



County Durham Core Evidence Base

Technical Paper No. 6

Settlements and Green Belt



Making a difference where you live

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SECTION 1

1. Introduction

- 1.1 From the 1st April 2009 a new unitary Council replaced the existing County Council and all of the seven District Councils in County Durham. In preparation for this, the Development Plans function has been subject to early integration and has started work on a new Local Development Framework (LDF) for the whole of County Durham.
- 1.2 The Local Development Framework is a key document for the new Council. It provides the planning framework embodied in spatial documents that is required to deliver local priorities as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy through facilitating and delivering development. There is therefore a requirement to draw the two processes together. It will also be based on the requirements set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy and on the Council's own ambitions to address the key issues of climate change and regeneration.
- 1.3 The policies and proposals will need to be based on accurate and tested evidence and needs assessment. The evidence needs to include the Economic Assessment of the County, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, aligning with the principles set out in Transforming Places. The Local Development Framework will provide the planning framework to deliver the County's vision for economic prosperity and improved quality of life. The key to this will be the Economic Strategy, the Local Transport Plan and other County based plans and strategies including the growth point areas.
- 1.4 Durham County Council's Cabinet, on 20th November 2008, approved the programme timetable for the LDF, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) – called "What we're doing and when". The LDS sets out three immediate priorities:
 - The Core Strategy** - contains the overarching strategy for future development of the County, including minerals and waste up to 2026.
 - The Growth Point Area Action Plans** - will be separate but co-ordinated Area Action Plans covering Central and Eastern Bishop Auckland, Peterlee and Spennymoor.
 - **Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document** – will provide guidance on how new development should be designed and constructed.
- 1.5 Further Local Development Documents will be produced when the time and resources are available and others may be produced if it becomes clear that they are required. These are listed below:
 - Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan

- Site Allocations Development Plan Document
- The Stanley Town Centre Area Action Plan
- Newton Aycliffe Area Action Plan
- The Durham City Centre Area Action Plan
- The Barnard Castle Town Centre Area Action Plan
- The Chester-le-Street Area Action Plan
- The Consett Town Centre Area Action Plan
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- CIL/Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document
- Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document

1.6 Purpose of Technical Paper

In developing the LDF, a number of Technical Papers, including this one, are intended to provide context to the policy approach to be adopted. They will provide a summary of baseline information to inform the scope of issues to be addressed. There are no specific papers for Climate Change or Regeneration as these key issues are “golden threads” running through all the others.

1.7 The papers are:

- No. 1: Housing
- No. 2: Tourism
- No. 3: Design and Local Distinctiveness
- No. 4: Heritage and Archaeology
- No. 5: Open Space, Recreation, Leisure and Play
- No. 6: Settlements & Green Belt
- No. 7: Community & Cultural Facilities
- No. 8: Diversity
- No. 9: Retail & Town Centres
- No. 10: Water
- No. 11: Community Involvement
- No. 12: Bio and Geodiversity
- No. 13: Energy Efficiency
- No. 14: Contamination and Pollution
- No. 15: Delivery & Infrastructure
- No. 16: Employment, Education & Skills
- No. 17: Deprivation (inc. Health, Community Safety, Neighbourhood Quality, Income, Crime & Disorder)
- No. 18: Rural Dimension (Rural Proofing)
- No. 19: Waste
- No. 20: Minerals
- No. 21: Transport and Accessibility
- No. 22: Landscape
- No. 23: Population and Demographics

Executive Summary

- 1.8 National and regional planning policy both seek to encourage sustainable communities and to direct new development to locations with access to a range of facilities and to means of transport other than the car. The use of a settlement hierarchy in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of development is also encouraged.
- 1.9 The delivery strategy for the County Durham Core Strategy must be sustainable and deliverable. It will focus on identifying sustainable locations for the future development of homes and jobs in the County and ensuring that targets for such provision set out in RSS are met. The delivery strategy will need to identify the most suitable locations for future development such as housing, retail and employment provision and the means by which it will be delivered.
- 1.10 In order to make the Core Strategy locally distinctive for County Durham and its constituent areas it is likely that sub-areas with similar characteristics will need to be identified. These will be used to target policies to particular areas. It may be that the areas may be different depending on the policy being applied.
- 1.11 A settlement hierarchy is a way of arranging settlements into a hierarchy based upon their population and level of services. It can then be used as a means of apportioning development in a sustainable way. Some of the Local Plans in County Durham used a simplified form of hierarchy to allocate sites and control windfall development, however a more sophisticated approach is likely to be required in the new Core Strategy.
- 1.12 In order to assess the existing facilities of settlements in County Durham and their capacity to accommodate future development an audit is required. The audit will then help identify options for a settlement hierarchy that will be included in the Core Strategy Issues and Options. An early decision is required on the scope of the audit and which settlements should be included within it.
- 1.13 The Green Belt in the north of the County and around Durham City prevents settlements from merging into one another, assists in safeguarding the countryside and helps preserve the setting and special character of the historic Durham City. Although the boundary of the Green Belt in most of the County was defined only recently, some consideration should be given to whether there are any exceptional circumstances to warrant an early review of the boundary. Consideration also needs to be given to the most appropriate options for the definition of the Green Belt boundary to the north of Consett and Stanley.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

National Context

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

- 2.1 **Paragraph 5** of PPS 1 states that ‘planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:
- making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people’s quality of life;
 - contributing to sustainable economic development;
 - protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;
 - ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources.’
- 2.2 One of the Government’s objectives for the planning system included in PPS1 seeks to ensure that ‘development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community’.
- 2.3 **Paragraph 27** of PPS1 states that ‘in preparing development plans, planning authorities should seek to:
- bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, for industrial development, for the exploitation of raw materials such as minerals, for retail and commercial development, and for leisure and recreation – taking into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs, the provision of essential infrastructure, including for sustainable waste management, and the need to avoid flood risk and other natural hazards;
 - focus developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development; and
 - reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport provision to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development. Planning should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges.’
- 2.4 **Paragraph 32** identifies that it is the spatial planning approach which provides the framework for delivering sustainable development and states that ‘in preparing spatial plans, planning authorities should:

- set a clear vision for the future pattern of development, with clear objectives for achieving that vision and strategies for delivery and implementation. Planning should lead and focus on outcomes. Plan policies must be set out clearly, with indicators against which progress can be measured. Plans should guide patterns of development and seek to manage changes to the areas they cover.'

Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1

- 2.5 A key planning objective of the Climate Change Supplement is to deliver sustainable development. As a result planning bodies and all planning authorities should 'prepare, and manage the delivery of, spatial strategies that deliver patterns of urban growth and sustainable rural developments that help secure the fullest possible use of sustainable transport for moving freight, public transport, cycling and walking; and, which overall, reduce the need to travel, especially by car'.
- 2.6 **Paragraph 23** states that in deciding which areas and sites are suitable, and for what type and intensity of development, planning authorities should take into account:
- whether there is, or the potential for, a realistic choice of access by means other than the private car and for opportunities to service the site through sustainable transport; and
 - the ability to build and sustain socially cohesive communities with appropriate community infrastructure, having regard to the full range of local impacts that could arise as a result of likely changes to the climate;

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

- 2.7 **Paragraph 10** of PPS3 states that the planning system should deliver housing development in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.
- 2.8 **Paragraph 36** states that 'in support of its objective of creating mixed and sustainable communities, the Government's policy is to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. This should be achieved by making effective use of land, existing infrastructure and available public and private investment, and include consideration of the opportunity for housing provision on surplus public sector land (including land owned by Central Government and its bodies or Local Authorities) to create mixed use developments. The

priority for development should be previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings.

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- 2.9 The Government's objectives for rural areas are:
- (i) To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas.
 - (ii) To promote more sustainable patterns of development by:
 - focusing most development in, or next to, existing towns and villages;
 - preventing urban sprawl;
 - discouraging the development of 'greenfield' land, and, where such land must be used, ensuring it is not used wastefully;
- 2.10 **Paragraph 2** of PPS7 states that 'planning policies in Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas'. This should include policies to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages (including through the provision of affordable housing) and for strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment.
- 2.11 **Paragraph 3** then directs that 'away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling. These centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development'.
- 2.12 In paragraph 4 planning authorities are encouraged to 'set out in LDDs, policies for allowing some limited development in, or next to, rural settlements that are not designated as local service centres, in order to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these communities'.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport

- 2.13 The Government's objectives in PPG13 are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to:
- promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;

- promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and
 - reduce the need to travel, especially by car.
- 2.14 In order to deliver these objectives the guidance directs local authorities, when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, to:
- actively manage the pattern of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport, and focus major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges;
 - accommodate housing principally within existing urban areas, planning for increased intensity of development for both housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
 - ensure that development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offers a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking, and cycling, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
 - in rural areas, locate most development for housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and services in local service centres which are designated in the development plan to act as focal points for housing, transport and other services, and encourage better transport provision in the countryside;

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2)

- 2.15 PPG2 was published in 1995 and states that ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. Green Belts can shape patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use. They can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development’.
- 2.16 The five purposes of Green Belts listed in PPG2 are:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.17 PPG2 advises that Green Belts are established through development plans. At that time Structure Plans provided the strategic policy context for

planning at local level. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 effectively replaced Structure Plans with Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF). The strategic policy context for Green Belts is therefore now included in RSS.

