

**WHORLTON VILLAGE**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN –SUBMISSION DRAFT**  
**2015 - 2035**

Prepared by Whorlton & Westwick Parish Council

Revised 27 November 2015

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# 1 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF WWPC

I am delighted to present the proposed Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan covers the extent of Whorlton Village Conservation Area as shown on the plan below. I hope that it will help to make the village a better place to live in for years to come.

The decision to proceed with the Plan was taken by the Parish Council at their meeting on 4 March 2014, following a presentation and continuing advice by the Durham County Council planning team.

A working sub-committee was formed which includes representatives from the Whorlton Village Community Association (WVCA which is a registered charity no 1003340), the WI, the PCC and WWPC.

Following comment from WWPC on DCC County Durham Plan (CPD) dated 16 Nov 2013 and the WVCA public consultation regarding future housing developments in Whorlton as per their letter of 22 Nov 2013 it was decided to accept the challenge of forming the Neighbourhood Plan in order to let local people to decide their future in the spirit of the Localism Act.

George Stastny  
Chairman WWPC



## 2 BASIC CONDITION STATEMENT

2.1 The right for communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans was established by the Localism Act 2011, which was accompanied by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. As a result, Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet a number of basic conditions which are detailed within schedule 4B of the 1990 Act, as inserted by the provision of Schedule 10 of The Localism Act. The basic conditions are addressed in the Basic Conditions Statement and require that:

- a) The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is prepared having regard to national policies and advice issued by the Secretary of State.
- b) The making of the NP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- c) The making of the NP is in general conformity with the County Local Plan (CDP).

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that there are three elements to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental and as such the planning system (of which this NP will form part) needs to perform the three roles:

- a) The economic role means contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available to support growth and innovation.
- b) The social role is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well being.
- c) The environmental role means contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

2.3 The NPPF item 6 para 55 sets out policies for development in rural areas, which should be sustainable and enhancing or maintaining the vitality of rural communities.

2.4 The CDP seems to suggest ( item 4 Core Policies Policy 2 Spatial Approach item e.) that the only way to achieve sustainable development is by provision of large scale affordable housing. This is being challenged by our NP.

The NPPF states that the three elements should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependant. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards and well designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solution.

2.5 Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvement in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including but not limited to:

- a) Making it easier for jobs to be created
- b) Moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for the future
- c) Replacing poor design with better design
- d) Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure
- e) Widening the choice of high quality homes

## 2.6 General Assessment of WVNP with national guidance

<b>NPPF Core Principle</b>	<b>WVNP Vision and Objectives</b>	<b>Policies / Decision Criteria</b>
Plan-led based on a positive local vision	All WVNP objectives apply	The plan has developed a vision and objectives for the village based on consultation that will help deliver the communities aspirations
Enhance and improve places in which people live	To make Whorlton village a better and sustainable place to live	The plan has policies for new housing (WP1, WP2) with development required to respect the environment of Whorlton
Economic development and delivery of homes and infrastructure	To make Whorlton village a better and sustainable place to live	The plan has policies for new housing (WP1, WP2) as well as promotion of working from home.
High quality design and standard of amenity	To make Whorlton village a better and sustainable place to live	Policy WP1 requires development to be in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings, and not adversely affect the amenity of residents in the area.
Promote the character and vitality of communities	To maintain and enhance the character of the village	Policy WP6 seeks to protect existing amenities within the village, which will help to maintain the vitality of the community.
Climate change, flood risk and reduced carbon usage	To make Whorlton village a better and sustainable place to live	Policy WP3 relating to home working will reduce the need to travel by car.
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	To maintain and enhance the character of the village	Policy WP1 requires development to be in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings. Inappropriate development proposals will be resisted.
Using brownfield land	Not covered by vision and objectives	Not covered by any policy but none in NP Areas
Promoting mixed use	Not covered by vision and objectives	Not covered by specific policy but Policy WP3 permits working from home
Conserving heritage	To maintain and enhance the character of the village	The Plan included a Policy (WP5) to protect and conserve heritage assets
Encourage sustainable transport	Not covered by vision and objectives	Policy WP6 seeks to maintain the existing bus links and frequency to nearby settlements.
Health and social and cultural well being	To make Whorlton village a better and sustainable place to live.	The plan seeks to maintain existing amenities and facilities (policy WP6) within the village.

### **3 WHORLTON VILLAGE: AN OVERVIEW**

3.1 Whorlton village consists currently of 70 dwellings situated around a large registered village green, with a pub, a church and a village hall providing the main amenities. The 2011 Census collected data for the whole of Whorlton Parish only, at 122 dwellings in the Parish. As the dwellings outside the Parish are mainly farmhouses with different demographics interpolating the data for Whorlton only is meaningless.

An informal mini-census of the village only was carried out by volunteers in February 2015, which confirmed that the 70 dwellings are occupied by 128 people, of which only 8 are under 18 years of age. Out of the 120 adults 61 are of retirement age. The housing stock consists of 46 houses and 24 bungalows/flats. 5 dwellings were for sale and 4 were unoccupied.

