

# ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017 - 2032

## REFERENDUM PLAN – JANUARY 2019



**ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
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**FOREWORD**

We are very pleased to present this Referendum version of the Acomb Neighbourhood Development Plan. Its purpose is to set out planning policies to guide development in Acomb Parish over the next 15 years. It complements the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and sets out locally created planning policies which must form the starting point for making decisions on planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area.

The Plan is based on a Vision and six Objectives, which were developed following public consultation. These were agreed following a Public Questionnaire in 2017.

The Plan sets out ten planning policies to help us achieve these objectives and will help with protecting the environment and promoting positive development that will benefit our community in an effective way.

The Plan will have a statutory basis and will influence future development throughout the Parish. Residents will now be given the opportunity to vote on whether they wish the Plan to be brought into force through a local referendum to be held in January 2019.

Cllr Norman Robson  
Chair of Acomb Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Cllr Charles Enderby  
Chair of Acomb Parish Council

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Acomb Parish Council is a qualifying body for the purposes of legislation governing neighbourhood planning and is therefore entitled to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Acomb. Northumberland County Council formally designated the whole of the Parish area as Acomb Neighbourhood Area on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 under Section 61G (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Acomb Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, consisting of members of the Parish Council and other local representatives, was appointed by the Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) for the Parish of Acomb (the Neighbourhood Area).

### **What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

A Neighbourhood Development Plan, once made, will become part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. It will sit alongside other statutory plans. At the moment the statutory Development Plan for Acomb Parish comprises the saved policies of the Tynedale District Local Plan (2000) and the Tynedale Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2007). The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan will be used by the County Council to determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area.

### **The Neighbourhood Area**

The Acomb Neighbourhood Area is shown on the map at Figure 1 below. The Neighbourhood Area lies entirely within the administrative area of Northumberland County Council.

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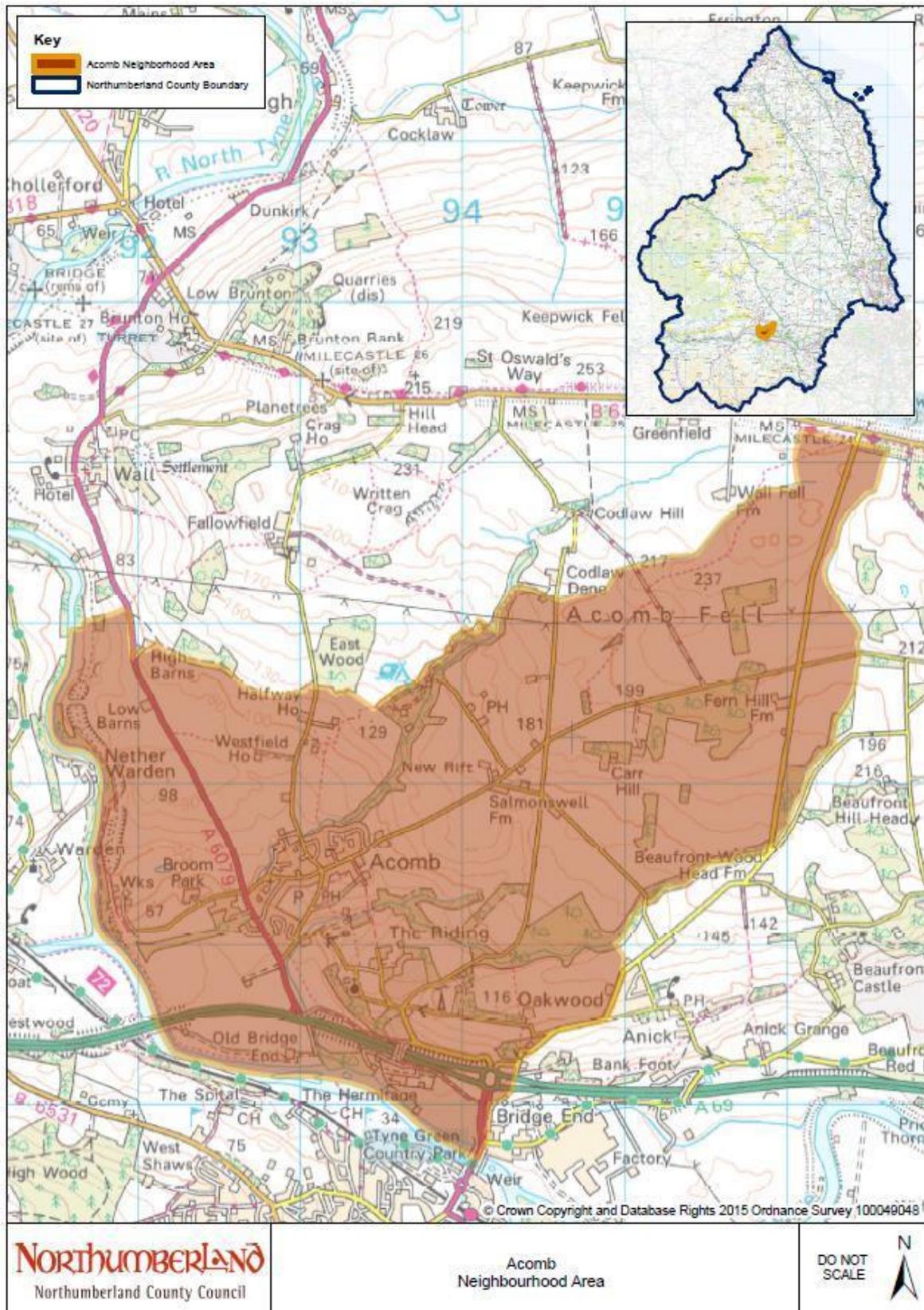


Figure 1: Acomb Neighbourhood Area

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### **National and Local Planning Policy Context:**

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies contained in the statutory Development Plan. Northumberland County Council has provided a list of strategic policies with which the Plan must be in general conformity. Further detail on this is contained in the Basic Conditions Statement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (NPPF) provided the national policy background under which the Plan was prepared and assessed through independent examination. A revised version of NPPF was published in July 2018 and this now provides the most up to date statement on Central Government planning policy. The NPPF supersedes some of the policies contained in local planning documents. Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be prepared having regard to national policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance in order to meet the relevant 'Basic Conditions'

The achievement of sustainable development is at the heart of planning, and should be a 'golden thread' running through all planning decisions and planning policy documents. The desire for development to be sustainable is also at the heart of community aspirations in Acomb.

The NPPF (2012) states that Neighbourhood Plans should: *"provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency"*. The NPPF also advises that policies in local plans should give "a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal"<sup>1</sup>.