Regional Context

Northern Way

- 2.18 Following the publication of the Sustainable Communities Plan, in February 2004, the Deputy Prime Minister invited the three northern Regional Development Agencies to prepare a Northern Way Growth Strategy setting out how the North could unlock the potential for faster economic growth and bridge the £29 billion output gap between the North and the rest of the UK
- 2.19 The Northern Way focuses on eight city-regions as key to the economic re-birth of the North and narrowing the output gap. Within the North East the Northern Way identified two city regions based around the Tees Valley and Tyne & Wear conurbations. The Northern Way concluded that the city regions are economically central to the future of a wide area, not just the city centres at their core. They have a mutually inter-dependent relationship with the hinterland around them. The Tyne & Wear City Region encompasses the northern part of County Durham including Durham City whilst Tee Valley City Region includes the south of County Durham including parts of Teesdale and Weardale. The city region concept is integral to both the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Regional Spatial Strategy

- 2.20 **Policy 2** of the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) states that ‘planning proposals and Local Development Frameworks should support sustainable development and construction through the delivery of environmental, social and economic objectives including:
- ensuring good accessibility for all to jobs, facilities, goods and services in the Region particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; and
 - reducing the need to travel by private car’.
- 2.21 **Policy 4** states that ‘Local Development Frameworks should adopt a sequential approach to the identification of land for development to give priority to previously developed land and buildings in the most sustainable locations’ using the following sequence:
- Suitable previously-developed sites and buildings within urban areas, particularly around public transport nodes;

- Other suitable locations within urban areas not identified as land to be protected for nature or heritage conservation or recreational purposes;
- Suitable sites in locations adjoining urban areas, particularly those that involve the use of previously-developed land and buildings; and
- Suitable sites in settlements outside urban areas, particularly those that involve the use of previously-developed land and buildings.

2.22 For the purposes of this policy, urban areas are defined as the Conurbations, Main Settlements, Regeneration Towns and Rural Service Centres, as defined in this RSS, and Secondary Settlements identified in Local Development Frameworks as providing a significant opportunity in terms of previously developed land and buildings. All sites should be in locations that are, or will be, well related to homes, jobs and services by all modes of transport, particularly public transport, walking and cycling.

Locational Strategy

2.23 **Paragraph 2.30** of RSS recognises the complexity of the settlement pattern in the North East and accepts that a simple hierarchy of settlements is not an appropriate model for the area, which exhibits a polycentric settlement pattern based on two city-regions. A polycentric settlement pattern is one with many centres or nodes, albeit with different characteristics and scales, rather than one key centre dominating everywhere, where their functions are interconnected.

2.24 **Paragraph 2.52** identifies the ‘Other Regeneration Areas’, which comprise the Rural Coalfields Regeneration Area in South East Northumberland; South East Northumberland North Tyneside Regeneration Initiative (SENNTRI); Durham Coalfield Communities Area; and the East Cleveland Regeneration Area.

2.25 **Paragraph 2.53** lists the towns identified in policies within this RSS, which lie within the ‘Other Regeneration Areas’ as (those in County Durham are in bold):

Amble	Houghton-le-Spring
Ashington	Loftus
Bishop Auckland	Newton Aycliffe
Blyth	Peterlee
Brotton	Saltburn
Chester-le-Street	Seaham
Consett	Shildon
Cramlington	Skelton
Crook	Spennymoor
Hetton-le-Hole	Stanley

2.26 **Paragraph 2.54** lists the Rural Service Centres. These are towns identified in policies within this RSS, which have a role in terms of the services that they provide to surrounding primarily rural areas. They are (those in County Durham are in bold):

Alnwick

Barnard Castle

Berwick-upon-Tweed

Guisborough

Haltwhistle

Hexham

Middleton-in-Teesdale

Morpeth

Prudhoe

Stanhope

2.27 **Paragraph 2.55** defines Secondary Settlements as towns and villages that are smaller in scale or function than Rural Service Centres.

2.28 **Policy 6** states that ‘plans, strategies and programmes should support and incorporate the locational strategy by:

- concentrating the majority of new development in the two Conurbations and the Main Settlements;
- allowing development appropriate in scale within the Regeneration Towns and Rural Service Centres to meet local needs and achieve a balance between housing, economic development, infrastructure and services;
- maintaining vibrant rural areas with a diversified economy and sustainable market towns, service centres and villages whilst preserving their historic fabric and character; and
- improving sustainable internal and external connectivity and accessibility, including sustainable accessibility from Other Regeneration Areas to the Conurbations and the Main Settlements’.

Tyne and Wear City Region

2.29 RSS describes the Tyne and Wear City-Region as exhibiting ‘a polycentric settlement pattern based around two core areas within the Tyne & Wear conurbation – Newcastle and Sunderland; a further major centre for population and employment – Durham City; and a wide hinterland encompassing both a range of rural towns and villages and three areas, in South East Northumberland and Wearside and County Durham, which were formerly coalfield areas’.

2.30 **Paragraph 2.99** identifies Durham City as ‘one of the Region’s major assets with its Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site; a university with an international reputation for research; a retail centre serving the surrounding settlements; a popular tourist destination in its own right; and a service sector including important public sector employers. This role is demonstrated by the large net inflows of commuters into the City (over 10,000) from surrounding areas. In terms of commuter outflows, Sunderland, Sedgefield and Newcastle are the main destinations. The City

will continue to contribute to the Region's future prosperity. There are opportunities for redevelopment within the City but the relatively small city centre restricts it providing a wider sub-regional retail role, and the City's outward expansion will continue to be contained by the Green Belt. However, the Green Belt contributes in part to the quality and attractiveness of the City as a place to live and work. The Durham City master plan is seeking to ensure a stronger and more vibrant city, whilst celebrating and respecting the City's unique historical assets'.

- 2.31 **Paragraph 2.100** identifies the Durham Coalfield Communities as 'an area in need of regeneration and in which action is being taken by various partnerships and agencies. The main centres within this 'Other Regeneration Areas', such as Chester-le-Street and Peterlee, and to a lesser extent other smaller settlements, provide key hubs for employment, services and facilities for surrounding hinterlands. These areas also have strong links with the conurbation and core areas within the city-region, which provide a broader range of job opportunities and facilities'.
- 2.32 **Paragraph 2.101** states that 'there are significant rural areas both within and surrounding the city-region. Towns including Crook are important service centres for local people and visitors in the rural areas, and fall within the sphere of influence of the city-region. Many rural settlements have dual roles as service centres for their wider rural hinterlands, whilst maintaining strong links with urban areas'.
- 2.33 **Policy 9** states that 'strategies, plans and programmes, and planning proposals should support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tyne & Wear City-Region by:
- giving priority to the regeneration of the following areas: the central parts of the Tyne River Corridor,
 - ensuring a scale and quality of development to reflect Durham City's unique character and its role as a major service and employment centre for its surrounding hinterland;
 - supporting the regeneration and development of Chester-le-Street, Consett, Stanley, Crook, Seaham, Peterlee, for sustainable growth without adversely impacting on the regeneration initiatives within the Tyne and Wear Conurbation;
 - focusing the majority of new economic development on the city centres of Newcastle and Sunderland;
 - supporting the Science City Newcastle initiative and developing a network of complementary nodes including Durham University and NetPark, County Durham;
 - continuing to support the influential economic role of the four universities in the city-region, enabling better links between universities and business, and campus expansions where appropriate;

- focusing new knowledge based Small Medium Enterprise accommodation and offices within and adjacent to Newcastle and Sunderland city centres, with provision in regeneration centres and rural service centres to meet local needs;
- supporting the integrated housing market renewal initiatives and programmes of the Durham Coalfield Communities Area, with particular emphasis on rebalancing the housing stock and meeting local housing needs;
- locating the majority of new retail and leisure development in the regional centre of Newcastle and the sub-regional centre of Sunderland. Additional development in other town centres should be consistent with their scale and function to maintain and enhance their vitality and viability; and
- developing housing to support the economic growth strategies in sustainable locations, mainly on previously developed land in areas where it does not undermine existing housing markets, particularly housing market restructuring areas.