The setting is in a picturesque confluence of the river Tees and Whorlton Beck, on a high plateau to the north of the river, surrounded by woodlands to the south and east. The Tees Way footpath passes through the village on the north bank of the river.

3.2 The main employer is Danshell providing residential care to the disabled and a Pub. One of the village farms has now been relocated away to the east of the village and the former site has been developed for housing, the other farm is at the NW corner of the village. There are several small businesses operating from the private dwellings.

3.3 Public transport links are poor relying on sporadic bus connections of some three daily connections to Barnard Castle and four to Darlington. The public transport is further restricted by a 3 T weight limit on Whorlton Bridge across the Tees to the south.

3.4 The housing stock relates to the origins of the village of several large houses and small dwellings serving the large ones. This reflects in the imbalance of the population of predominantly single people or couples in the small dwellings and lack of family sized dwellings for families with children etc.

3.5 Apart from the Conservation Area status the village contains 18 "listed" buildings/structures grade 2 and one, Whorlton suspension bridge graded 2\*.

3.6 The village is very popular as a retirement place and a commuter place for people in work, resulting in above average property prices for the region and resulting pressure on housing development. The saved Local Plan from the former Teesdale District Council has drawn up very tight development limits preventing practically any new buildings in the village. The 2009 Local Government Review saw the creation of the unitary Durham County Council. It is preparing a Local Plan but at the time of writing that Plan is being refreshed following its withdrawal from examination after an interim Inspector's Report was quashed in the Courts. As such there is no up to date strategic context for the WVNP to follow at present.

## 4 HOW THE PLAN WAS PREPARED AND CONSULTATION STATEMENT

4.1 The Plan was prepared by the working sub-committee led by WWPC chairman who is a practicing chartered architect and who lived in Whorlton for forty years. The committee consisted of the following members:

Cllr George Stastny - chairman

Cllr Roger Foster

Cllr Ian Wilkinson

Cllr Trevor Honeyman

Mrs Anne Woodward (representing the Whorlton Women Institute)

Mrs Linda Alderson (representing the Whorlton Parochial Church Council)

Mr Peter Bigge (representing the Whorlton Village Community Association( WVCA))

4.2 The preparation of the Plan was guided and supported by the planning department of DCC.

4.3 The sub-committee has placed great value to seeking views from the village community by including representatives from the local public bodies, listed above, In order to reach the general public good use was made of the local monthly publication "The Flyer" which is sponsored by the WVCA and distributed free of charge to every home.

4.4 General views were sought in The Flyer November 2014 issue, only two replies were received, one related to housing only and the other containing lengthy views from a former councillor. (appendix 1A, 1B, 1C & 2A) Both responses were considered by the committee and as their main point concerned provision of affordable housing Policy WP1 was revised accordingly.

4.5 Future housing development in the village was of prime concern to the residents. The WNP committee has therefore arranged for a public consultation in November 2014 by means of a questionnaire reaching all households in the village, receiving 28 replies. (see appendix 3 & 3A)

4.6 Apart from the consultation bodies listed in 4.1 above whose views were given verbally at committee meetings and included in the NP the following consultation bodies and individuals were consulted on 29 June 2015:

a Northumbrian Water

b Environment Agency

c Natural England

d Historic North East

e Teesdale Disability Access Forum

f Teesdale Development Company

g Durham Community Action

h DCC Cllr George Richardson

i DCC Cllr James Rowlandson

j Residents of Whorlton (formal consultation following invitation of comments by The Flyer –see item 4.4 above)

k Durham County Council (SEA & HRA Screening Opinion)

4.7 Response to consultations and amendments of NP.

Responses were received from the following bodies:

b Environment Agency.

The EA expressed concern about building in Flood Zones 2&3 but as the NP does not allocate any specific housing sites no change was proposed.

Their concern regarding the proposed cemetery extension is covered by the extant planning permission.

e Historic England

Suggestion was made to consider preparation of Character Appraisal and Habitat Assessment, including review of the conservation Area boundary and Policy 7.5.8 was added to the NP

k DCC has produced very thorough Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report\* but in Conclusion note para 4.8 stated that the WVNP will not result in likely significant effect upon any of the relevant sites. No further action was therefore taken.

\*Included at Appendix 6

## **5 WHAT THE PLAN AIMS TO ACHIEVE**

5.1 The sub-committee is aware of the small area of the Plan area and it's small population limiting the number of issues which can be addressed and also of the limited human resources to prepare the Plan.

5.2 However, regardless of these limitations the residents have shown their strong desire to influence their future in certain key areas such as future housing, village facilities and environment ensuring sustainable future.

## **6 THE VISIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

6.1 The vision and objective of the Plan is to make Whorlton village a better and sustainable place to live.

6.2 The village enjoys strong community cohesion and friendly disposition. This character should be maintained and enhanced.

6.3 The objectives of the NP, which have been highlighted though community consultation and the natural progression of the NP are detailed under item 7 (Policies), including the issues and how the policies are to be implemented.