The Plan seeks to give clarity to developers, and to the local community, about what kind of development will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area; and identifies important considerations, defined in the form of land-use planning policies, that must be taken into account when decisions are made on planning applications.

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF Paragraphs 17 and 154

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### **Pre-submission Consultation**

A pre-submission consultation took place in December 2017, which comprised the statutory stage of consultation required to be completed by the Parish Council in accordance with the relevant legislation before submitting the Plan to Northumberland County Council for formal Examination. This consultation took place over an eight week period commencing on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

An open day was held in the Village Hall, during the consultation period, where people had an opportunity to look at the Plan, along with the Policies Map that accompanies it, and discuss any issues with members of the Steering Group. Consultation bodies were also consulted, and many of their comments were incorporated into the Plan. A full list of responses, and how these were incorporated into the Plan, is provided in the Consultation Statement.

### **What other consultation has taken place?**

The Steering Group has engaged throughout the process with the local community, through consultation and newsletters, and the provision of information on the Neighbourhood Plan website [www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk).

Following an initial open launch for the Neighbourhood Plan and incorporating many of the results of the Action4Acomb 2014 Parish Questionnaire, a 'Vision' and a set of 'Objectives' were formulated, with suggested planning policy areas.

Consultation took place in Spring 2017 to gain community feedback regarding the proposed Vision, Objectives and the potential policies which could be included in the draft Plan. More than 90% approval was received from this consultation. A full report was written following that consultation, and a copy of the report is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website.

The final Plan closely reflects the feedback received from the local community and local businesses. More detail on other consultation undertaken is set out in the Consultation Statement which was submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan along with a Basic Conditions Statement to Northumberland County Council.

The submitted Plan was publicised by the County Council in July and August 2018. The Plan was subsequently subject to an Independent Examination which concluded with a report published on 10 October 2018 recommending that the Plan may now be put to a local referendum, subject to some minor modification. A referendum will now be arranged by the County Council and all residents registered to vote within Acomb Parish will be given the opportunity to vote on whether the Plan should be brought into force. The referendum is expected to take place in January 2019.

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### CHAPTER 1: ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

#### 1.1 The Settlement and Housing

Acomb Parish is a predominantly rural area, consisting of the Village of Acomb, surrounded by Green Belt and outlying farms. Acomb Village has a school, two churches, a Village Hall, a Sports Pavilion, a Post Office, a Hairdressing Salon and four public houses. Many of these facilities are used by people outside the Parish. There are approximately 550 residential properties in the Parish, and a population of around 1300.

The Neighbourhood Area has a stable population in total numbers, with inflow rates similar to outflow rates (around 10%). Because of the population stability of over 65s, the community is an ageing one, with the average age being higher than that of Northumberland as a whole. However, new development of 39 houses (available during 2018) on Garden House Bank will bring a significant population growth (about 12%).

#### 1.2 Economy

The Neighbourhood Area contains around 50 small businesses mostly run and manned by out of parish employees. These businesses are predominantly in the Industrial Estate and surrounding area. There is a higher than average number of self-employed workers (about 8%), working from home.

#### 1.3 Green Belt

Acomb Village is surrounded by Green Belt, virtually up to the edge of the Settlement, and this provides adequate and desirable separation from Hexham, 2 miles away. The Green Belt boundary is shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map.

#### 1.4 Development Sites

There is only one site allocated for housing development in the Parish in the current statutory Development Plan and this is being developed for 39 residential properties, including 6 affordable homes.

#### 1.5 Heritage/Environment

Acomb Village is an old mining and farming village, which, as a settlement, dates back to before mediaeval times. Consequently, there is significant history, and many remains to be found. These include the recently uncovered corn drying kilns (Figure 2) from the 14th or 15th Century. There are a number of listed buildings and places of historic interest within the Neighbourhood Area. The Village has the highest concentration of listed buildings within the Parish and has a Conservation Area. There are many areas within the Parish which are of

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significant amenity value, including Tyne Watersmeet, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Playing Fields and The Gaps. Other smaller areas are shown within this Plan.



*Figure 2: 15<sup>th</sup> Century Corn Drying Kiln off Garden House Bank*

#### **1.6 Transport**

The A69 runs through the southern part of the Neighbourhood Area. This makes the area accessible to Hexham, Newcastle and Carlisle, and therefore is a popular commuting base. There are regular but infrequent public transport services to and from Acomb. Most residents and visitors therefore require personal transport. This creates parking issues in the Village, where there are few off road parking facilities, and at times an over-used narrow lane infrastructure. There are no evening/late night bus services, meaning younger people and the elderly can be isolated.

#### **1.7 Flooding**

The Village of Acomb was one of the first five communities in Northumberland to be recognised by the Environment Agency as suffering from severe flash flooding. This is usually caused by the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn being unable to cope with the volume of water coming from their catchment areas on Acomb Fell during significant storms.

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## 2.0 CHAPTER 2: VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE PLAN

- 2.1 Through the consultation responses, and identification of key issues that the Plan should address, the following vision was agreed:

**The Vision for the Acomb Neighbourhood Area is as follows:**

**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.**

- 2.2 To support this vision, a number of objectives have been identified:

### **Objective 1 - Community Facilities and Local Green Space**

**We will protect the community facilities we have and promote new community facilities. Our most highly valued outdoor spaces will be designated as Local Green Spaces.**

#### **Community Facilities**

- 2.3 Acomb has a number of highly valued community facilities. An audit of these facilities has taken place. The most highly valued facilities were identified by the public in consultation events. These were identified as the Village Hall, Pavilion, Village Shop, Post Office, First School and Little Oaks Nursery, the pubs, fish and chip shop, tennis courts and play areas. In addition to those facilities, there are other local businesses which provide a service which are also valued; there is a hairdresser's, Indian take-away, wet-fish retailer and other services provided on the industrial estate.
- 2.4 The main issues identified were:
- Retention of valued community facilities (Village Hall, Pavilion, Shop and Post Office, Acomb First School, Nursery, Fish and Chip Shop and Hairdressing Salon);
  - The Pavilion and Village Hall are in need of refurbishment;
  - Play areas, Tennis Courts and other valued open spaces should be protected.