Tees Valley City-Region

- 2.34 **Paragraph 2.149** describes the Tees valley City Region as displaying ‘a polycentric settlement pattern, based around the Conurbation, with the Main Settlements of Darlington and Hartlepool, the two “Other Regeneration Areas” of East Cleveland and Durham Coalfield Communities Area, and a rural hinterland, which contains market towns including Barnard Castle and Guisborough’.
- 2.35 **Paragraph 2.156** recognises that ‘outside of the conurbation and the main settlements that the southern extent of the Durham Coalfield Communities Area has an important role to play in the regeneration of the area. The towns of Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon, Bishop Auckland, within these areas, provide important local facilities, services and employment. It is important that the function and vitality of these towns are supported, so that they can continue to meet the local shopping, recreational and community needs of the communities, which they serve. They also have links to the conurbation and main settlements where a broader range of facilities, services and employment opportunities are provided’.
- 2.36 **Policy 10** states that ‘strategies, plans and programmes, and planning proposals, should support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tees Valley City-Region by:
- giving priority to the regeneration of the Stockton-Middlesbrough, Redcar and Hartlepool Quays and brownfield opportunities in Darlington;
 - supporting the regeneration and development of Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon, Bishop Auckland for sustainable growth without

adversely impacting on the regeneration initiatives within the Tees Valley conurbation.

- supporting the appropriate development of Wynyard and NetPark as Key Employment Locations;
- supporting the development of Darlington and Newton Aycliffe as employment locations, particularly to take advantage of their location close to the A1, A66 and East Coast Main Line;
- locating the majority of new retail and leisure development in the sub-regional centres of Middlesbrough and Darlington, whilst additional development in other centres should be consistent with their scale and function to enhance their vitality and viability;
- developing housing to support the economic growth strategies in sustainable locations, mainly on previously developed land in areas where it does not undermine existing housing markets, particularly housing market restructuring areas; and
- supporting housing market renewal programmes for the Tees valley City-Region, including Durham Coalfields Communities Area.

Rural Areas

- 2.37 **Paragraph 2.202** recognises that there are ‘a number of towns such as Barnard Castle, Alnwick, Hexham and Morpeth which provide important services to their rural hinterlands. In addition some of the towns within the regeneration areas such as Bishop Auckland and Crook, also provide a similar function. As a result of the remoteness of the Region’s rural areas their population is also reliant on smaller settlements. Development within rural service centres should be of an appropriate scale and nature to fulfil the needs of the local communities. Increasing rural businesses will result in a greater number of economically active people being located in rural areas during the day, supporting a variety of local services, including shops and schools.
- 2.38 **Paragraph 2.222** recognises that ‘outside of the main rural service centres there is a network of Secondary Settlements that provide a range of community facilities, retailing and employment opportunities for more local catchments. It is important to ensure that their specific local economic and regeneration needs are provided for, to ensure that the whole of the rural economy contributes to regional economic growth and regeneration. However, these will be on a much smaller scale, in accordance with the RSS Locational Strategy. Local Development Frameworks will need to identify an appropriate settlement hierarchy, incorporating the Secondary Settlements and villages below the main rural service centres, to determine where further small scale development is required to support sustainable communities’.

- 2.39 **Policy 10** states that ‘strategies, plans and programmes, and planning proposals, should support the development of a vibrant rural economy that makes a positive contribution to regional prosperity, whilst protecting the Region’s environmental assets from inappropriate development by:
- strengthening the role of the Rural Service Centres of Barnard Castle, Middleton-in-Teesdale and Stanhope;
 - identifying an appropriate scale of development that is sufficient to sustain settlements and a vibrant rural economy. Local Development Frameworks should identify a settlement hierarchy, including Secondary Settlements to determine the appropriate scale and nature of development;
 - providing a positive framework to capitalise on the key opportunities the environment provides for the development of a range of employment uses, including the diversification of agriculture, tourism, culture and leisure and new sectors of the economy including renewables and environmental technologies; and
 - protecting and improving the provision of rural service infrastructure and other physical development where this is critical for supporting and maintaining sustainable rural communities.

Delivering Sustainable Communities

- 2.40 Delivering sustainable communities requires consideration of spatial issues that are both directly and indirectly affected by the planning system. Local planning authorities will need to consider the contribution of both the locational elements of land use and the design and layout of development in delivering sustainable communities. Therefore, all development within the Region should be designed and located to deliver sustainable communities. In order to promote sustainable communities **Policy 24** states that ‘strategies, plans and programmes and planning proposals, should assess the suitability of land for development and the contribution that can be made by design in relation to the following criteria:
- the nature of the development and its locational requirements;
 - concentrating the majority of the Region’s development within the defined urban areas;
 - the need to utilise previously developed land wherever possible;
 - locating development to reduce the need to travel, journey length and fuel consumption;
 - the ability for movement needs and accessibility of development sites to homes, jobs, services and facilities to be well served by all modes of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport;
 - linking development to appropriate provision of infrastructure including green infrastructure, water supply and wastewater treatment, energy supplies;
 - linking development to provision of educational, health and other social facilities and services;

- the impact that the development of sites and its design will have on the Region's natural resources, biodiversity, landscapes, environmental and cultural assets, and people's health; and its potential to contribute to enhancement of these;
- physical constraints on the development of land including the level of contamination, flood risk and land stability, incorporating flood protection and alleviation mechanisms such as Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- the potential contribution of development to reducing health and social inequalities including fuel poverty, and to meeting the needs of an ageing population and the disabled, through design and the provision of accessible health, sports, community, recreational, and other facilities including suitable provision of play space and greenspaces with accessible woodland, with new development;
- the promotion of mixed use developments, well served by public transport, to reduce journey lengths and ensure that the best use is made of land, transport infrastructure and services;
- the potential contribution of development to the strengthening of local communities and their social cohesion;
- the potential contribution of development to secure crime prevention and community safety by design;
- ensuring that development has low consumption of natural resources both in construction and in operation, and incorporates embedded renewable energy generation where appropriate;
- the potential contribution of development to the enhancement and creation of habitats and species populations and to the promotion of biodiversity and geodiversity; and
- the use of local labour markets and materials.

Green Belt

- 2.41 **Policy 9** of the RSS states that to 'ensure that the Green Belt continues to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne & Wear. The Green Belt should:
- a. prevent the merging of:
 - b. Sunderland with Seaham, Houghton-le-Spring, Washington or Tyneside; Gateshead with Hebburn, Washington, Birtley or Whickham; Washington with Chester-le-Street; Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle International Airport, or Cramlington; North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth; and Durham City with Chester-le-Street.
 - c. preserve the setting and special character of Durham City, Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth;
 - d. assist in urban regeneration in the city-regions by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land; and

- e. maintain the broad extent of the Green Belt with detailed boundaries to be defined in relevant Local Development Frameworks, around Morpeth and the area to the north of Consett and Stanley and eastwards to Chester-le-Street’.
- 2.42 The explanatory text states that ‘the general extent of the Region’s Green Belt forms a band of protected land around Tyne & Wear, including adjacent areas of Northumberland and County Durham, and should be maintained. The detailed boundaries around Morpeth and to the north of Consett, Stanley and eastwards to Chester-le-Street have not yet been defined; Revised Green Belt boundaries should be brought forward in relevant LDFs’.

County (sub-regional) Context

County Durham Structure Plan

- 2.43 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG7)(adopted 1993) asked Durham County Council to examine the case for an extension to the approved Tyne and Wear Green Belt to the south of Gateshead Metropolitan Borough and to the west and south of Sunderland City Council area, so as to cover a sufficiently wide area to secure effective protection from development pressures. The County Council was also asked to pay particular attention to strengthening policies to safeguard the character and special setting of Durham City.
- 2.44 As a result **Policy 5** in the County Durham Structure Plan (adopted March 1999) stated that ‘there shall be a green belt in north Durham, south of the tyne and wear conurbation covering the following general areas:
(a) north of Consett and Stanley, and eastwards to Chester-le-Street;
(b) extending south-westwards from Chester-le-Street, east of Kimblesworth, south of Witton Gilbert, east of Bearpark and southwards to Croxdale, and then north-eastwards to Sherburn and West Rainton, to encircle Durham City; and
(c) north and north west of Seaham
- 2.45 The policies of the County Durham Structure Plan have now expired and superseded by **Policy 9** in RSS and the relevant saved Local Plan policies.