## **7 POLICIES**

7.1 Planning decisions are guided by planning policies when planning applications are made to Durham County Council. The Localism Act 2011 has allowed communities to develop their own policies against which any development will be considered through the NP planning process.



Provided that the policies are based on sound evidence, community input and the proper principles of planning they will become a statutory part of the Development Plan for the area.

## **7.2 Housing**

7.2.1 Two public consultations have been carried out with adequate response indicating opposition to large scale housing developments preferring organic growth over the Plan period of small developments of one to three dwellings in appropriate locations. Second public consultation established the desired number and type of the dwellings consisting of 3 bungalows and 7 family houses, one of which is “low cost”, giving 10 dwellings in total. This attitude resonates with the views of the renowned architectural historian Ian Nairn in his publication Nairn’s County Durham, who said Whorlton had “the feel of an estate village but without the regimentation, a natural and organic plan, trimmed up and put on parade. It must never overflow beyond the boundaries of the Green” (appendix 5)

7.2.2 There is concern with empty properties or underused holiday properties in the village, diminishing the available housing stock.

7.2.3 The majority of land surrounding the NPA is classified as Grade 3 (good to moderate) agricultural land, any loss of good agricultural land for housing should be resisted.

7.2.4 Northumbrian Water Ltd has confirmed that the proposed number of dwellings can be serviced from the existing network. (see appendix 4)

### **POLICY WP1: Housing provision**

The target housing provision is 10 dwellings (approx 3 bungalows and 7 family dwellings) in appropriate locations, over the duration of the Plan. Permission will be granted if the development:

- a. is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- b. does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area, including daylight/sunlight, privacy, air quality, noise and light pollution;
- c. has safe and suitable access to the site for all people.
- d. avoids the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land

It is proposed to re-assess the future housing need at the half term of the Plan.

In addition, support will be given to affordable Starter Homes for the first time buyers under 40 in accord with Government guidelines.

Efforts should be taken to prevent rise in numbers of empty or underused properties in the village.

### **POLICY WP2: Housing allocation**

No housing allocation are made in the WVNP and planning application for housing development will be judged against the general aims and requirements of the WVNP. Flood risk issues will be addressed at planning application stage.

## **7.3 Employment**

7.3.1 Whorlton is not suitable for any new, large scale employment, however, it is suitable for “working from home” option. Using home as a working base for at least part of the week can offer business opportunities. Working from home does not necessarily need planning permission as long as the home remains mainly a home.

Live/work units can be also envisaged accommodating artists or craftsmen.

### **POLICY WP3: Working from home**

Planning permission for development that enables home working will be granted if the development:

- a. is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings;
- b. does not significantly affects the amenities of residents of the area;
- c. has a safe and suitable access to the site for all people.

## **7.4 Internet connection**

7.4.1 Good Internet connection is driving business and employment opportunities and helping people access services. Providing good internet connection speed is essential for the future.

### **POLICY WP4: Superfast broadband**

All new dwellings should incorporate ducting capable of accepting fibre to enable Superfast Broadband.

## **7.5 Protection of environment and heritage**

7.5.1 Whorlton village is fortunate to offer environment of exceptionally high standard, however, it is important to protect, maintain and where possible enhance the standard. The Conservation Area and Listed Building Status offers some protection to building and trees but some features such as stone walls, gates, hedges, village pump and fountain, red phone box etc are not protected and some were lost in the past.

7.5.2 There is an ancient ferry crossing to Wycliffe downstream from the suspension bridge consisting of a ruinous Ferryman’s Cottage and iron bolts with steps down to the river, operating from at least 1691.

7.5.3 The NP area includes one Local Wildlife Site (LWS) at Whorlton Banks and provides high potential for population of protected species such as Great Crested Newts and Bats.

River Tees water is of good biological and chemical quality which is locally maintained by a recently extended and improved sewage plant. Whorlton Beck is liable to flooding but the causes of this are outside the remit of the NP.

7.5.4 Some properties are badly maintained becoming an eyesore or wrecked cars are parked on private land but in full view from public areas.

7.5.5 Whorlton NP area contains large number of trees. These are protected by the planning requirements of the Conservation Area status and the LWS status of Whorlton Banks.

7.5.6. The draft WVNP has been screened by DCC Sustainability Strategy Team (refer to Screening Report dated February 2015) which confirmed that the NP will have no adverse effect on the natural habitats within the area.  
( appendix 6)

7.5.7 DCC should consider imposing stricter environmental control using Article 4 Direction of the Planning Act.

7.5.8 The NP will be reviewed in the future to consider the preparation of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal including review the NP and Conservation Area boundaries.

#### **POLICY WP5: Protection of the historic environment**

Development proposals will be required to respect the setting and/or character of designated and non-designated heritage assets such as all stone wall, Whorlton Church, Ferryman's Cottage and associated structures, Village Green pumps and stone bridge over Whorlton Beck etc.

Inappropriate development proposals that cause substantial harm or total loss will be resisted and those that cause less than substantial harm will be weighted against the public benefits.

