

# EMBLETON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## BACKGROUND HOUSING EVIDENCE PAPER

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides consolidated background information to give context to policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan on housing, affordable housing, a proposed policy on principal occupancy restrictions on all new housing development in the Neighbourhood Area, and the policy of drawing tight settlement boundaries around Embleton village and Christon Bank.

## 2.0 Strategic context for housing

- 2.1 Planning Practice Guidance provides advice on the strategic context for housing in neighbourhood plans. It states, in Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20160211:

*'The Neighbourhood Plan must provide at least as much housing as is required to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in the Neighbourhood Area.*

*Neighbourhood plans, when brought into force, become part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area. They can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan.*

*A draft neighbourhood plan or Order must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force if it is to meet the basic condition. Although a draft neighbourhood plan or Order is not tested against the policies in an emerging Local Plan the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process is likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. For example, up-to-date housing needs evidence is relevant to the question of whether a housing supply policy in a neighbourhood plan or Order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.*

*Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date Local Plan is in place the qualifying body and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in:*

- *the emerging neighbourhood plan.*
- *the emerging Local Plan.*
- *the adopted development plan with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.*

*The local planning authority should take a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination.*

*The local planning authority should work with the qualifying body to produce complementary neighbourhood and Local Plans. It is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in the emerging Local Plan, including housing supply policies. This is because section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the conflict must be resolved by the decision maker favouring the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan. Neighbourhood plans should consider providing indicative delivery timetables and allocating reserve sites to ensure that emerging evidence of housing need is addressed. This can help minimise potential conflicts and ensure that policies in the neighbourhood plan are not overridden by a new Local Plan.'*

- 2.2 More recently Planning Practice Guidance now requires Neighbourhood Plans to meet their housing requirement in full, where they are proposing to allocate land for housing. It states in Paragraph: 097 Reference ID: 41-097-20180913

*'In order for a neighbourhood plan to meet the criteria set in paragraph 14b of the Framework, the 'policies and allocations' in the plan should meet the identified housing requirement in full, whether it is derived from the standard methodology for local housing need, the housing figure in the area's strategic policies, an indicative figure provided by the local authority, or where it has exceptionally been determined by the neighbourhood planning body. For example, a neighbourhood housing requirement of 50 units could be met through 2 sites allocated for 20 housing units and a policy for a windfall allowance of 10 units. However, a policy on a windfall allowance alone would not be sufficient.*

*Allocations are sites clearly outlined with a site boundary on a policies map with accompanying site allocation policies in the plan setting out, as a minimum, the proposed land use and the quantum of development appropriate for the site. Policies and allocations within other development plan documents, for example strategic site allocations or windfall development set out in a strategic or local plan, will not meet criterion 14b of the Framework. Housing requirement figures set for designated neighbourhood areas should reflect any relevant allocations already set within the strategic policies.*

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- 2.3 Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to allocate sites for housing, it is proposing to define settlement boundaries, and, for these to be robust, they must deliver 'sustainable development' and ensure that they include enough land to deliver the objectively assessed need for housing.

### **3.0 Housing provision over the Plan period**

- 3.1 Northumberland County Council has assessed the housing need for the County, and published figures for the required housing delivery for each designated Neighbourhood Area. The figure for Embleton Neighbourhood Area is 65 dwellings, to be delivered between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2032 (i.e., over the emerging Northumberland Local Plan period).
- 3.2 This figure applies to all dwellings that are completed, or approved, since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.
- 3.3 The table below shows the number of completions and approvals that have taken place since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Although a number of approvals may have been given prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, research shows that other submissions on the same sites (for example, discharge of conditions applications, minor amendments, etc.,) means that the delivery of the dwellings is within the Plan period.

**Table 1: List of planning application references and numbers of units approved or completed since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016**

Planning reference	No. of units	Site
12/03620/FUL	1	Land east of Fallodon Cottage (DISCON submitted in 2016)
16/00876/FUL	38	Creighton Place development, Embleton inc. 6 affordable homes
17/04459/FUL	1	4 Horsley Place, Christon Bank
17/03461/FUL	1	16 Springfield View, Christon Bank
17/01767/CLEXIS	1	The Croft East Farm, Embleton (one dwelling to 2)
17/00213/FUL	1	8 Creighton Place – 1.5 storey 4 bed house
15/03626/FUL	4	Land North East of Wesley Way, Christon Bank (permitted 22/7/2016)
18/00687/FUL	3	(substitution of plots not yet built) Springfield, Christon Bank
16/00369/DISCON	1	From previous approval – 15/03288/REM
16/03510/FUL	13	Land North of Horsley Place, Christon Bank inc. 2 affordable homes.
18/02583/FUL	16	Land North of Woodsteads (Creighton Place), Embleton inc.4 affordable homes
<b>Total</b>	<b>80 units approved/completed since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016</b>	