Sustainable Community Strategy

- 2.46 One of the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a ‘high quality and sustainable environment’. Under this theme there are a number of long term goals such as:
- A high quality clean, green, attractive and accessible environment.

- A high quality local built and historic environment that meets the needs of communities.
- Provision of sustainable residential accommodation across all tenures, meeting identified needs.
- Enhanced choice and access to sustainable and integrated transport networks.
- A reduced impact on climate change.

2.47 Directing new development to sustainable locations through the use of a settlement hierarchy will contribute to many of these long term goals.

Local Area Agreement

2.48 Locating new development in sustainable location will contribute directly to LAA indicator 32 which seeks to reduce the per capita CO2 emissions in the Local Authority area.

Local Context

Chester-le-Street

2.49 HP6 - Proposals for residential development not allocated in the local plan will only be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries of the following settlements as shown on the proposals map:

Chester-le-Street	Bournmoor
Great Lumley	Fencehouses
Sacrison	Ouston/Urpeth Grange
Pelton/Newfield/Pelton Lane Ends	Nettlesworth and Kimblesworth

Provided that:

- i) the site is classified as previously developed land
- ii) the proposal fulfils the general criterion of Policy HP9, Appendix I and other relevant policies of the local plan

2.50 HP8 - No outward expansion and, therefore, no change in settlement boundaries are proposed although, as shown on the proposals map, small scale residential development will be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries of the following settlements : -

High Handenhold	Pelton Fell North
Plawsworth	Perkinsville
Beamish	Picktree
Chester Moor	Waldridge
Grange Villa	West Pelton
Pelton Fell	Edmondsley

Provided that :

- i) the site is classed as previously developed land;

- ii) the site is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling or the proposal can enhance such provision;
- iii) the site is readily accessible to employment, educational retail community and other facilities by modes of travel other than the car;
- iv) the site can be sustained by the capacity of existing or potential infrastructure, including public transport, physical infrastructure and social infrastructure (such as schools) or can facilitate their continued level of provision;
- v) the proposal is appropriate in scale, character and location and fulfils policies HP9, HP10, Appendix I and other relevant policies of the local plan.

Derwentside

- 2.51 Policy HO5 - Housing development on small sites will only be permitted in the settlements listed below, where the development:
- a) is appropriate to the existing pattern and form of development in the settlement; and
 - (b) does not extend beyond the existing built up area of the settlement; and
 - (c) represents acceptable backland or tandem development; and
 - (d) does not exceed 0.4 hectares in size if taken together with an adjoining site.

Annfield Plain (including	Iveston
Catchgate and West Kyo)	Lanchester
Blackhill	Langley Park
Burnhope	Leadgate
Burnopfield	Maiden Law
Castleside	Medomsley
Consett	Moorside
Cornsay Colliery	New Kyo
Craghead	No Place
Crookgate	Oxhill
Delves Lane (including	Quaking Houses
Crookhall)	Quebec
Dipton (including Flinthill)	Satley
Ebchester	Shotley Bridge
Esh	Stanley (including Shield Row)
Esh Winning	Tanfield
Greencroft	Tanfield lea (including
Hamsterley (incl. Low	Broomhill)
Westwood)	Tantobie
Hamsterley Mill	The Dene
Harelaw	The Grove
Hobson (including Pickering	The Middles
Nook)	South Moor (including Oxhill)

White-le-Head

Durham City

2.52 Policy H3 - New housing development, in addition to that allocated in policy h1, comprising windfall development of previously developed land and conversions will be permitted within the settlement boundaries of the villages listed below provided it is appropriate in scale, design, location and number of units (in the case of the smaller villages, (b) below, this number will be limited) to the character of the settlement and does not result in the development of areas which possess important functional, visual or environmental attributes which contribute to the settlement's character.

a) larger villages

Bearpark	Langley Moor
Bowburn	Meadowfield
Brandon	New Brancepeth
Coxhoe	Sherburn
Esh Winning	Sherburn Hill
High Pittington	Ushaw Moor
High Shincliffe	West Rainton
Kelloe	Witton Gilbert

b) smaller villages

Brandon Village	Ludworth
Broompark	Parkhill
Cassop	Quarrington Hill
Croxdale	Shadforth
Hett	Shincliffe
Low Newton	Sunderland Bridge
Low Pittington	Waterhouses

2.53 Exceptionally the limited development of small greenfield sites (less than 10 units and where the total developable area is less than 0.33 hectares in extent) will be permitted in the coalfield villages most in need of regeneration provided that:

- i) there are clear, quantifiable regeneration benefits that will be achieved through the development of small greenfield sites; and
- ii) these regeneration benefits could not be achieved through the development of previously developed land or conversions of existing buildings.

2.54 The coalfield villages most in need of regeneration to which this policy applies are:

Bearpark	Cassop
Bowburn	Coxhoe
Brandon	Esh Winning

High Pittington
Kelloe
Ludworth
New Brancepeth
Quarrington Hill

Sherburn
Sherburn Hill
Ushaw Moor
West Rainton
Witton Gilbert

Easington

Major Centres
The major centres of:
Peterlee

Seaham

2.55 Perform an important role since they provide jobs, recreational shopping facilities, educational and other services for their residents and for most of the people in the surrounding villages. It is, therefore, essential that sufficient housing land is allocated in Peterlee and Seaham to support, maintain and enhance this role. The concentration of housing land allocations in these major centres is consistent with the principle of sustainable development in that it will provide the greatest opportunity for residents to take advantage of local sources of employment and services and thus minimise the need to travel long distances by car.

2.56 Outside the major centres, it is intended that most of the remaining housing need should be met in those villages which have a reasonable range of services and facilities including some shops, a primary school and a good bus service, thus providing the greatest opportunity to minimise the need for car borne travel. The settlements considered most suitable for general housing development are the former colliery villages of:

Blackhall
Easington (Including
Easington Village)
Haswell
Hesleden
Horden
Murton

Shotton
South Hetton
Thornley
Trimdon Station
Wheatley Hill
Wingate/Station Town.

2.57 It is important that housing land is allocated in these settlements to assist their sustainability and their economic regeneration.

2.58 The remaining villages of:

Castle Eden
Dalton-le-Dale
Haswell Plough
Hawthorn

High Hesleden
Hutton Henry
Little Thorpe
Seaton

2.64 Policy H3 - Housing development will be permitted on sites over 0.4 hectare, comprising previously developed land, within the development limits of the following settlements, provided that they meet the criteria of Policy GD1 and do not conflict with Policy ECON3:-

Barnard Castle	Hamsterley
Butterknowle	Ingleton
Cockfield	Mickleton
Cotherstone	Middleton in Teesdale
Eggleston	Staindrop
Etherley	Stainton Grove
Evenwood	Startforth
Gainford	Woodland

2.65 Policy H4 - Small scale housing development will be permitted on sites of less than 0.4 hectare, comprising previously developed land, within the development limits of the settlements listed below. Proposals should satisfy the criteria contained in Policy GD1. Tandem development will not be permitted. Backland development will only be permitted where it would not cause unacceptable harm to the privacy or overall residential amenity of the occupants of neighbouring dwellings, and an adequate and safe access can be provided.

Barnard Castle	Hamsterley
Barningham	High Lands
Bolam	Hutton Magna
Boldron	Ingleton
Bowes	Mickleton
Butterknowle	Middleton in Teesdale
Cockfield	Ovington
Copley	Ramshaw
Cotherstone	Romaldkirk
Eggleston	Staindrop
Etherley (ie Low Etherley, High Etherley, Toft Hill)	Stainton
Evenwood	Stainton Grove
Evenwood Gate	Startforth
Gainford	Whorlton
Greta Bridge	Winston
	Woodland

Wear Valley

2.66 Policy H3 - New development will be directed to those towns and villages best able to support it. Within the limits to development of the following towns and villages, as shown on the Proposals Map, development (in addition to development on allocated sites) will be allowed provided it meets the criteria set down in policy GD1 and conforms to the other policies of this plan:

Bishop Auckland (Including West Auckland, St. Helen And South Church)	
Coundon/Leeholme	Roddymoor
Dene Valley	Witton-le-Wear
Escomb	Oakenshaw
Witton Park	Helmington Row
Binchester	Stanhope
Toronto	Tow Law
Newfield	Wolsingham
Crook	Frosterley
Willington (including Sunnybrow)	St John's Chapel
Howden-le-Wear	Ireshopeburn
Fir Tree	Edmundbyers
Hunwick/Lane Ends	Eastgate
North Bitchburn	Rookhope
Billy Row/Stanley/Mount	Westgate
Pleasant	Cowhill
Sunniside	Wearhead