#### **7.6 Protection and provision of amenities**

7.6.1 Whorlton offers limited range of public amenities such as the Village Hall, The Church, The Pub, Children Play Area, Village Garden and the Registered Village Green. The last feature is protected by legislation but the other ones are under pressure due to falling and elderly population.

7.6.2 Due to the number of dwellings without suitable gardens there is a demand according to the last count for allotment gardens.

7.6.3 The Whorlton Church burial space is near its full capacity and cemetery extension will be needed in the near future.

7.6.4 The village has a high dog ownership and is popular with walkers with or without dogs from outside of the area. Provision of litter bins and dog litter bins is essential.

7.6.5 Street lighting of the village is poor, bearing in mind large proportion of the elderly and does not extend to cover the area of recent housing "The Steadings"

7.6.6 Some areas of the Village Green are hard paved in unsuitable materials, difficult to maintain resulting in injury risk to pedestrians.

7.6.7 Whilst we appreciate that public transport will be limited due to the size of the population of the village it is important to people relying on the existing transport links with the larger towns that these links are maintained.

Suitable public transport should be available even to those who have access to private transport on account of sustainability, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels.

**POLICY WP6: Amenities**

Existing amenities will be protected and any proposals resulting in the loss of them shall be resisted, exploring all avenues leading to their retention.

Planning permission for provision of allotment gardens and cemetery area extension will be granted if the development:

- a. does not significantly affect the amenities of nearby residents.
- b. has a safe and suitable access to the site for all people
- c. in the case of the cemetery area extension, has the appropriate consent from the Environment Agency.

Provision of litter bins will be maintained and enhanced.

Street lighting will be upgraded and extended, ensuring that it is sustainable and without light pollution.

Suitable proposals to upgrade the hard paved areas of the Village Green to a satisfactory standard will be supported.

The existing bus links and frequency should be maintained and reduction of these links should be resisted.



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# THE BACK PAGE

**YOUR VIEWS?** The Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan committee is seeking views from the residents on the future of the village for the next 20 years, as a follow-up from the housing consultation last year. Anything will be considered, please write to the Clerk (address below) with your name and address, to be received by 17 November 2014 at the latest.

**MANY THANKS** to all those who worked so hard to make the Harvest Festival such a joyful and successful evening. £226 was raised at the supper for Christian Aid.

**CYCLISTS:** Interested in leisurely midweek cycle rides on local roads, with at least one café stop guaranteed? Contact Wilf Wrigley at wilfwrigley@outlook.com or 01833 621309.

**TUESDAY WALKS:** Join our friendly walking group and discover beautiful Teesdale and beyond. Tuesday mornings. Dogs are welcome. Further details from Ann on 01833 621024.

**HISTORY GROUP** next meets on Tuesday November 18th, 7pm in Barningham village hall.

**CHURCH SERVICES** at St Mary's Church, Whorlton: Communion, 9am, second and fourth Sundays in the month.

**VILLAGE CONTACTS:** Whorlton Village Community Association: Hall Manager Linda Alderson (01833 627002). Whorlton & Westwick Parish Council: Chairman George Stastny, Riverside, Whorlton, Co Durham DL12 8XD 01833 627419. Clerk J J Dickinson, Stubb House Lodge, Winston, Darlington DL2 3PP 01833 627341.



Whorlton has two websites:  
[www.whorlton-village.com](http://www.whorlton-village.com)  
[villagehall.whorlton-village.com](http://villagehall.whorlton-village.com)



If you have a smartphone with a bar code reader application you can open them up from these QR images.

**NEXT FLYER DEADLINE NOVEMBER 25: SEND ITEMS FOR INCLUSION TO Mary Stastny Tel 01833 627419 or email [cul\\_stastny@hotmail.com](mailto:cul_stastny@hotmail.com)**

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## WHERETON HOUSE

Dear Jonathan,

I am in favour of houses in the  
village

I would like -

- (1) More bungalows
- (2) Houses of 3-4 bedrooms
- (3) Houses suitable for first-time buyers

10/1

**David Kinch**

Rose Lea

Whorlton

DL12 8XD

**Mr J>J. Dickinson**

Stubb House Lodge

Winston

Darlington#

DL2 3PP

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**Dear Johnathan**

Village Plan

My opinion is that The Village Plan should aim to strike the right balance between growth and conservation, valuing what makes the village unique. It is about making sure new homes provided, in the right areas, and people have a choice about where to live.

The Village Plan should set the levels of housing development that should be provided over the plan period to best meet the needs of the area and establish a clear strategy for meeting development needs in the most sustainable way that protects the quality of life of existing and future residents.

Its policies should aim to ensure that development is of high quality and will meet the challenges the Village face with an ageing population, endeavoring to not lose open spaces that residents need to provide a good quality of life. Underpinning the whole of the Plan should be the Government's commitment to sustainable development. Taking account of local circumstances, the new Village Plan's development and other proposals should aim to meet the 3 overarching principles of sustainability:

- Economic – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
  - Social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and
-



support its health, social and cultural wellbeing; and

- Environmental – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, prudent use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Whorlton will continue to be one of the best places to live in County Durham. The residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.