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#### Local Green Spaces

- 2.5 Although Acomb is surrounded by Green Belt, there are important Green Spaces within and on the edge of the settlement. Some of these were identified in the list of 'community facilities'.
- 2.6 Tyne Watersmeet was identified as an important area for local people to visit and walk. This area was not identified as a Local Green Space as it was not considered to meet the requirements set out in the NPPF, which states that Local Green Spaces should not comprise 'an extensive tract of land'. In addition, this area is entirely within the Green Belt, and partially designated as SSSI as well. However, it is recognised that this is an area which is also used significantly by Acomb Angling Club as part of its reach.
- 2.7 Issues identified in relation to Local Green Spaces were:
- Local Green Spaces that are highly valued by the community were identified as Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk, The Gaps, the Playing Field (ultimately defined as a Community and Recreational Space) and uncultivated land south of it, the School Common and Millersfield play area; and
  - A number of other places were identified outside the settlement of Acomb, and in the Green Belt, such as walks to neighbouring villages, the caravan site, and Hexham.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified, and deliver Objective 1:**

- Policy 1: Local Green Spaces – identifies and protects Local Green Spaces that are highly valued by the local community.**
- Policy 2: Acomb Playing Field Community Facilities – identified as an important recreational facility whose loss should be resisted unless alternative appropriate equivalent provision is made elsewhere.**
- Policy 3: Community Facilities – identifies existing community facilities and seeks to prevent their loss, and supports the provision of improved community facilities.**

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**Objective 2: Flooding**

**We will seek to ensure that the impacts of flooding are reduced in Acomb and support measures to reduce those impacts**

**Flooding Issues**

- 2.8 Flooding has been a significant problem in Acomb over recent years, with significant episodes of localised flash flooding.
- 2.9 Many of the measures proposed to achieve this objective will be delivered through Community Projects<sup>2</sup>, rather than planning policy. Catchment management is a key mechanism which can be used to reduce the impacts of flooding. This will inevitably be partly beyond the Neighbourhood Area, and also is implemented outside the planning system. One planning policy in relation to flooding supports the provision of flood defence infrastructure where planning permission is required. The Environment Agency has commissioned hydraulic modelling to inform a business case for a flood alleviation scheme in Acomb. In particular, options including hard defences in the Village and natural flood management in the upper catchment areas of the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn are being considered.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver that objective:**

- Policy 4: Flooding**  
**Policy 6: New Housing (include SuDS measures)**

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<sup>2</sup> Acomb Community Led 5-Year Plan copies of which disseminated to all households and found on [www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk)

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*Figure 3: Bottom of Garden House Bank – June 2012*

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#### **Objective 3: Traffic, Walking and Cycling in Acomb**

**We will seek to reduce the negative impact that road traffic has on the Village of Acomb. We will seek to enhance and develop the local network of paths and bridleways.**

- 2.10 There was a strong desire to reduce the negative impact that traffic has on the Village of Acomb, as well as a desire to improve footpaths, bridleways and off-road routes to allow villagers to get to Hexham or riverside walks, by means other than the private car. Much has already been done to mitigate the traffic impacts through Acomb.
- 2.11 The impact of traffic along Howford Lane and A6079 was identified as a particular problem, which could potentially worsen if the quarry site were to expand and increase the scale of the operation there. There is a Developed Site in the Green Belt, in the Tynedale Local Plan at Howford Haulage Site (also known as Howford Quarry (Recycling Works)) which allows for retention and limited redevelopment for employment uses, but within the context of its Green Belt location. The site has already been re-developed as a recycling facility and any intensification in the use of the site could give rise to further traffic pressures.
- 2.12 Other specific issues include:
- Traffic along Howford Lane which is used by walkers, horse-riders and cyclists – there are concerns that this could get worse;
  - Need to improve routes and links between settlements and ‘missing links’ on bridleways and footpaths;
  - Speeding traffic through Acomb especially along A6079;
  - Impact of on-road parking of vehicles in the Village and parking generally.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

**Policy 5: Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding**

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#### Objective 4: Housing

**We will support small-scale housing development within the settlement of Acomb, with a particular emphasis on providing housing that meets identified needs**

#### **Housing**

- 2.13 There was a strong desire to limit the amount of larger scale housing developments coming forward in the Neighbourhood Area, with an element of support for smaller housing schemes, particularly those that would meet the needs of first time buyers.
- 2.14 Acomb is tightly surrounded by Green Belt, and therefore there are now few opportunities to develop beyond the built-up area of Acomb. There are some brownfield sites that are not within the Green Belt that could come forward for housing.
- 2.15 A detailed study was carried out by Arc 4, of housing needs in Acomb<sup>3</sup>. The findings of that study indicated that there was not a demonstrable housing need in Acomb, but that any policy intervention should be to support more housing for younger families.
- There was a general desire not to see more housing in Acomb, other than small developments within the settlement;
  - A desire to restrict any new housing development in the countryside and Green Belt;
  - Some respondents said there was a need for bungalows/two bedroom houses;
  - Any new housing should be well-designed and reflect the special character of Acomb;
  - The Housing Needs Survey did not identify a strong 'affordable' housing need in Acomb – there is a relatively high proportion of social rented housing stock in the Parish (18.8%);
  - There could be a need for more open market/intermediate housing for lower income households – there are currently no shared ownership or intermediate tenures in Acomb;
  - Acomb house prices are relatively high in comparison with the rest of Northumberland;
  - The provision of a diversity of tenure options is a key policy consideration arising from the housing study – particularly Starter Homes, or housing that could be bought by young families.

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<sup>3</sup> Acomb Housing Needs Assessment (2016)

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**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

**Policy 6: New Housing**

**Objective 5: Local Employment and Business**

**To support existing local businesses to meet their needs and provide a positive environment for new businesses to flourish**

**Economy**

2.16 Acomb has a small industrial estate on its periphery, which houses a number of small businesses. A 'demand study'<sup>4</sup> carried out by Northumberland County Council in 2017 found that there was not a significant demand for more employment land. Two employment sites are protected through the existing Development Plan, and the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to maintain that protection, whilst encouraging the potential for small businesses to grow. A planning policy is proposed to support new local employment opportunities, and support home-working and live-work units. The policy would be aimed at:

- The need to support existing businesses on the allocated employment sites;
- Encourage more small businesses/business hubs.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

**Policy 7: Local Economy**

**Objective 6 - Heritage, Conservation, Buildings and Design**

**Preserve and where possible, enhance the character of our Conservation Area and wider Parish by requiring any new development to be high quality and reflect the principles in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

2.17 The Conservation Area in Acomb was designated in 1991. The adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisal highlights the special significance of the Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings in the Neighbourhood

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<sup>4</sup> Employment Land and Premises Demand Study, ES Group for Northumberland County Council, 2015

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Area, which are protected already through their listed status. Issues that have been considered include:

- The need to increase awareness of the Conservation Area, and make sure that it is taken into account in local decision-making;
- Most of the development likely to come forward in Acomb will be in the Conservation Area due to the low density of housing, and potential conversion schemes that could come forward;
- There are a number of buildings and structures in the Neighbourhood Area that are of historic interest, but are not formally listed, which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, and the character of other parts of the Parish.