Green Belt in District Local Plans

- 2.67 The Structure Plan could only indicate the general extent of the area of the North Durham Green Belt and it was for local plans prepared by the appropriate District Councils (Derwentside, Chester-le-Street, City of Durham and Easington) to define the detailed boundaries.
- 2.68 **Policy 4** of the Easington District Local Plan (adopted December 2001) defines the Green Belt boundary within Easington as 'an extension of the Tyne and Wear green belt in the county of Durham, to include land to the north of Lord Byron's walk; north of Seaham Grange Industrial Estate and north west of the A1086 to the junction with the B1404 road; West of the former Tuthill quarry to Ryhope railway and north of the B1404 road'.
- 2.69 **Policy NE3** of the Chester-le-Street Local Plan (adopted October 2003) defines the Green belt in Chester-le-Street District from the 'north of Chester-le-Street town and the C2C cycle path to the County boundary, in the Lambton Park area and the River Wear Valley, south of Lambton Park, including the A167 and East Coast Main Line railway'
- 2.70 **Policy E1** of the Durham City Local Plan (adopted May 2004) defines the Green Belt boundary around Durham City, which includes the 'green fingers of land that penetrate the City at Aykley Heads and Flass Vale; substantial areas of high landscape value around the City, including parts of the Browney Valley and the Wear Valley; and the strategic gap to the north of the City, adjacent to the proposed Chester-le-Street Green Belt'.

3. BASELINE

County Durham Settlement Summary Sheets

- 3.1 The Research and Information Unit of Durham County Council have produced Settlement Summary Sheets for a large number of settlements in the County using statistics from the 2001 census. The 2001 census was a comprehensive survey of people living in the UK and provides detailed information about the entire population. The Settlement Summary sheets include data from a large range of indicators including:
- Numbers of people and households.
 - Age breakdowns.
 - Economic Activity.
 - Housing.
 - Car Ownership.
- 3.2 The full Summary Sheets are available on the Council's website at: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=5967> and a summary including just population and households is at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The list of settlements used in the Settlement Summary Sheets is 263. This is significantly more than the 201 settlements listed in the Local Plans of the former County Durham Districts. It will need to be decided which, if any, of these lists is used in the LDF or if another way of identifying which settlements to include is required.

Discussion Box 1: Which list of settlements should be used in the LDF? Or should an alternative list be defined using particular criteria?

- 3.4 The extent of the Green Belt in Derwentside has never been defined as the Local Plan was adopted in January 1997 before the Structure Plan.

Table 1 – Extent of Green Belt

	Area of Green Belt (hectares)
Chester-le-Street	2770
Derwentside	Undefined
Durham City	5670
Easington	280
North East	73000
England	1635670

4. DELIVERY STRATEGY

4.1 The delivery strategy for the County Durham Core Strategy must be sustainable and deliverable. It will focus on identifying sustainable locations for the future development of homes and jobs in the County and ensuring that targets for such provision set out in RSS are met. The delivery strategy will need to identify the most suitable locations for future development such as housing, retail and employment provision and the means by which it will be delivered. Detail on the requirements of RSS in these topic areas will be included in the relevant technical papers.

Housing

Employment,
Education
and Skills

4.2 The Core Strategy, in accordance with PPS12 should set out broad locations for delivering housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, retail, leisure, community, essential public services and transport development. This should be supported by a key diagram, which shows the locations for strategic development, major transport issues and patterns of movement and constraints. In identifying broad locations for future development in County Durham it is necessary to have regard to the range of national, regional and local policy sources outlined above

Retail &
Town
Centres

Retail &
Town
Centres

Community &
Cultural
Facilities

4.3 The delivery strategy will also need to set the context for the Growth Point and particularly the three Area Action Plans. As the principle of the Growth Point has been agreed by the Government, this part of the spatial strategy is not in question, it is the options for future development in the remainder of the County that need to be explored.

Discussion Box 2: What are the options for the Delivery Strategy for County Durham?

Defining Policy Areas

4.4 National guidance makes it clear that the vision for core strategies should be informed by ‘an analysis of the characteristics of the area and its constituent parts and the key issues and challenges facing them. The vision should be in general conformity with the RSS and it should closely relate to any Sustainable Community Strategy for the area’.

4.5 In order to make the Core Strategy locally distinctive for County Durham and its constituent areas it is likely that sub-areas with similar characteristics will need to be identified. These will be used to target policies to particular areas. It may be that the areas may be different depending on the policy being applied.

- 4.6 Given the size and diversity within County Durham it is likely that there will be different issues and opportunities that will affect different areas in different ways. The following characteristics should be considered:
- Settlement Pattern
 - Social Welfare
 - Economy
 - Environmental Characteristics
 - Transport and Accessibility
 - Key Linkages (Including with City Regions)
- 4.7 After establishing a number of key characteristics we would put forward three options which would be used to decide the final sub areas. We would seek to use the work already completed by the County Durham LDF Team.

Discussion Box 3: What are the options for defining policy areas in County Durham and how do they link with the Delivery Strategy?

5. SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

5.1 A settlement hierarchy is a way of arranging settlements into a hierarchy based upon their population and level of services. It can then be used as a means of apportioning development in a sustainable way. Some of the Local Plans in County Durham used a simplified form of hierarchy to allocate sites and control windfall development, however a more sophisticated approach is likely to be required in the new Core Strategy.

Population & Demographics

Transport & Accessibility

5.2 The settlement hierarchy in the Core Strategy will need to reflect the hierarchy in the RSS of Main Settlements, Regeneration Towns, Rural Service Centres and Secondary Settlements, but will need to add a local dimension. The most practical way to do this is to identify sub-categories within the Secondary Settlements based on size, location and access to services. This approach would reflect the nature of County Durham, which has a large number of smaller settlements in addition to those referred to in RSS. Whether there are sub-categories within the Regeneration Towns or Rural Service Centres should also be considered.

Discussion Box 4: Does the RSS settlement hierarchy accurately reflect the roles of the identified settlements in County Durham or are there other subcategories?

5.3 It is essential that any hierarchy must have a balance between the different levels within it as well as sound principles for defining how the settlements are fitted into it. The most effective way to do this is through a settlement audit based on a set of criteria. Having a common approach to that used in the SHLAA would have the advantage of consistency but it is likely that a more sophisticated assessment framework will be required.

5.4 The audit and resultant hierarchy will help identify which settlements have the capacity to absorb further development and may give an indication of the scale. The Government's emphasis on development taking place in the most sustainable locations means that a clear understanding of a settlement's facilities and services for the surrounding hinterland is therefore essential.

Discussion Box 5: What criteria should be used in the Settlement Audit to assess the suitability of settlements for future development?

5.5 As the settlement hierarchy is developed it needs to include an element of public and stakeholder engagement. Ideally a survey of residents to obtain their views and opinions on the future planning context of the settlements they live in would be undertaken. However the number of settlements in

Community Involvement

the County and the amount of time available to complete the settlement audit will makes this very difficult.

- 5.6 Many of the Regeneration Towns in the County do not consist of one homogenous urban area but instead are made up of a number of smaller communities, which together form the settlement. As an example the urban area of Consett consists of Consett town itself together with the communities of Delves Lane, Blackhill, Leadgate, Moorside and a number of others. In the case of Consett the urban area is relatively easy to define but there are other Towns, which are not as easily defined for example Stanley. In the past the urban area of Stanley has been defined as the core area of Stanley itself together with South Moor, Shield Row, East and South Stanley but other definitions that include Craghead, Tanfield Lea, Annfield Plain and all combinations in between. This issue needs to be resolved where it occurs across the County.

Discussion Box 6: Should consultation or any other method be used to identify the logical extent of the Regeneration Towns or are those used in the Settlement Summary Sheets considered the most

- 5.7 The settlement audit will be needed to inform the Issues and Options stage of the Core Strategy in order to provide options for a settlement hierarchy and the distribution of development across the County.

