it makes a positive contribution to the character of the village, and takes the opportunity to re-inforce local distinctiveness offered by the particular characteristics of that site.

Developments of over 5 units will be expected to be supported with a Design Brief which demonstrates how the proposal incorporates the above details.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Policy GD1 in the Tynedale LDF refers to the 'general location of development' and states that smaller villages (of which Acomb is one) should accommodate small scale development only. It states that, in all cases, the scale and nature of development should respect the character of the town or village concerned and take into account the capacity of essential infrastructure.

It is considered acceptable therefore, and in line with strategic policy, to support small-scale housing development in Acomb.

Other policies in the Tynedale LDF are policy H1 (Principles for housing), H2 (Housing provision and management of supply) and policy H3 (Location of new housing). Policy H1 is now partially out of date, as it refers to meeting housing demand as identified in strategic requirements set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Local Plan for Northumberland is in very early stages of preparation, and detailed housing figures have not yet been adopted.

Other criteria in policy H1 relate to providing for a full range and choice of housing types to meet the needs of the whole community, giving priority to the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs, and limiting new building to main towns, local centres and

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smaller villages with adequate services. The policy also seeks to ensure that housing is well-designed, providing high quality living environments, and ensuring that new housing development contributes appropriately to the local community in terms of meeting identified local housing needs and providing necessary services and infrastructure.

The Tynedale Local Plan has one policy that relates specifically to Acomb: Policy H6a: Land safeguarded to meet possible future housing needs of Acomb. The site referred to in that policy has now been developed.

NPPF

Chapter 6 of the NPPF is about delivering a ‘wide choice of high quality homes’. Paragraph 47 states that LPAs should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing. Acomb Parish Council undertook a detailed Housing Needs Assessment, to establish the particular housing need for Acomb parish, and this document is referenced within the policy and available as a background Evidence Base document.

Paragraph 55 states that in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Paragraph 56 relates to design, and the importance the government attaches to good design as a key aspect of sustainable development; indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 58 states that neighbourhood plans should develop ‘robust and comprehensive’ policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area, and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Paragraph 17 states that plans should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

It is considered that the policy overall is consistent with strategic policy.

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Policy 7: Local Economy

Proposed policy 7 is shown below:

Policy 7: Local Economy

To create and retain a sustainable local economy in the Plan area, small-scale business proposals will be supported where they enable the creation of new business or the opportunity to expand existing business, subject to respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.

Proposals for additional business units within the existing business and employment areas identified on the Policies Map will be supported. These business and employment areas are protected for employment use (B1, B2, B8). Small-scale A1 and A3 uses related to existing businesses will also be supported.

Proposals for home working in the Plan area, where they do not affect the amenity of neighbouring properties by way of additional traffic, noise or other amenity impacts, will be supported.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Relevant policy in the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy is contained in Policies EDT1 and EDT2. Policy EDT1 seeks to support a buoyant and diverse local economy, ensuring that sufficient land is available to meet the employment requirements in the (previous) District, and by protecting allocated employment land for its intended purpose. EDT2 (Employment Land Provision) which refers to allocated employment sites. There is already an area of allocated employment land in Acomb (allocated through Policy EDT2). Policy 7 seeks to retain and protect this employment land as shown on the policies map, and to support the provision of additional uses where they are related to the primary employment use, in order to give flexibility to businesses located on these employment sites.

NPPF

Paragraph 28 is about supporting a prosperous rural economy. It states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, neighbourhood plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

Paragraph 19 states that planning should operate to 'encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system'.

Policy 7 is considered to be in general conformity with strategic policy

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Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area

Proposed policy 8 is shown below:

Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area

Any proposal within the Acomb Conservation Area, or within the setting of the Conservation Area must demonstrate how it will preserve or enhance the character of the Acomb Conservation Area, as defined in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Proposals including extensions, alterations to existing buildings and structures, conversions and in-fill development must have particular regard to:

- a) The need to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness by reflecting the vernacular scale, massing, layout, means of enclosure, detailed design and materials characteristic of the Acomb Conservation Area through:
 - i) use of local materials for Acomb consisting of natural sandstone and natural slate roofing materials;
 - ii) the maintenance of 'plain' rooflines, avoiding the addition of dormer windows which would detract from the special character of Acomb conservation area;
 - iii) the incorporation of timber sliding sash windows;
 - iv) the use of locally distinctive detailing of masonry, doorways, rooflines, chimneys and chimney-pots, windows and rainwater goods;
 - v) the provision of appropriate boundary treatment to consist of sandstone walls and/or hedgerows;
 - vi) the retention of existing boundary walls
- b) Give special attention to the impact of development on the appreciation of The Green (The Pant) and its surrounding buildings;
- c) Re-inforce the significance and setting of 'key buildings' in the Conservation Area: Acomb House, Acomb High House, Chare Head, Town Head, Fold Cottage and their associated buildings
- d) Give special attention to the rural nature and low density of the conservation area and its setting, including views into and out of the Conservation Area; and
- e) Ensure future development does not harm the setting of listed buildings in the Conservation Area and in particular does not impact on the group value of listed buildings.