2.18 A planning policy is proposed to ensure that all new development in or affecting the setting of Acomb's Conservation Area is carefully designed to preserve or enhance that character. Elsewhere, high quality design is expected. A separate policy seeks to protect heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area that are not currently designated (non-listed heritage assets). These assets are listed in Appendix A.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

- Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area**  
**Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets in Acomb**  
**Policy 10: Design in New Development**

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## 3.0 CHAPTER 3: PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 This section of the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan contains planning policies. These policies have been listed under each objective. Planning policies are highlighted in green boxes for clarity. Beneath each policy is a 'policy explanation', which explains what the policy is trying to achieve, and how it is envisaged that the policy will be implemented. Community Projects are shown in Chapter 5. These community actions will be delivered through the Acomb Community Led Plan by the Action4Acomb (A4A) Constituted Group, endorsed by the Parish Council and involving the local community.

### **OBJECTIVE 1 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

***Objective: We will protect the community facilities we have and promote new community facilities. Our most highly valued outdoor spaces will be designated as Local Green Spaces.***

- 3.2 Policies 1, 2 and 3 seek to deliver Objective 1, by protecting specific green spaces, recreational areas and other community facilities in and adjacent to Acomb Village. Policy 3 identifies community facilities which have been shown to be of particular importance to residents in Acomb, and seeks their retention, and seeks to facilitate the provision of additional community facilities.

#### **Policy 1: Local Green Spaces**

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

**Acomb Tennis Courts and Play Area (G1)**

**The Gaps (G2)**

**Millersfield Play Area (G3)**

**Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk (G4)**

**School Common (G5)**

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*Figure 4: The Gaps - a Local Green Space in Acomb*

Policy Explanation:

- 3.3 The Local Green Spaces identified in Policy 1 are highly valued by the local community and were specifically identified through the consultation process. These spaces are largely valued for recreational purposes (particularly the Playing Field, Tennis Courts and the Millersfield Play Area). The Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk is valued for its recreational value and biodiversity interest. The Gaps provides an important open space within the built-up area, and provide informal recreational space. The Gaps was used at one time for allotments. The School Common is an area which is used by the school for “Forest School” activities. It is Common land and is within the Green Belt.
- 3.4 An audit of these green spaces was carried out in order to ensure that they meet the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. All of the Local Green Spaces identified have either a biodiversity, educational or recreational value or a combination of one or more of these.

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**Policy 2: Acomb Playing Field**

**Acomb Playing Field and Pavilion, as shown on the Policies Map, should not be built on unless:**

- a) it can be demonstrated through a robust assessment that the playing field and pavilion building are surplus to local requirements;**
- b) the loss proposed from any proposed development on the site would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or**
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, including the creation of a new pavilion, the benefits of which can be shown to clearly outweigh the loss of the current use and buildings.**

- 3.5 The Playing Field and Pavilion comprises an important community and recreation space for the village. The Playing Field and Pavilion makes a valuable contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community and comprises a highly-regarded green resource for Acomb Village.

**Policy 3: Community Facilities**

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

- 1. Acomb First School**
- 2. Acomb Hair Salon**
- 3. Acomb Methodist Chapel and Hall**
- 4. Acomb Pavilion**
- 5. Acomb Village Hall**
- 6. Acomb Village Shop and Post Office**
- 7. Fish and Chip Shop**
- 8. Little Oaks Community Nursery**
- 9. Public Houses in Acomb**
- 10. St. John Lee Church and Hall**

**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 the Village, or in another suitable accessible location within the Neighbourhood Area.**

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*Figure 5: Acomb Village Hall - a community facility*

Policy Explanation:

- 3.6 In a rural village like Acomb, community facilities are of vital importance to cohesion and sustainability of the local community. A healthy provision of local services and facilities means that people are less likely to need to travel and means that communities can become more self-sustaining. This is particularly relevant in light of the new development recently approved at Garden House Bank.
- 3.7 The facilities listed in the policy have been identified through rigorous consultation, as being highly valued by the local community. Proposals that involve the change of use or loss of these facilities would have a significant detrimental impact on the sustainability of the Village. Some facilities named will be registered as Assets of Community Value, which will give residents and the Parish Council the opportunity to buy the facility under the Right to Bid legislation introduced through the Localism Act.
- 3.8 Residents also wanted to protect other Community Facilities, such as the play areas, tennis courts, and green spaces that are valued by the local community. These spaces are protected through Policy 1: Local Green Spaces.
- 3.9 The Village Hall and Pavilion are both in need of repair and refurbishment. It may be that the re-development of one of these sites may assist in generating the income to redevelop the other. The Parish Council intends to carry out further consultation to assist them in determining the best way to regenerate the Village Hall and/or Pavilion for the benefit of the local community. Local community engagement will be important in the future plans for these facilities.

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- 3.10 There are four pubs in Acomb – The Mariner’s Hotel near the Caravan Site, The Miner’s Arms, the Queen’s Arms and the Sun Inn.
- 3.11 Acomb First School and Little Oaks nursery are highly valued. There may be proposals in the future to extend the school. Changes to the educational system, increasing population and moves from a three tier to a two-tier system, could result in pressures on the school to expand to accommodate the larger number of pupils. This could also have major implications for the Little Oaks nursery because of the need to relinquish the current space leased from the school. This policy therefore seeks to support any future proposals to expand the school and ensure that Little Oaks can be accommodated appropriately.