6. COUNTY DURHAM GREEN BELT

Rationale

- 6.1 The open land between Chester-le-Street and Durham City experiences significant development pressures. The unrestricted sprawl of Durham City northwards and Chester-le-Street southwards could result in the area of countryside between them becoming too small to remain effective in maintaining their separate character and preventing coalescence. The Green Belt in this location prevents the neighbouring towns of Chester-le-Street and Durham City from merging into one another, assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and helps preserve the setting and special character of the historic Durham City.
- 6.2 Long established planning policies have sought to protect the setting and special character of Durham City. However only Green Belt designation can ensure the permanent retention of those important open areas around the City, which are vital to sustaining the outstanding, internationally recognised, environmental qualities of the City. An encircling Green Belt will secure the effective protection of the open land surrounding the City and will preserve the setting and special character of Durham City by preventing the unplanned outward expansion of the City and coalescence with the surrounding villages. The most appropriate locations for new development in the District, if it cannot be accommodated in Durham City, are the larger villages readily accessible to the City, which could benefit from new investment to assist their regeneration.
- 6.3 To the north and north west of Seaham, the Green Belt will check the potential outward expansion of the conurbation, prevent the free standing town of Seaham merging with the conurbation, assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, assist in urban regeneration in the town by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, and will help in creating more sustainable patterns of development and growth.
- 6.4 The land to the north of Consett, Stanley and Chester-le-Street within the Derwent and Team Valleys lies adjacent to the Tyne and Wear Green Belt and has a close visual and functional relationship with the conurbation Green Belt area. The Green Belt in Durham will strengthen the Green Belt in Tyne and Wear and secure effective protection to check the potential outward expansion of the conurbation, assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, assist in urban regeneration in Consett and Stanley by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, and will help in creating more sustainable patterns of development and growth.

Heritage

Review of Green Belt Boundaries

- 6.5 PPG2 states that ‘once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally’.
- 6.6 When local planning authorities prepare new or revised structure and local plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time-scale, which is longer than, that normally adopted for other aspects of the plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period.
- 6.7 As part of the preparation of the emerging Regional Planning Guidance for the North East to 2016, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions requested that further consideration be given to the extension of the North Durham Green Belt (in accordance with the recommendations of the Panel Report into the Examination in Public of the Structure Plan Review Deposit Draft) when the Structure Plan is next reviewed. Following a Public Examination into the emerging Regional Planning Guidance held in 2000, the panel recommended against the further extension of the North Durham Green Belt and this was accepted in the final version of the RPG published in April 2001.
- 6.8 **Policy 9** of RSS seeks to ‘maintain the broad extent of the Green Belt’ although the explanatory text does state that ‘revised Green Belt boundaries should be brought forward in relevant LDFs’.
- 6.9 The new authority will therefore have to consider whether there are any exceptional circumstances to warrant a review of the existing Green Belt boundaries.

Discussion Box 7: Are there any exceptional circumstance, which would justify a review of the existing defined Green Belt boundaries?

- 6.10 On a smaller scale the existing Green Belt boundaries should be assessed in detail to determine whether there is a need for any minor changes either to reflect changes to physical features on the ground or to correct previous cartographic errors, thereby providing more defensible boundaries.

Definition of Green Belt boundary to the North of Consett and Stanley

- 6.11 PPG2 states that up-to-date approved (Green Belt) boundaries are essential, to provide certainty as to where Green Belt policies do and do not apply and to enable the proper consideration of future development options'. Policy 9 of RSS also states that 'detailed boundaries (are) to be defined in relevant Local Development Frameworks, around Morpeth and the area to the north of Consett and Stanley and eastwards to Chester-le-Street.' As a result one of the tasks of the new County Durham Core Strategy will be to define the Green Belt boundary to the north of Consett and Stanley and eastwards to meet up with the Green Belt around Chester-le-Street.
- 6.12 PPG2 advises that when defining a Green Belt boundary it needs to be carefully drawn to exclude land, which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open in order that the boundary can endure for a significant period of time. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt may have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development. If boundaries are drawn excessively tightly around existing built-up areas it may not be possible to maintain the degree of permanence that Green Belts should have. As a result the issue of safeguarded land will also have to be considered.
- 6.13 PPG2 also states that 'when drawing Green Belt boundaries in development plans local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. Boundaries should also be clearly defined, using readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, belts of trees or woodland edges where possible'.

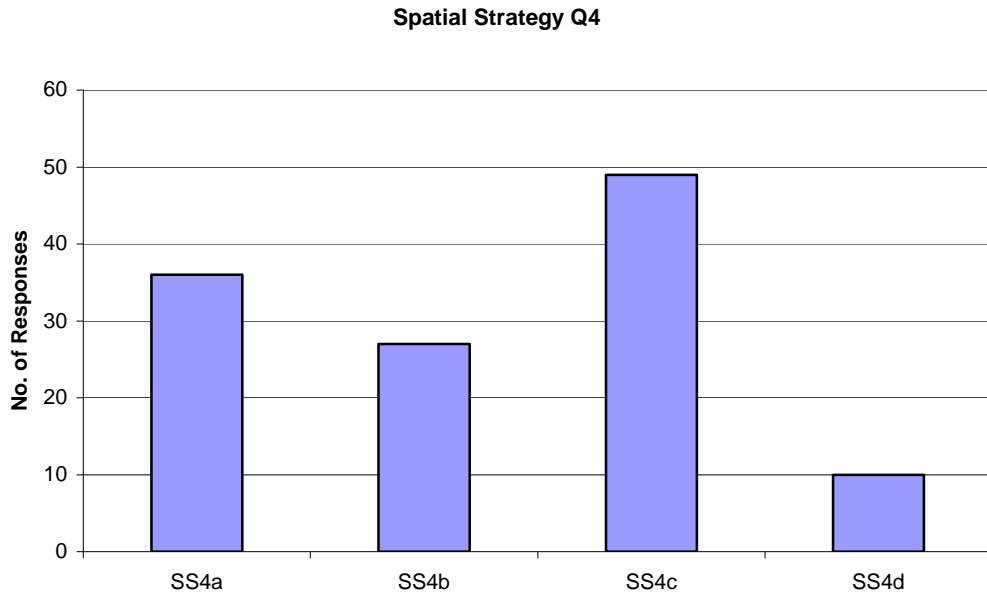
Derwentside Core Strategy Issues and Options

- 6.14 A question on the definition of the North Durham green belt was asked in the Issues and Options. The question gave three alternatives shown on Map 1 below but also gave the opportunity to identify a different option. The question and responses are given below. It needs to be determined as part of the Issues and Options for the County Durham Core Strategy whether the same options will be presented or whether there are other more appropriate boundary options.

SS4. What should be the extent of the North Durham Green Belt within Derwentside? (see map 1)

- a Include the Derwent valley from Burnopfield to Consett from the River Derwent to the Derwent Walk and the area from Burnopfield to Stanley from the District boundary to Crookgate bank and Kip Hill.

- b** As **option a** and including the remainder of the Derwent Valley to Leadgate and the Hobson.
- c** As **option b** and including the area to the north of Tantobie and Tanfield Lea.
- d** None of the above, other suggested boundary.