- To protect the character of Whorlton, including its built and natural heritage, as well as protecting the Green Belt. New development should enhance the area, and protect and enhance biodiversity.
- To provide land for housing in sustainable locations that meets local needs and aspirations, and gives choice about type, size, tenure and cost.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development, and the NPPF has at its heart a presumption in favour of *sustainable development, which it says should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking.*

- To deliver new developments that are high quality and well-designed with distinctive character that reflects their location, and which responds robustly to the challenges of climate change.

When considering development proposals the Village plan should take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. I hope the village will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals will be in accord with the Durham Local Plan

The SHMA includes consideration of need for affordable housing.

Horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside or where supported by other policies in the Village plan should be permitted.

Agriculture still makes an important contribution to Whorlton Village increasingly farms around the county are diversifying into non-agricultural activities, for the business to remain viable. This could include planting of woodland, farm shops, farm-based food processing and packaging, craft workshops, sporting facilities, equestrian businesses, nature trails, holiday accommodation or renewable energy infrastructure. In order to protect the quality and distinctiveness of the local landscape, the Village should prevent uncoordinated development in rural areas and the piecemeal stripping of assets from farms.

10/3

The following are taken from the County Durham Plan Submission Draft Tracked Changes (April 2014)

Green Belt (page 87)

Within the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will be regarded as inappropriate and will not be permitted. Exceptions to this, where they accord with other policies in the Plan and minimise impact on openness through appropriate landscaping, design, scale, siting and *appropriate use of materials*, are:

- a. Buildings necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;

Policy 35 (page 171)

Development in the Countryside

Planning permission for development in the countryside, with the exception of minerals, waste, and renewable energy proposals, will only be granted where they accord with other relevant policies in the Plan and where one or more of the following exceptions apply:

- a. The land is developed in accordance with Policy 35, an allocation in the County Durham Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan;
- b. The development proposals are considered necessary for the efficient or the continued viable operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and/or other appropriate land based businesses, including the diversification of activities on existing farm units which do not *prejudice the agricultural use*;

Affordable Housing (page 19)

2.17 There is a need to ensure a supply of affordable housing across the County in those areas where need is most acute. Furthermore, there is a need to differentiate between urban and *rural parts of the County which tend to have a different mix of requirements and constraints*. The ageing population may lead to an increase in the demand for affordable housing at the same time as the reduction in public sector spending is potentially reducing the overall availability of support for people and households. Both of these factors may also change the types and sizes of new housing that are needed.

Policy 2

Spatial Approach (page 29)

Sustainable development and maximizing opportunities for delivery are the core principles of the Spatial Approach. To achieve this, development will be delivered across the County as follows:

e. In rural areas, development that meets the needs of the local community, for instance affordable housing and economic diversification, including appropriate tourist development, will be permitted providing the countryside is protected from wider development pressures and widespread new building.

(page 30)

4.8 The Matthew Taylor Review of the Rural Economy and Affordable Housing recommends that local authorities do more to ensure that those who work in the countryside can also live there. Criteria d and e of the Spatial Approach will allow the sustainable growth of smaller settlements, and groups of settlements, including those in rural areas, thereby reflecting Matthew Taylor's recommendations

Page 23 South Durham:

New housing across the area will have addressed a range of housing needs in the area, in particular, the need to provide affordable accommodation for first time buyers,

Housing Approach (page 42)

4.41 Evidence gathered for the preparation of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) identifies the need for market, executive and affordable housing.

Exception Sites (page 100)

Housing and employment related development that is contrary to Policy 35 (Development in the Countryside) but accords with other relevant policies in the Plan will be permitted where:

- a. The development provides affordable housing, there is evidence of need identified in an appropriate housing needs assessment, the tenure split between social rented, affordable rented and intermediate rented reflects this need and, wherever possible, the housing is allocated to those who are in local housing need;

With regard to a. above, I understand that an independent survey was made by a housing company which comprised, Gainford, Winston, Whorlton and Westwick, Langton and Ingleton (I believe) the document stated that Durham County Council were aware of this. Will the results be used as evidence of need in an appropriate housing needs assessment? If so can the village see the results of the evidence that applies to Whorlton.

Housing (page 100)

5.25 Exception housing should meet local needs, reflect demand for particular sizes, types and tenure of houses and be affordable in perpetuity. The justification for housing development on such sites can only be made on the basis of a pressing local need for affordable housing which cannot easily be met in other ways.

10/5

## Policy 15 (page 94)

### Development of unallocated sites in Built up Areas

Whorlton has no allocated sites in the Durham plan and policy 15 must be adhered to on the adoption of the Durham Plan.

### Quantity of New Development

In order to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future residents of Whorlton, I feel the following levels of development should be proposed in the Village for the next 20 years

#### a. 10 new homes (not including affordable)

5 should be Bungalows to meet the growing need for housing for older peoples

5 should be Family homes a mixture of 3, 4, 5 bedrooms

The total could be built as and when but not to exceed a total of 10 until after 2030.