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### OBJECTIVE 2 - FLOODING

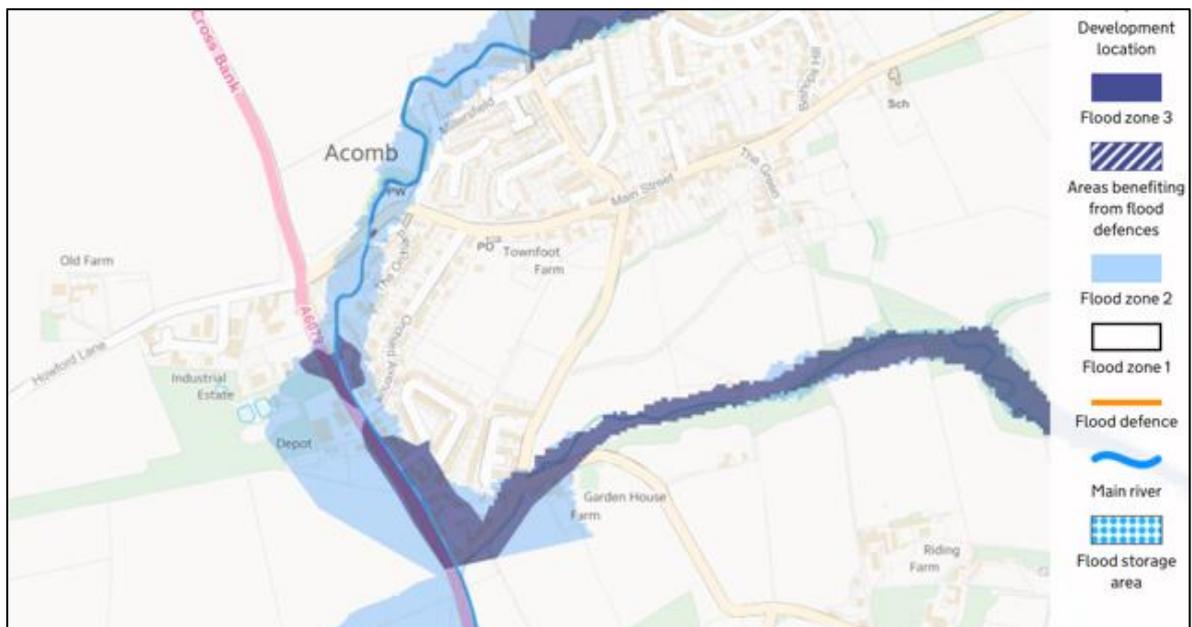
**Objective: We will seek to ensure that the impacts of flooding are reduced in Acomb and support measures to reduce those impacts**

#### **Policy 4: Flooding**

**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.**

**New development must not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere or create a future risk of flooding.**



**Figure 6: Environment Agency Flood Map showing Flood Zones in Acomb**

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Policy Explanation:

- 3.12 The Village of Acomb is recognised by the Environment Agency as one of a number of communities in Northumberland which face challenging flood conditions.
- 3.13 A number of measures have been brought into practice, including the use of volunteer Flood Wardens, Acomb Flood Plan and Citizen Science monitoring projects at the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn which are taking place in collaboration with the Environment Agency.
- 3.14 Northumberland County Council proposes, in its Strategic Infrastructure Strategy, to implement flood alleviation measures for Acomb. This policy seeks to support the provision of infrastructure (where it needs planning permission) for specific flood alleviation measures which are proposed within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.15 There are some brownfield sites within the inset boundary for Acomb that could come forward for housing in the future. Some of these sites lie within Flood zone 2 and potentially partially within Flood zone 3. It is important that any development proposed on these sites does not exacerbate flooding elsewhere, and that it is 'future proofed' to ensure that future occupants are not at risk of flooding.

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*Figure 7: Old Road to Hexham, below St John Lee – January 2016*

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**OBJECTIVE 3 - TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC, WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE-RIDING**

***Objective: We will seek to reduce the negative impact that road traffic has on the Village of Acomb. We will seek to enhance and develop the local network of paths and bridleways.***

**Policy 5: 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 will be supported.**

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



***Figure 8: Woodland Walk (Pit Heaps to Tyne Watersmeet)***

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Policy Explanation:

- 3.16 The issue of traffic speed is a significant one for Acomb, where the main road (A6079) goes through the Village. There are already a number of measures in place to reduce traffic speeds, and Action4Acomb (A4A) continues to work with the Parish Council, the community and the County Council to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the road network. Any further measures which could further improve safety will be supported.
- 3.17 Acomb is served by a network of footpaths and bridleways, enabling non-road users to access Hexham, Wall and other surrounding areas, safely. A large number of residents, in response to consultation, said they would value the improvement of these off-road routes.
- 3.18 There are a number of 'gaps', where linking of footpaths and bridleways would have a positive impact on the local community and make it easier for residents to walk/cycle to Hexham, and neighbouring villages, as well as to access the countryside more easily. In particular, access from the A6079, via the Pit Heaps, to the Woodland Walks and Tyne Watersmeet (and SSSI) should be preserved. Existing Footpaths/Rights of Ways are shown on the Policies Map.

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#### **OBJECTIVE 4 – HOUSING**

*Objective: We will support small-scale housing development within the settlement of Acomb, with a particular emphasis on providing housing that meets identified needs*

#### **Policy 6: New Housing**

Residential development proposals 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;
- f) Incorporate landscaping and boundary treatments that reflect the local area

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**Figure 10: Morrison Terrace, Acomb**

Policy Explanation:

- 3.19 Overall, there was not a strong desire to see more housing in Acomb. Most respondents to surveys felt that any new housing should be for small schemes within the Village. There are limited opportunities in Acomb for this type of development.
- 3.20 The Housing Needs Survey (2017) carried out for Acomb Parish identified a potential shortfall in housing for young families, and market 'affordable' housing (meaning lower cost housing, Starter Homes, or intermediate housing) for lower income families. The survey advocated a policy intervention to seek to increase provision of specifically this type of housing to allow younger families and first-time buyers to stay in Acomb. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support, where appropriate, the provision of smaller, lower cost housing, which will go towards meeting the needs of younger families.
- 3.21 The survey conducted for the Neighbourhood Plan revealed a strong desire for more bungalows, and smaller housing units, such as 2/3 bed houses. Therefore, the local need is for smaller units, lower cost housing and 'Starter Homes' which will help younger people get onto the housing ladder.
- 3.22 How development is integrated into the Village is highly important to residents.

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Policy 6 encourages proposals to be of high quality design and to fit in with properties in the area in terms of their height, scale, massing, materials and design. Proposals should also demonstrate that they do not impact negatively on the amenity of surrounding properties by way of being overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing.

- 3.23 Flooding has already been identified as a significant issue in Acomb. Policy 6 seeks to re-inforce the importance of incorporating SuDS into any scheme to ameliorate run-off and drainage impacts elsewhere.
- 3.24 There are brownfield sites within the settlement boundary where new housing development could take place. These could be a combination of conversion schemes within the settlement, or re-development of brownfield sites (for example the bus depot) near the entrance to the Village.
- 3.25 Any development on the bus depot site, should seek to re-inforce local character by, for example, ensuring that it pays particular attention to the role of that site as a 'gateway' into the Village.