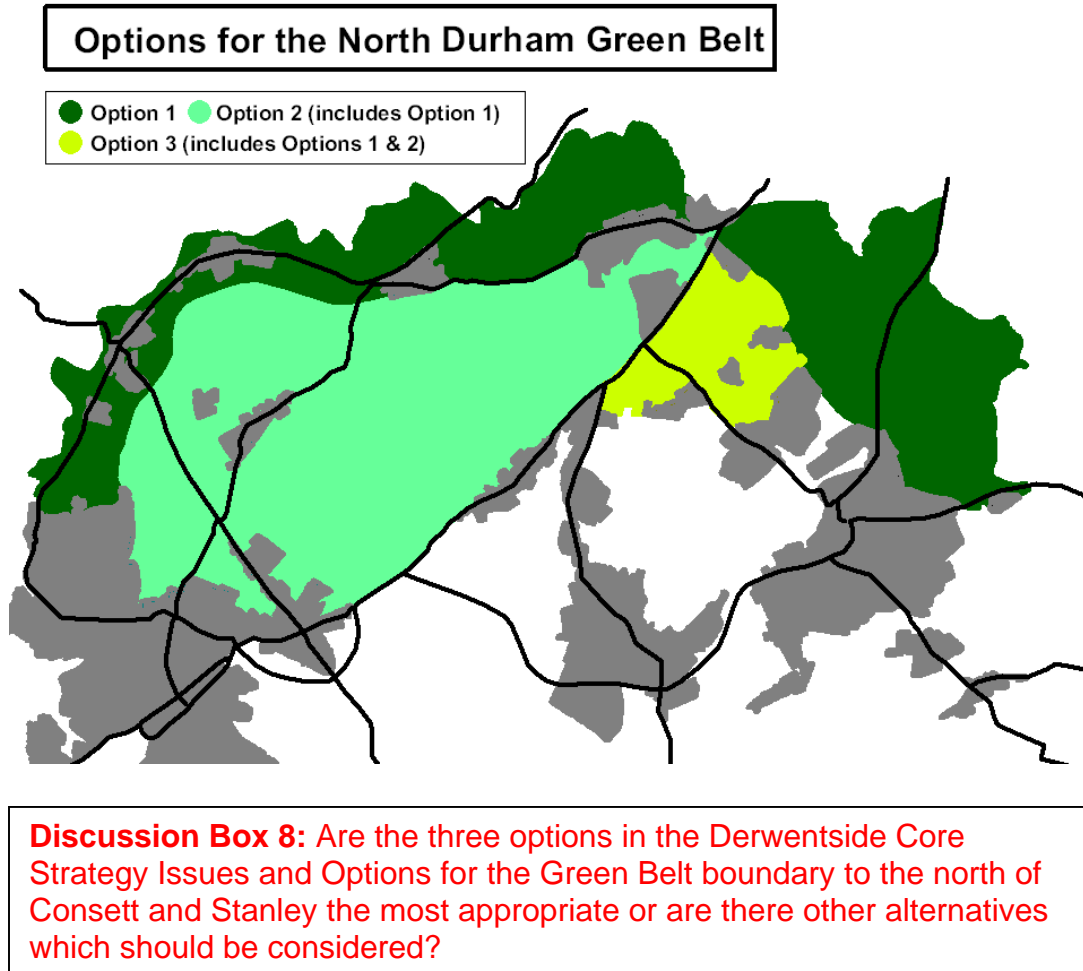


6.15 The Government Office’s comments on this question are given below and should also be taken into account when considering how this issue should be taken forward in the Issues and Options.

‘Whilst the Document identifies a number of options for the designation of the Green Belt, it fails to identify how the issue will be taken forward and how and when precise boundaries will be defined. The detailed boundaries could be defined within the emerging Core Strategy DPD or as part of the Stanley Area Action Plan and Allocations DPDs. As the last two DPDs will not be prepared and adopted for several years, it may be preferable to undertake this task as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how you intend to progress this issue.’

6.16 Map 1 on page 32 of the Document identifies a number of options for the definition of the North Durham Green Belt. It will be important that the proposed Green Belt boundary ties in with the boundaries contained within the adopted Chester-le-Street Local Plan (2003) and any revisions proposed within the emerging Gateshead Unitary Development Plan (Test of Soundness vi).’

Map1



Safeguarded Land

- 6.17 PPG2 stipulates that green belts should only be designated where there is adequate land available elsewhere to meet the long term development needs of the District. It also suggests, taking into account the permanence of green belts, that consideration should be given to whether land which may be required to meet longer term development needs (beyond the period of the Local Plan) should be identified and safeguarded between the urban area and the green belt.
- 6.18 PPG2 also suggests that regional/strategic guidance should provide the framework for considering the issue of safeguarded land in terms of how much might be needed and where it might suitably be located. Neither RPG7 nor the adopted County Durham Structure Plan Review provided guidance as to the allocation of safeguarded land.

- 6.19 As a result Chester-le-Street District Council did not identify any safeguarded land and made it clear that the inner Green Belt boundaries defined on the proposals Map were to remain permanent and unchanged beyond the Plan period.
- 6.20 It was also Durham City Council's intention that the Green Belt boundaries defined on the Proposals Map were to remain permanent and unchanged beyond the current Plan period (ie 2006). Land for longer term development needs for those settlements outside the green belt boundary defined on the Proposals Map was to be identified in forthcoming Local Plan Reviews, taking into account the capacity and ability of those settlements to provide for sustainable communities.
- 6.21 Easington also gave careful consideration to the issue of safeguarded land and concluded that 'the Plan identifies sufficient land for industrial, housing and other forms of development to meet the needs of Seaham and to ensure its maintenance as a major centre. Much of this land comprises derelict or underused sites. Furthermore, the need specifically to identify safeguarded land between the urban area and the green belt is not considered relevant or necessary for a number of reasons:
- the open gap between the northern edge of Seaham and Ryhope is so limited that any development here would undermine robustness and effectiveness of the green belt;
 - significant built development north of Lord Byrons Walk would potentially detract both from the existing Northern AHLV and the attractive character and setting of the northern part of the town;
 - the proposed Green Belt comprises a relatively small area (280 hectares) and only constrains opportunities for development/expansion on the north and north western side of the town;
- additional land and opportunities for development exist to the south of Seaham and elsewhere in the District to accommodate development needs beyond the Plan period'.

Discussion Box 9: Is there any requirement for safeguarded land in conjunction with the Green Belt in North Durham?

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Regeneration

- 7.1 The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) ¹ promotes ‘a strong focus on delivering sustainable development best practice in regeneration, including activities to:
- ensure the incorporation of sustainable development principles and best practice in the planning, management and design processes of regeneration schemes, and
 - concentrate on demand management and energy usage in transport schemes.’
- The RES also has a strong focus on economic inclusion including activities to improve access to employment.
- 7.2 The County Durham Economic Strategy (CDES) seeks to ‘develop economically competitive places and sustainable communities to support our efforts to create long-term economic growth.’ Flowing from this strategic aim are a number of objectives.
- Unlock the economic potential of our major centres to deliver a suitable range of retail, office and leisure related activities to support their populations and wider hinterlands.
 - Deliver sustainable communities and support housing development and renewal programmes in line with the sub-regional housing strategy.
 - Bring forward quality strategic employment sites and premises to meet the accommodation needs of small businesses, manufacturers and logistics/distribution/warehousing companies.
- 7.3 The aims of the RES and the CDES would be addressed by locating future development, including regeneration schemes, in sustainable locations with access to services, such as employment. The location of new development should build on the strengths of existing centres rather than be a threat to their vitality and viability. It should also support existing services and create the conditions that will attract new services by ensuring that it is accessible to alternative means of transport to the car.
- 7.4 One of the five declared purposes of a Green Belt is to ‘to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land’. Therefore the continued protection of the existing Green Belt and the definition of the boundary in North West Durham will assist in this purpose by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. In certain circumstances however, unduly restrictive Green Belt boundaries may restrict regeneration. The situation in County Durham must be

Retail &
Town
Centres

Employment,
Education &
Skills

¹ Regional Economic Strategy 2006- 20

continually monitored to allow early response to any emerging issues with the boundary of the Green Belt.

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

- 7.5 As mentioned previously a key planning objective of the Climate Change Supplement to PPS1 is to deliver sustainable development. As a result planning bodies and all planning authorities are expected to prepare spatial strategies that deliver patterns of urban growth and reduce the need to travel, especially by car.
- 7.6 The supplement also states that in deciding which areas and sites are suitable, and for what type and intensity of development, planning authorities should take into account:
- whether there is, or the potential for, a realistic choice of access by means other than the private car and for opportunities to service the site through sustainable transport; and
 - the ability to build and sustain socially cohesive communities with appropriate community infrastructure, having regard to the full range of local impacts that could arise as a result of likely changes to the climate;
- 7.7 By its very nature an assessment of the suitability of settlements for future development against sustainability criteria will contribute to tackling the causes of climate change. Furthermore developing a settlement hierarchy which will seek to direct development to locations that have access to range of facilities, including public transport, will reduce the growth in carbon emissions associated with new development.

Transport & Accessibility

Community & Cultural Facilities

Emerging Issues

- 7.8 The delivery strategy will need to identify the most suitable locations for future development such as housing, retail and employment provision and the means by which it will be delivered. Appropriate options for the Delivery Strategy for County Durham will need to be generated.
- 7.9 In order to make the Core Strategy locally distinctive for County Durham and its constituent areas it is likely that sub-areas with similar characteristics will need to be identified. These will be used to target policies to particular areas. Appropriate options for policy areas for County Durham need to be generated and the relationship between the policy areas and the delivery strategy needs to be considered.
- 7.10 It is clear that an audit of the settlements in County Durham is required to assess their existing facilities and their capacity to accommodate future development. An early decision is required on the scope of the audit and

which settlements should be included within it. The sustainability criteria to be used in the audit also need to be developed, weighted and consulted on as soon as possible. The audit will then inform options for County Durham's settlement hierarchy.

- 7.11 The Core Strategy Issues and Options will need to consider the extent of the County Durham Green Belt. Although the boundary of the Green Belt in most of the County was defined only recently, some consideration should be given to whether there are any exceptional circumstances to warrant an early review of the boundary.
- 7.12 Consideration needs to be given to the most appropriate options for the definition of the Green Belt boundary to the north of Consett and Stanley.