Whorlton Village plan will only apply to the land within the boundary that has been chosen. Any large or small scale development that may be applied for in the life of the plan which is near to the boundary but outside in the Parish will have to be dealt with under ordinary *planning rules and the Durham Plan.*

I think it is important for the residents of the village to be informed that they can still even if the village plan is adopted object to any planning application that is submitted.



# The Flyer

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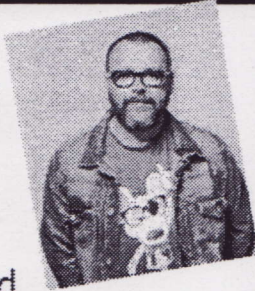
WHORLTON &  
WESTWICK

No. 78

FEBRUARY 2015

FREE

**Thursday**  
**26<sup>th</sup> February**  
Doors open 6pm,  
show starts 8pm



We are very excited that for Feb's comedy night we have the very talented **Aidan Goatley**, with his Edinburgh preview show "**11 (and a half) films to happiness**". Aidan's last Edinburgh show was a massive hit, we expect this preview for his 2015 show to sell out, tickets are strictly limited so please get yours early!

Tickets available now from  
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## Bridge Inn - Whorlton -

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[www.thebridgeinn-whorlton.co.uk](http://www.thebridgeinn-whorlton.co.uk)

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## Neighbourhood plan progress

THE preparation of the Whorlton Village Neighbour-hood Plan is progressing well and the plan has now been submitted to Durham County Council for their views and advice.

The Plan is available on the Parish Council website, limited number of paper copies will be made available for inspection at the pub. Any comments to the Clerk please.

A proposal has been mentioned at the last Council meeting to erect a seat round the chestnut tree on The Green. Please pass your comments and suggestions including fundraising to cover the costs to the Clerk.

The negotiations with Danshell to purchase the play area land and

## WHORLTON NEWS

additional land for the cemetery is progressing at a slow pace but the Councillors are confident that the efforts will be well worth it in spite of the increase of our Council Tax due to the expenses associated with the proposals.

GEORGE STASTNY  
Parish Council Chairman

## Sell-out for 39 Steps premiere

WHORLTON Village Hall again became the stage of choice for a Castle Players Premiere: Simon Pell's adaptation of The 39 Steps by John Buchan was a sell-out and the audience were chuckling happily during this action-packed

performance by the community theatre group.

There have been many films and plays made from the story but this one was more comedy than drama and resembled pantomime much more than the famous Hitchcock thriller.

Simon's previous adaptations of novels to stage, such as Dracula, were so popular that they had to tour the village halls of Teesdale for two winters running and it would be unsurprising if this one went the same way.

The cast and crew were delighted with the venue and just regretted that they could not take Whorlton's "stunning lighting system" on tour with them; it certainly added to the atmospherics.

The tour continues into February so you can catch it if you missed it at the following venues:

Friday, January 30th, 7.30pm  
St Mary's Parish Hall, Barnard Castle (01833 637904)

Sunday, February 1st, 3pm St Cuthbert's Centre, Crook (01388 730495)

Friday, February 6th, 7.30pm  
Bowes & Gilmonby Village Hall (01833 628357)

Sunday, February 8th, 3pm  
Scarth Hall, Staindrop (01833 660773)

The Castle Players are now recruiting for The Merry Wives of Windsor in the summer. First meeting is at the parish hall on Monday February 2nd, 7pm - why not come along?

### NEWSHAM VILLAGE HALL

## RAVENSWORTH SCHOOL FRIENDS QUIZ & CHILLI NIGHT Friday February 6th, 7.30pm

Tickets £6 including supper. Licensed bar. Phone Jo on 07967 655204 or Joanne on 07855 700568 or Rachel on 07976 769155

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[www.themorridd.co.uk](http://www.themorridd.co.uk) / [www.thegaragespa.co.uk](http://www.thegaragespa.co.uk)

## Art@Whorlton

Monday evening art classes have now begun at Whorlton Village Hall, starting at 7pm, in addition to our regular ongoing Thursday 10am group for those who can't make the daytime.

Please contact  
David Hall ~ Jane Young  
[www.whorlton-art.com](http://www.whorlton-art.com)  
07588 038283

**WHORLTON VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGARDING HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN WHORLTON**

You are invited to take part in a public consultation organised by the WVNP Committee in respect of the future development of the village in relation to the new Durham County Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan requires public participation from the residents of the village. You will recollect the previous housing consultation carried out by the Whorlton Community Association last year in November which overwhelmingly endorsed option 2 preferring "isolated small housing developments in groups of 1 to 3 dwellings, in appropriate locations". This option has been adopted by the WVNP Committee as a basis for the WVNP regarding future housing development.

The WVNP will cover 20 year period from 2015 to 2035 and the Committee is seeking your views on the number and type of the dwellings to be built within the period. The committee feels that about 10 dwellings in all including any low cost housing could be built with preference to family type dwellings in order to attract younger people and to redress the imbalance of older people and large number of small dwellings in the village.

The closing date for the submission of your entry is **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014** and your entry is to be posted into the collection box at The Bridge Public House. Additional copies of the form are available at The Bridge Public House.