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**OBJECTIVE 5 - LOCAL ECONOMY**

***Objective: To support existing local businesses to meet their needs and provide a positive environment for new businesses to flourish***

**Policy 7: Local Economy**

**Proposals for new business uses and/or the expansion of existing business uses will be supported subject to demonstrating respect for 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, and B8). Small-scale A1 and A3 uses related to existing businesses will also be supported.**

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



***Figure 11: Acomb Industrial Estate (Howford Lane)***

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Policy Explanation:

- 3.26 There is a higher than average number of small businesses in Acomb, due to the protection of the employment sites that were allocated in the Tynedale Local Plan.
- 3.27 The Plan seeks to maintain these allocations and keep this area available for business and employment uses. These businesses not only contribute to the local economy but also, in some cases, provide services (for example, the Tandoori, and Ridley's Fish and Game).
- 3.28 The policy proposes to restrict the use of the employment site to B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage) uses. However, some of the businesses may require some small-scale A1 use (Retail) or even A3 use (Café) if it is related to their business. It is considered that to enable these local businesses to thrive, and to provide a service to the local community, these businesses should have the flexibility to expand their businesses by providing such a service should they wish to. For example, the Fish and Game shop sells from the site, as do a number of other businesses on the industrial estate. This policy will allow the flexibility for this to continue, and to apply to other businesses should they wish to diversify.
- 3.29 Policy 7 seeks to maintain and enhance these facilities by giving support to development proposals within the employment designated areas and also to home-working proposals where planning permission is required, provided these do not change the character of the area in which they are sited.

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#### **OBJECTIVE 6 - DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE ASSETS**

*Objective: Preserve and where possible, enhance the character of our Conservation Area and wider Parish by requiring any new development to be high quality and reflect the principles in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal*

#### **Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area**

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

Proposals in the Conservation Area and its setting should have regard to:

- a) The aim of making 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) the use of appropriate materials for Acomb including 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 including sandstone walls and/or hedgerows;
  - vi) The retention of existing boundary walls
- b) Reinforce 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;
- c) Take account of the rural nature and low density of the Conservation Area and its setting, including views into and out of the Conservation Area; and
- d) Have regard to the setting of Listed Buildings and their group value.

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*Figure 12: Traditional buildings in Acomb Conservation Area*

Policy Explanation:

- 3.30 The Acomb Conservation Area boundary is shown on the Policies Map. A detailed Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal (ACACA) identifies some of the key and most significant elements of the Conservation Area.
- 3.31 The NPPF requires that in determining planning applications, local authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 3.32 This policy seeks to ensure that the significant features that are identified in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal are incorporated into decision-making in development proposals in the Conservation Area in order to avoid harm to this heritage asset.
- 3.33 The Statement of special significance contained within the ACACA summarises some of the key aspects of the Conservation Area. It outlines key features of significance which should inform how proposals have regard to this policy:
- The rural topography of Acomb, including the slopes, punctuated by a range of compact and intimate groups of houses and old farms lodged in hollows, long and staggered lines of buildings disappearing around bends in the road, indented building lines, changes in height of rooflines, all introduce variety and suggest

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- low density development across much of the Parish;
- The Main Street, which frames distant views of surrounding countryside to the west;
  - The Village is fringed by countryside which dominates some views and can be seen as discrete and intriguing glimpses through gaps between buildings. These views reinforce Acomb's rural context and enhance its visual character;
  - Gardens and traditional stone boundary walls add to the Village landscape;
  - A traditional skyline of dual pitched roofs topped by chimney stacks and pots;
  - The historic core of the Village (with a range of listed buildings and eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings) with the Green (Pant) at the top of the slope forming a natural focal point;
  - Predominant building material of local light buff/cream coloured sandstone, welsh slate, and timber painted windows. Occasional contrast of red bricks and flat applications of render;
  - Key buildings are identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal which provide historic anchor points, visual focus, aesthetic quality and influential examples of local building type. Specifically, the country houses of Acomb House, Acomb High House, as well as Chare Head, Town Head and Fold cottage, with their associated buildings, are of significance.
- 3.34 High quality design which contributes to local character does not necessarily mean that it has to be 'traditional', or replicate design in the immediate area. Modern design proposals, particularly those incorporating sustainable design principles, can still contribute to local character.
- 3.35 Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area (all Grade II) are:
- Acomb House and Stable Block including gate piers and garden walls to east;
  - Acomb High House;
  - Fold Cottage (group listing including Hydrant, Cart shed (and attached wall to east), and Barn, all associated with Fold Cottage);
  - Green (Pant) with adjacent hydrant;
  - Barn 40m north of Chare Head Farmhouse;
  - Tynevale House;
  - Middle Farmhouse;
  - North View, Main Street;
  - The Barracks, Main Street.
- 3.36 There are a number of other Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Area. In Acomb, Listed Buildings outside the Conservation Area are the Methodist Church and Garden House and cottage.
- 3.37 St. John Lee, which is a separate hamlet in the Neighbourhood Area, has Listed Buildings (including listed tombstones), as does the Riding and associated buildings. Acomb Mill is also a Listed Building.

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- 3.38 The Hermitage, in the south of the Neighbourhood Area is a Grade II\* Listed Building, and various buildings and structures associated with the Hermitage are also Listed Buildings.

#### **Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets**

**Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets should be sensitively designed having regard to the significance of the heritage asset including, where relevant, its archaeological, historic and/or architectural interest and its setting.**

#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.39 Acomb Parish has a rich heritage, based largely but not exclusively, on agriculture and mining (coal, lead and the rare mineral witherite). The public consultation carried out in April 2017 demonstrated how much local residents wanted to preserve and enhance the features of particular historic interest in their community. The Parish has 49 Grade II Listed Buildings, of which only 14 lie in the Conservation Area, although all structures within the Conservation Area do have additional protection. This suggests that there is quite a lot of heritage interest outside the Conservation Area and beyond Grade II Listed Buildings.



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*Figure 13: The White House - A potential non-designated heritage asset*

- 3.40 The NPPF states that a heritage asset is: “a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in considering planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”. Interest can be historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic, while significance can be because of rarity, representativeness, aesthetic appeal, integrity or association.
- 3.41 The Parish Council is committed to supporting the assessment and definition of a list of non-designated heritage assets in the Parish.

#### **POLICY 10: Design in New Development**

**All new development in the Neighbourhood Area must comprise high quality design. Where relevant and material, a proposal for development should demonstrate how it:**

- a) Has been informed by local character, context, and site topography; 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.**

#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.42 Design was considered by residents to be important in the whole Parish, not just in the Conservation Area. This policy seeks to ensure that any new development seeks to deliver high quality design, and particularly seeks to support proposals that reflect and respect local vernacular, materials and detailing. Acomb has a historic problem with flooding, and the policy seeks to ensure that, where relevant, development incorporates design measures to reduce the impacts of

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flooding where possible, through the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

- 3.43 Acomb is a short distance from the Dark Sky Park, and the policy seeks to support that designation by limiting impacts of light pollution in new development.
- 3.44 Amenity of neighbouring properties is always an important consideration in any development proposal. Policy 10 seeks to ensure that schemes minimise, wherever possible, impacts on surrounding properties, and do not result in unacceptable impacts on amenity.