3.4 The information contained in Table 1 shows that the Neighbourhood Area has delivered well above the total number of houses required for the Plan period. It is therefore justifiable that a relatively stringent approach has been taken to ensuring settlement boundaries are relatively tightly drawn around both the settlements of Embleton village and Christon Bank, and that no further sites are allocated for housing in the Neighbourhood Area.

#### **4.0 Evidence available for other areas of housing policy in the Neighbourhood Plan**

##### ***Affordable Housing and Rural Exceptions Sites***

4.1 A detailed report was commissioned by the Embleton Parish Council to assess the affordable housing need in the Neighbourhood Area. This report was conducted by Community Action Northumberland (CAN) and forms part of the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan and is included in the submission documents.

4.2 The conclusions of that report were that there is not a significant identified need for affordable housing locally. However, it is possible that a number of people who may have wished to remain living in the area may have left due to not being able to afford a house and would therefore not have responded to the survey. The report concluded that there was an identified need for housing in 11 households in the Neighbourhood Area. Of these, half were owner-occupiers

looking to downsize. This means a maximum of 5 new households were identified as being potentially in need of affordable housing.

- 4.3 It is worth noting here that there has been a recent social housing development managed by Homes for Northumberland and completed on land adjacent to the quarry, provides 16 affordable homes and apartments. In addition, 6 dwellings in the recent Creighton Place development were sold at discount market value (i.e. ‘affordable’ in planning terms).
- 4.4 Any identified need for additional affordable housing could be met through a small affordable housing development, which could be delivered as a rural exceptions site (as defined in the NPPF), potentially outside the settlement boundary of either settlement, or through a Community Led Housing Scheme.
- 4.5 A rural exceptions site is defined in the NPPF (July 2018) as a small site to deliver an identified local need. The Housing Needs Assessment for Embleton Parish has identified a small affordable housing need and would be appropriate evidence to use to justify the delivery of a rural exceptions site for housing.
- 4.6 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to support such a development but does not go further to seek to provide a specific site for affordable housing.

### ***Principal Residence Policy***

- 4.7 When consulted at the initial stages of the Plan, many residents said that they would like to see more permanent residents living in the area, and less holiday homes and second homes.
- 4.8 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore proposes a specific policy to ensure that all future development in the Neighbourhood Area is for principal residence only. This is because there is evidence of a high level of second homes and holiday homes in the Neighbourhood Area, and particularly within Embleton village (Christon Bank less so).
- 4.9 The census (2011) identifies just under 27% of houses within the Parish of Embleton as being empty. Local surveys have since identified at least 32% of houses as being second homes or holiday homes.
- 4.10 The recent development at Creighton Place of 33 dwellings (plus six discount market value dwellings) is at least 40% holiday/second homes. This gives a clear idea of the pressure that the Neighbourhood Area is under for second and holiday homes.
- 4.11 The emerging Northumberland Local Plan is proposing a planning policy to restrict all development to Principal Occupancy only in those areas that can demonstrate in excess of 20% holiday homes/second homes in their area. Embleton Parish is well in excess of this figure.
- 4.12 A report has been produced by Northumberland County Council to provide evidence for the policy approach proposed in the Local Plan, and this evidence base report also provides useful evidence for the Embleton Neighbourhood Plan. The report can be accessed here:  
<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/Technical%20Papers%20for%20Housing/NCC-Second-and-Holiday-HomesTechnical-Paper.pdf>
- 4.13 The conclusion of the report is that the data from the Census is robust enough to justify the policy approach proposed, and based on other successful Neighbourhood Plans (St. Ives, North Northumberland Coast, and now a number of others) it is considered a proportionate approach to take.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

5.1 This report provides evidence for policies proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan to provide relatively tight settlement boundaries, support rural exceptions sites and affordable housing, and have a policy to restrict all new dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area to Principal Occupancy only. It is considered that these policy approaches are justified, and there is robust evidence to demonstrate that the policy approach is proportionate to the local context.