The result of the consultation will be assessed by the Clerk to the Parish Council. Your anonymity will be secured, however, in order to ensure the legality of the consultation, your name, address and signature must be provided. The consultation is open to anyone over 18 years of age living in the village.

**QUESTION 1**

Please state your preference for the number of new dwellings in Whorlton over the 20 year period.

.....

**QUESTION 2**

Please state your preference for the type of housing to be built, ie family houses, bungalows or flats, low cost housing etc.

.....

Your Name .....

Signature .....

Your address .....

Prepared and printed by the WVNP Committee.  
November 2014

Consultation Results

<u>Postcode</u>	<u>Number of Dwellings</u>	<u>Bungalows</u>	<u>3/4 Bed Family Houses</u>	<u>Low Cost Family Housing Note</u>
DL12 8XD	3	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XQ	3	100%	0%	0%
DL12 8XQ	3	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XQ	4	50%	50%	0%
DL12 8XD	5	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8UZ	6	100%	0%	0%
DL12 8UZ	6	100%	0%	0%
DL12 8XD	6	50%	50%	0% not exact percentages
DL12 8XQ	6	50%	50%	0% not exact percentages
DL12 8XD	6	50%	50%	0% not exact percentages
DL12 8XF	8	100%	0%	0%
DL12 8XA	10	50%	50%	0% not exact percentages
DL12 8XD	10	0%	0%	100%
DL12 8XD	10	50%	50%	0% not exact percentages
DL12 8XA	10	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XA	10	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XD	10	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XL	10	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XQ	10	33%	33%	33% not exact percentages
DL12 8XA	10	50%	50%	0% not exact percentages
DL12 8XD	12	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XA	15	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XQ	15	33%	33%	33% not exact percentages
DL12 8XA	16	0%	100%	0%
DL12 8XD	18	33%	33%	33% not exact percentages
DL12 8XQ	20	33%	33%	33% not exact percentages
DL12 8XD	20	25%	25%	50%
DL12 8XD	30	33%	33%	33% not exact percentages
<b>AVERAGES</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>33.57%</b>	<b>55.00%</b>	<b>11.25%</b>



**From:** Daniel Woodward <Daniel.Woodward@nwl.co.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Whorlton Neighbourhood Plan  
**Date:** 27 April 2015 14:33:06 GMT+01:00  
**To:** 'George Stastny' <georgestastny@gmail.com>  
▶ 1 Attachment, 132 KB

---

George,

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to comment on the housing proposals for your neighbourhood plan.

I have taken a look at the Whorlton area on our sewer mapping system. Any development within the region will drain to Whorlton Sewage Treatment Works (STW). This is located to the south of the village close to the river. This is a relatively small STW which serves only the village.

At this moment in time I am not aware of any issues with the STW. I do not anticipate any issues with the addition of 10 no dwellings over the next 20 years to the STW.

In terms of the sewerage network, I have attached a plan showing historic flooding events in the area. Please note that these areas are only what have been reported to NW and that these areas only flooded in what is known as an "extreme event". An "extreme event" is something NW class as a storm that is of a higher intensity than that the sewer is designed to cope with.

With this information we would have no concerns about the addition of 10 no dwellings in the area to the sewerage network.

We would still recommend development use the hierarchy of preference when disposing of surface water. This would be firstly discharging to soakaway or watercourse before attempting to connect to the public sewer.

I hope you find this information useful and I wish you the best of luck with the development of the Whorlton neighbourhood plan.

If there is any further information you require please feel free to contact me directly and I will be happy to give any support I can.

Thanks

Daniel Woodward  
New Development- Planning Team

T: 0191 419 6731      E: daniel.woodward@nwl.co.uk  
W: www.nwl.co.uk

Northumbrian Water, Leat House, Pattinson Road, Washington, NE38 8LB

## NAIRN'S COUNTY DURHAM



Ian Nairn

### Whorlton

In the mellowest part of Durham, between Darlington and Barnard Castle. A pert triangular green, as concise and finished as a theorem, beautifully kept up. The feel of an estate village but without the regimentation: a natural and organic plan, trimmed up and put on parade. It must never overflow beyond the boundaries of the green. Here for once is a place which is in its ideal state now: all it needs is maintenance.

Apparently so correct, Whorlton has a surprise up its sleeve. Exactly one field away from the southern end of the green, the landscape drops away suddenly a hundred feet to the Tees. This demure miss was sitting on a cliff-edge all the time.