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## 4.0 CHAPTER 4: MONITORING AND REVIEW

4.1 Policies in the Plan will be monitored annually by the Parish Council to determine their performance and relevance and to review whether or not objectives are being met. The results of the monitoring process will determine where policy review and change are needed.

4.2 Key tasks are:

- Review progress on a regular basis (annually)
- Assess the extent to which policies are being implemented
- Determine why policies are not being implemented and set out steps to be taken to ensure policies are implemented as intended or whether any need to be amended or replaced
- Identify whether policies need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended
- Identify whether policies need changing to reflect changes in national and local planning policy

4.3 A trigger for review may be when the Northumberland Local Plan is produced. At this point, it may be necessary to review policies in the Neighbourhood Plan for compatibility with any new proposals in the Local Plan and identify whether additional policies may be needed.

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## 5.0 CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Acomb's Community Led 5 Year Plan – 2015 to 2020 (published August 2016), contains the findings from the Parish Questionnaire, distributed and collected (56% response) from all Parish households in November 2014. Many of the findings of this questionnaire formed the basis from which the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives were developed. In addition, numerous public engagement events added weight to supporting and verifying what residents valued and wanted for Acomb. The Community Led Plan is very different in scope from the Neighbourhood Plan, covering a range of social, environmental and economic issues over a shorter time frame.

Three themed areas emerged from the 2014 Parish Questionnaire findings which can be viewed within the Community Led Plan:

- **Protect and Sustain**
- **Improve and Renew**
- **Support and Co-operate**

Each section highlights the significant areas with action plans, many of which have been achieved or are being progressed. These are reviewed annually in partnership with Acomb Parish Council.

It is important to understand the difference between community actions identified in the Community Led Plan and those Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is a Statutory Document relating solely to land-use and is part of the Local Planning Policy framework. However, it is equally important to recognise that they both have a significant impact on Acomb's future.

All households have received a hard copy of Acomb's Community Led Plan. It can also be viewed on A4A's website [www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk) along with the full data findings.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Steering Group:

Mr Norman Robson, Acomb Parish Council, Chair of Steering Group  
Mr Charles Enderby, Chair of Acomb Parish Council, Steering Group Member  
Mrs Lorna Farr, Acomb Parish Council, Steering Group Member, A4A  
Mrs Rachel Gagliano, Acomb Parish Council, Steering Group Member, A4A  
Mr Bill Grigg, Clerk to Acomb Parish Council  
Ms Matilda Bevan, Local Resident, Steering Group Member  
Mrs Jane Wrigley, Stakeholder, Vice-Chair of Steering Group  
Councillor Trevor Cessford

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Mr Neil McKie, Robson Print  
Mr Peter Rodger, Web Manager and IT Consultant  
Mrs Jenny Ludman, Ludman Planning, Planning Consultant  
Present and past members of the Steering Group

and

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**APPENDIX A: Ecological Information**

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**ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION**

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**Designated Sites and Priority Habitats in the Acomb Neighbourhood Area**

**1. Internationally Designated Sites**

- 1.1 The nearest European sites to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary are:
- 1.6km west from Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC
  - 5.8km south west North Pennine Moors SAC
  - 5.8km south west North Pennines Moor SPA
  - 10.6km west from Border Mires Kielder-Butterburn SAC
  - 10.7km west from Roman Wall Loughs
- 1.2 The Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC lies 1.6km west from the site boundary. The Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC is complex, in that maintenance of the Calaminarian grassland plant communities that form the interest features of these sites is dependent on the ongoing deposition of heavy metals such as lead and zinc, which are washed out of historic mine workings upstream of these sites. Therefore, policies and projects within the neighbourhood plan are unlikely to affect this site.
- 1.3 The North Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and North Pennine Moors Special Protection Area lies 5.8km south west of the Neighbourhood Area at its nearest point. These sites are designated for a breeding bird assemblage and upland habitats including species rich grasslands. This is just within the 6km zone of influence for upland sites. There are no policies or projects within the Neighbourhood Plan which will affect the interest features of those sites by increasing disturbance to those areas.
- 1.4 The other sites are well beyond the 6 to 10km zone of influence for activities that could cause recreational disturbance, and there are no other adverse effects arising from development of this nature that could cause a significant effect over these distances.
- 1.5 A Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan concludes no likely significant effect on internationally designated sites.

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#### 2. Nationally Designated Sites

- 2.1 Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest fall within the boundaries of the Parish and Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.2 **Fallowfield Mine SSSI.** Geological SSSI Fallowfield Mine is one of the two world type localities of the very rare double carbonate mineral alstonite. While the other type locality (Brownley Hill Mine, near Alston) no longer yields the mineral, specimens can still be found from dumps at Fallowfield, even though these are now largely overgrown and planted with trees.
- 2.3 **Tyne Watersmeet SSSI** is located at the confluence of the rivers North and South Tyne, is an area of diverse habitats of particular interest for its invertebrate fauna, being regarded as one of the best sites in north east England for ground beetles. The varied flora also includes some uncommon plants. The woodlands include types dominated by native species; oak *Quercus* sp., birch *Betula* sp. and wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, and others with introduced species including beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, horse-chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, grey poplar *Populus canescens* and riverside willow *Salix* spp. and alder *Alnus glutinosus* communities. The ground-flora includes the locally rare yellow star-of Bethlehem *Gagea lutea* and clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata* as well as many characteristic woodland species including dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, wood melick *Melica uniflora*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica* which are locally dominant.
- 2.4 A periodically flooded riverside rock outcrop supports an unusual ground flora assemblage beneath a variety of willow shrubs which includes dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, globeflower *Trollius europaeus* and wild basil *Clinopodium vulgare*. An abandoned river terrace supports a short turf of plants, typical of river deposits contaminated by heavy metals, with spring sandwort *Minuartia verna*, thrift *Armeria maritima* and meadow oat-grass *Avenula pratensis*.
- 2.5 The most significant invertebrate records are for the variety of specialised beetles and uncommon species of flies and moths. Of particular note is the community of beetles adapted to life on the alluvium and unstable sand river banks, these include several ground beetles; *Bembidion testaceum*, *B. monticola*, *Dromius notatus*, *.melanocephalus* and a dung beetle, *Aegialia sabuleti*. Another insect-