Appendix 1

2001 CENSUS SUMMARY INFORMATION (numbers)	All	All households
FORMER DISTRICT OF CHESTER-LE-STREET		
Beamish	286	138
Blackhouse	79	34
Bournmoor	2,010	845
Chester le Street Major Centre	23,946	10,256
Chester Moor	240	123
Edmondsley	472	214
Fencehouses	1,492	564
Grange Villa	874	421
Great Lumley	3,549	1,455
High Handenhold	379	145
High Urpeth	29	12
Kimbleworth	323	146
Lambton Park	89	42
Nettleworth	203	92
Newfield	318	117
Ouston	2,977	1,198
Pelton	3,293	1,413
Pelton Fell	1,561	681
Plawsworth	234	76
Sacriston	5,077	2,155
Urpeth	2,295	914
Waldridge	215	118
West Pelton	744	334
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	50,685	21,493
CHESTER-LE-STREET	53,695	22,837
FORMER DISTRICT OF DERWENTSIDE		
Annfield Plain	3,569	1,557
Bloemfontein	566	256
Burnhope	1,182	525
Burnopfield	2,791	1,107
Catchgate	1,523	654
Clough Dene	70	34
Consett Major Centre	27,394	11,948
Cornsay	42	16
Cornsay Colliery	226	86
Craghead	932	412
Dipton	1,470	659
East Hedley Hope	162	72
East Law	190	68
Ebchester	878	411
Esh	465	174
Flinthill	1,152	507
Greencroft	1,005	428
Hamsterley Colliery	415	184
Hamsterley Mill	395	154

Hare Law	517	191
High Westwood	53	18
Holmside	126	60
Iveston	170	61
Lanchester	3,742	1,586
Langley Park	4,229	1,817
Lintz Green	27	12
Lintzford	27	12
Low Westwood	214	96
Maiden Law	280	103
Medomsley	1,517	614
Medomsley Edge	319	115
Muggleswick	130	39
New Kyo	810	348
No Place	469	212
Pickering Nook	551	239
Quaking Houses	749	271
Quebec	176	70
Satley	188	79
Stanley Major Centre	16,306	7,182
Tanfield	277	112
Tanfield Lea	2,089	865
Tantobie	1,274	553
The Middles	447	203
West Kyo	118	49
Wilks Hill	44	18
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	79,276	34,177
DERWENTSIDE	85,076	36,483
FORMER DISTRICT OF CITY OF DURHAM		
Bearpark	1,633	727
Bowburn	3,514	1,525
Brancepeth	360	144
Brandon	4,753	2,232
Brasside	403	143
Broompark	278	113
Cassop	441	195
Coxhoe	3,397	1,418
Croxdale	496	273
Durham City Major Centre	42,123	15,392
Esh Winning	2,887	1,285
Hett	224	94
High Pittington	1,224	508
High Shincliffe	1,181	451
Kelloe	1,468	658
Langley Moor	1,183	493
Leamside	112	48
Littletown	150	60
Low Pittington	183	73
Ludworth	551	257
Meadowfield	2,120	857
New Brancepeth	1,106	445
Old Cassop	31	13
Old Quarrington	44	19

Parkhill	680	285
Quarrington Hill	680	288
Rainton Gate	53	21
Shadforth	346	144
Sherburn	2,956	1,364
Sherburn Hill	998	399
Sherburn House	56	20
Shincliffe	506	177
Sunderland Bridge	97	41
Tursdale	54	21
Ushaw Moor	3,671	1,512
Waterhouses	417	190
West Rainton	2,045	908
Witton Gilbert	1,960	904
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	84,381	33,697
CITY OF DURHAM	87,712	34,851
FORMER EASINGTON DISTRICT		
Blackhall Colliery	3,135	1,349
Blackhall Rocks	2,110	898
Castle Eden	385	158
Cold Hesleton	16	6
Crimdon	114	42
Deaf Hill	372	163
Easington Colliery	2,619	1,180
Easington Village	3,682	1,577
Grants Houses	223	98
Haswell	967	429
Haswell Plough	435	180
Hawthorn	355	153
Hesleden	573	259
High Hesleden	182	77
Hutton Henry	490	180
Little Thorpe	56	22
Murton	6,919	2,945
Peterlee Major Centre	30,093	11,916
Seaham Major Centre	21,714	8,951
Sheraton	91	35
Shotton Colliery	4,254	1,792
South Hetton	2,578	1,110
Station Town	682	291
Thornley	2,513	1,065
Trimdon Station	532	248
Wellfield	446	161
Wheatley Hill	3,115	1,414
Wingate	2,996	1,219
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	91,647	37,918
EASINGTON	93,985	38,787
FORMER SEDGEFIELD DISTRICT		
Bishop Middleham	1,234	513
Bradbury	95	37
Byers Green	672	292
Chilton	3,908	1,697
Chilton Lane	580	272

Eldon	397	175
Ferryhill	10,006	4,457
Fishburn	2,133	902
Kirk Merrington	739	333
Mainsforth	98	38
Middridge	340	150
Mordon	213	75
Newton Aycliffe Major Centre	25,504	10,489
North Close	313	121
Rushyford	152	76
Sedgefield	4,214	1,854
Shildon Major Centre	10,079	4,523
Spennymoor Major Centre	17,241	7,475
Trimdon	3,019	1,288
Trimdon Colliery	940	420
Trimdon Grange	1,314	509
West Cornforth	2,422	1,079
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	85,613	36,775
SEDFIELD	87,210	37,509
FORMER TEESDALE DISTRICT		
Barnard Castle Major Centre	6,641	2,738
Barningham	204	88
Bolam	63	27
Boldron	83	40
Bowes	224	85
Brignall	25	10
Burnt Houses	43	20
Butterknowle	434	193
Cleatlam	113	46
Cockfield	1,382	656
Copley	190	82
Copley Lane	65	29
Cotherstone	543	228
Eggleston	363	148
Esperley	79	37
Evenwood	1,612	716
Evenwood Gate	95	45
Gainford	1,008	445
Gilmonby	45	17
Greta Bridge	28	11
Hamstreley Forest	378	166
Headlam	34	16
High Etherley	1,345	549
High Lands	159	74
Hilton	31	13
Hummerbeck	79	31
Hunderthwaite	94	29
Hutton Magna	137	65
Ingleton	422	201
Lartington	111	41
Little Newsham	26	11
Low Etherley	379	152
Mickleton	389	156

Middleton in Teesdale	941	446
Morley	63	29
Morton Tinmouth	20	8
Newbiggin	144	65
Ovington	180	74
Phoenix Row	64	25
Ramshaw	157	70
Rokerby	68	27
Romaldkirk	177	75
Scargill	29	12
South Cleatlam	120	51
South Side	101	41
Spring Gardens	151	60
Staindrop	1,210	556
Stainton	237	123
Stainton Grove	400	168
Toft Hill	302	116
Wackerfield	36	15
Whorlton	259	94
Winston	282	121
Woodland	414	178
Wycliffe	22	11
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	22,201	9,530
TEESDALE	24,455	10,460
FORMER WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT		
Billy Row	824	321
Binchester	271	124
Bishop Auckland Major Centre	24,392	10,351
Close House	296	133
Coronation	215	88
Coundon	2,611	1,090
Coundon Grange	235	127
Cowshill	156	68
Crawley Side	170	65
Crook Major Centre	8,212	3,677
Daddy Shield	177	87
Eastgate	163	62
Edmundbyers	118	62
Eldon Lane	394	188
Escomb	358	146
Etherley Grange	81	34
Fir Tree	226	89
Frosterley	705	314
Helmington Row	228	95
High Grange	274	108
Howden le Wear	1,234	541
Hunstanworth	68	28
Hunwick	952	393
Ireshopeburn	112	50
Lanehead	40	18
Leasingthorne	41	18
Leeholme	513	206
Middlestone Village	67	29

New Coundon	41	18
Newfield (Bishop Auckland)	368	142
North Bitchburn	135	60
Oakenshaw	470	193
Roddymoor	500	226
Rookhope	267	118
Ruffside	30	15
St Johns Chapel	307	157
Stanhope	1,633	690
Stanley Crook	405	182
Sunnyside	347	167
Sunnybrow	1,296	542
Thornley Village	184	67
Toronto	399	192
Tow Law	1,958	819
Wear Valley Junction	101	39
Wearhead	210	92
West Blackdene	37	17
Westerton	44	19
Westgate	298	133
Willington	4,534	1,983
Witton Park	384	168
Witton le Wear	529	209
Wolsingham	2,061	911
Woodside	153	67
Total Living in Settlements/Major Centres	59,824	25,738
WEAR VALLEY	61,335	26,495
COUNTY DURHAM	493,484	207,438
England and Wales	52,041,916	21,660,475