Development of poor design that fails to make a positive contribution or fails to preserve the character and quality of the Conservation Area will be refused.

[Tynedale Local Plan \(2000\) \(saved policies\)](#) and [Tynedale LDF Core Strategy \(2007\)](#)

Policy BE1 of the Tynedale LDF contains 'Principles for the built environment'. The Tynedale Local Plan Policy BE18 refers to 'development affecting the character and setting of a Conservation Area'.

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Policy BE1 sets out the principles for the built environment. These principles are to conserve and where appropriate enhance the quality and integrity of Tynedale's built environment and its historic features, giving particular protection to listed buildings and conservation areas. It seeks to further ensure that development is of a high quality design that will maintain and enhance the distinctive local character of the District's villages.

Policy BE18 relates to development outside a Conservation Area, and states that development will be permitted if it would not harm the character setting or views into or out of the Conservation Area.

Proposed policy 8 is consistent with this policy, seeking to identify specific elements of the conservation area that are important, including key views.

NPPF

Chapter 12 has policy on the historic environment, and this policy seeks to ensure the historic setting and context of the area is respected in new development.

The policy is considered to be in conformity with the NPPF.

Policy 9: Non-designated heritage assets

Proposed Policy 9 is shown below:

Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets

The Neighbourhood Plan list of non-designated Heritage Assets are defined in Appendix A. Development affecting any non-designated heritage asset or its setting, whether locally listed, or identified in the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan List in Appendix A, should be sensitively designed having regard to the significance of the heritage asset including its archaeological, historic and architectural interest and its setting.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Policy BE1 is the relevant policy, which is referred above, in relation to Policy 8. It is considered that Policy 9 is in general conformity with Policy BE1.

NPPF

Chapter 12 of the NPPF contains detailed policy on the historic environment and distinguishes between 'designated' and 'non-designated' heritage assets, and the approach to be taken to such assets in decision-making. Paragraph states that local planning authorities should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Policy 9 seeks to identify non-designated heritage assets and describes their local significance. These assets are listed in Appendix A of the Plan.

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Paragraph 135 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. Policy 9 reflects paragraph 135, giving local specificity through the listing of non-designated heritage assets in Appendix A.

Policy 10: Design in new development

Proposed policy 10 is shown below:

POLICY 10: DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

All new development in the Plan area, including extensions and conversions, should incorporate high quality design and demonstrate how the proposal:

- a) Has been informed by local character, context, and site geography; and
- b) Reflects local character in terms of scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping, means of enclosure and access; and
- c) Incorporates features that reflect surrounding character and materials, including windows, doors, chimneys, and other details which have an impact on the appearance of the proposed development; and
- d) Incorporates high quality landscaping and take opportunities to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems into the scheme; and
- e) Takes measures to limit impact of light pollution from artificial light on the nearby Dark Sky Park; and
- f) Ensures that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on amenity of nearby residents in terms of loss of light, overshadowing or other amenity impacts.

Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)

Tynedale Local Plan contains no saved policies in relation to the built environment. Policies in the Tynedale LDF in relation to design are contained in Policy BE1 – principles for the built environment. Policy BE1 sets out the principles for the built environment. These principles are to conserve and where appropriate enhance the quality and integrity of Tynedale's built environment and its historic features, giving particular protection to listed buildings and conservation areas. It seeks to further ensure that development is of a high quality design that will maintain and enhance the distinctive local character of the District's villages. Policy 10 seeks to give a local dimension to what high quality design means in the context of Acomb. Particular attention is drawn to those elements that are locally relevant, such as the proximity of the Dark Skies Park, and local vernacular detail which is particularly important in the context of Acomb. Sustainable drainage is an important issue in a village that has seen significant flooding in recent years, and this aspect is therefore incorporated into the policy.

NPPF

The NPPF advocates high quality design. Paragraph 58 states that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. This includes responding to local character, establishing a strong sense of place, and creating safe and accessible environments. This policy seeks

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to focus on those areas that are considered most important within the context of Acomb. The supporting text gives additional detail about how this policy should be interpreted.

Paragraph 59 states that design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area.

3.4 The ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations

The neighbourhood plan would not breach any EU obligations.

3.5 The ‘prescribed conditions’ are met

A Screening Opinion with regard to whether Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required in relation to this neighbourhood plan has been sought. It was concluded that a SEA would not be required. A Screening Opinion with regard to whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment would be required was also sought, and this Screening Opinion was also negative.

Both Screening Opinions are available on the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan website and are included in the submission documents. The schedule of Strategic Policies is also included in the submission documents.

4.0 Conclusion

The evidence provided in this Basic Conditions Statement concludes that the Acomb Parish Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) (as amended).