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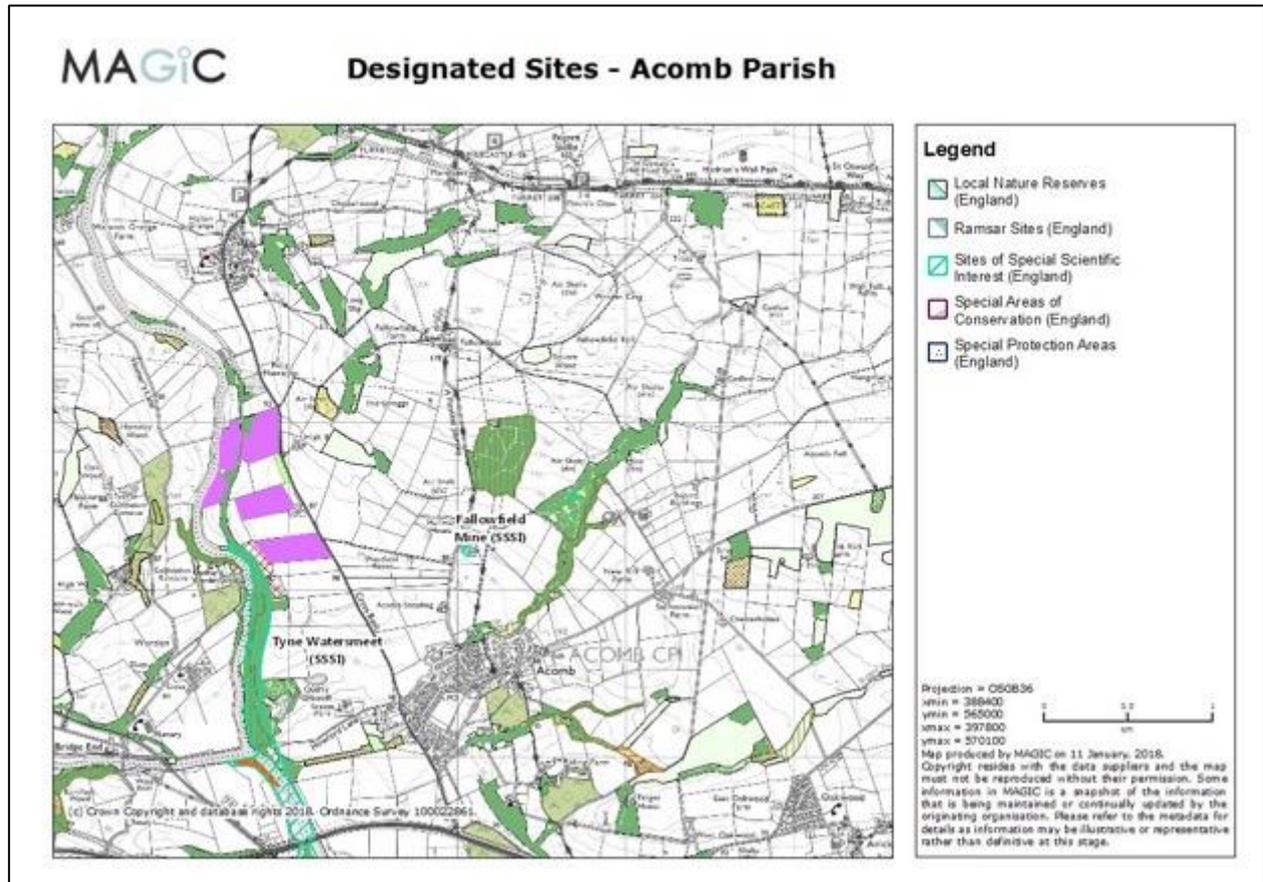
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rich habitat is the grey poplar woodland where two weevils, *Dorytomus tremula*, a nationally rare species and *D. tortrix* are found along with caterpillars of the sprawler moth *Brachiongelia sphinx*. Two hoverflies *Cheilosia antiqua* and *C. impressa*, both unusual in the north are found in herb-rich grassland. Other rare species include *Tropiphorus obtusus* a large weevil which feeds on dog's mercury and two ground beetles, *Pterostichus cristatus* which is characteristic of mixed woodland with its main centre of distribution in North East England, and *Lebia chlorocephala*, usually a coastal species in the north, the larvae of which are parasitic on *Chrysolina polita* a leaf beetle.

### 3. Priority Habitats

- 3.1 UK BAP priority species and habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', published in July 2012, has succeeded the UK BAP. The UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- 3.2 Ancient Woodland is still present within the Neighbourhood Area at East Wood, Broom Park Wood Acomb Dene and along the Birkey Burn.
- 3.3 Woodland and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat is present to the south of Acomb House and to the south of Riding Farm.
- 3.4 Designated Sites and priority habitats are shown below. Areas of ancient woodland are shown as green with brown diagonal lines. Parkland is light green.

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#### Glossary of Terms

**Action4Acomb:** a local constituted Community Group established in 2013 with the prime purpose to develop and implement a Community Led 5 Year Plan, 2015-2020.

**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.

**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.

**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 meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings and places of worship. A list of community facilities is identified.

**Community Led Plan:** A working document with a clear action plan for the community of Acomb to work together with its Partners (Parish Council, County Council, Environment Agency, Voluntary Organisations and others) to achieve real change to benefit Acomb residents.

**Core Strategy:** A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area.

**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.

**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.

**Green Belt:** A land designation with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in the NPPF are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and assist in urban regeneration, be encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. The whole

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Neighbourhood Area is in the Green Belt, apart from those areas 'inset' within the Green Belt [see definition of 'inset']

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

**Inset:** A term used to describe a town or village that is surrounded by the Green Belt but is not itself covered (or 'washed over') by the Green Belt designation. This means that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within the settlement concerned in the area defined by the inset boundary.

**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 form part of the statutory Development Plan setting out planning policies to be used in the determination of planning applications in a defined local area, normally the administrative area of a Local Planning Authority.

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

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** The Government's land-use planning policies for England.

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):** The Government's guidance on land-use planning matters.

**Neighbourhood Development Plan:** A plan which forms part of the statutory Development Plan setting out local planning policies that have been prepared by a parish council.

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

**Previously Developed Land (PDL) or Brownfield Land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

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**Setting:** 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.

**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.

**Sustainable development:** Defined by the World Commission of on Environment and Development in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Also defined in the NPPF states in paragraph 7 that 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.