Historic England

Ms Nadia Wetherell  
Sustainability Strategy Officer  
Durham County Council  
Regeneration and Economic  
Development  
County Hall  
Room 5 – 66/72  
Durham  
DH1 5UQ

Direct 0191 269 1237

Dial:

Your Ref:

Our Ref: AWH/DU  
Whorlton Village Neighbourhood  
Plan and SEA

Date: 10 June 2015

*Nadia*

Dear Ms ~~Wetherell~~

### **Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan – Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Thank you for your email of 4 June 2015 inviting Historic England to comment on the SEA Screening Report in connection with the above draft Neighbourhood Plan. We are pleased to do so. In replying, I would also take this opportunity, if I may, to make some observations on the Plan itself which I hope the Parish Council will find helpful.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Firstly, however, I would concur that, insofar as the protection of the historic environment is concerned, the Neighbourhood Plan would be unlikely to result in significant environmental effects sufficient to require an Environmental Report to accompany it. Please note that it is Historic England, rather than the newly-created charity English Heritage, that is the statutory authority responsible for dealing with such planning consultations (although it is not a statutory consultee in respect of the EU Habitats Directive and Habitat Regulations Assessment).

#### General observations on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Historic England is pleased to observe that a fundamental aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard and enhance the conservation area and its numerous heritage assets, and in so doing seek to make the village and the community more sustainable. Such aspirations are well aligned with the government's planning policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).



Historic England, Bessie Surtees House, 41-44 Sandhill, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 3JF  
Telephone 0191 269 1255 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



The key to good plan-making is having a sound evidence base. In this respect I note that the conservation area does not have a character appraisal or management plan – two guiding documents which good practice suggests should accompany such a designation.

In order to be able to properly assess the possible impact of development upon the conservation area (ensure it is sustainable) it is necessary to identify what is significant (valuable and important) about each part of it – deciding in what ways change might harm that significance and deciding where change might be a good thing.

When character appraisals are carried out, they bring with them an opportunity to review, for example, the area boundary – whether it needs to be adjusted to include land and buildings which are now thought to be of conservation interest, or remove areas which have altered such that they have lost their historic value. Apparent to me is the importance of the river corridor to the character and appearance of the village. This being the case, it may be worthwhile giving consideration to extending the conservation area boundary to include both sides, and in so doing incorporate the whole of the suspension bridge and the site of the historic ferry crossing. It is also a good opportunity, as the Parish Council has pointed out, to introduce tighter planning controls over permitted development through the imposition of an Article 4 Direction (see Policy WP5).

Character appraisals can also be the catalyst for the identification of buildings and features which, although not statutorily designated, are nevertheless of importance and worthy of inclusion on a local list. Such heritage assets are afforded a greater degree of protection within the planning system by virtue of paragraphs 135 and 136 of the NPPF. Character appraisals can also be the catalyst for the identification of any heritage assets which may be at risk for any one of a variety of reasons (paragraph 7.5.4 refers). Local lists, heritage at risk registers, Article 4 Directions are just some of the positive and proactive actions that can be the basis of a management plan for the conservation area.

Given the extent of planned change in respect of a number of other conservation areas in Durham, preparing a character appraisal or drawing up a local list for the village may not necessarily be a priority for the County Council, but as priorities for the local community they are perhaps something which, with some assistance, they could quite conveniently and effectively produce themselves.

One further matter to comment on as regards boundaries relates to the extent of the Neighbourhood Plan area itself. Given that development adjacent or otherwise in close proximity to a conservation area has the potential to harm its character and appearance, the Parish Council may wish to consider whether or not the plan area should be extended for this reason to include land which is important to its amenity/setting. By this means some additional sites of local heritage interest (including archaeological sites) may be safeguarded.



Historic England, Bessie Surtees House, 41-44 Sandhill, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 3JF  
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Specific comments on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Paragraph 3.5 – listed buildings are usually referred to as grade I, grade II\* or grade II. Whilst Whorlton Bridge is indeed listed grade II\*, it is also a Scheduled Monument, the designation of which takes precedence in legislative terms.

Policy WP2: *Housing allocations* – as drafted this is not a policy.

Paragraph 7.5.1 – where walls etc. form part of the curtilage of a listed building they are quite likely to be protected by that listing.

Policy WP5: *Protection of the Environment* – as drafted this is not a policy. It is written as what might best be described as a series of community/County Council actions, all of which could be satisfactorily addressed through a conservation area character appraisal and management plan

I trust these comments and observations are of some assistance to you and the Parish Council. Should you or they wish to discuss any of the matters raised I shall be happy to assist. I have attached for the attention of the Parish Council in particular some websites which they may find helpful as they progress their Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours sincerely,

*Alan Hunter*

**Alan Hunter**

**Principal Historic Environment Planning Adviser: North East**

e-mail: [Alan.Hunter@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:Alan.Hunter@HistoricEngland.org.uk)



Historic England, Bessie Surtees House, 41-44 Sandhill, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 3JF  
Telephone 0191 269 1255 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

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## **ANNEX**

Historic England provides general advice on its web site, which we would recommend should be read before engaging with the neighbourhood planning process:

<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>

The Historic England Guide to Heritage Protection provides further information on Neighbourhood Plans: <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/historic-environment/neighbourhoodplanning/>

Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders:

<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/consent/ndo/>

The Government has produced a guidance note on neighbourhood planning:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-planning>

Further information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance which contains a section devoted to neighbourhood planning:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>

This includes advice on how heritage issues should be addressed in Neighbourhood Plans:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/plan-making-historic-environment/>



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Telephone 0191 269 1255 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

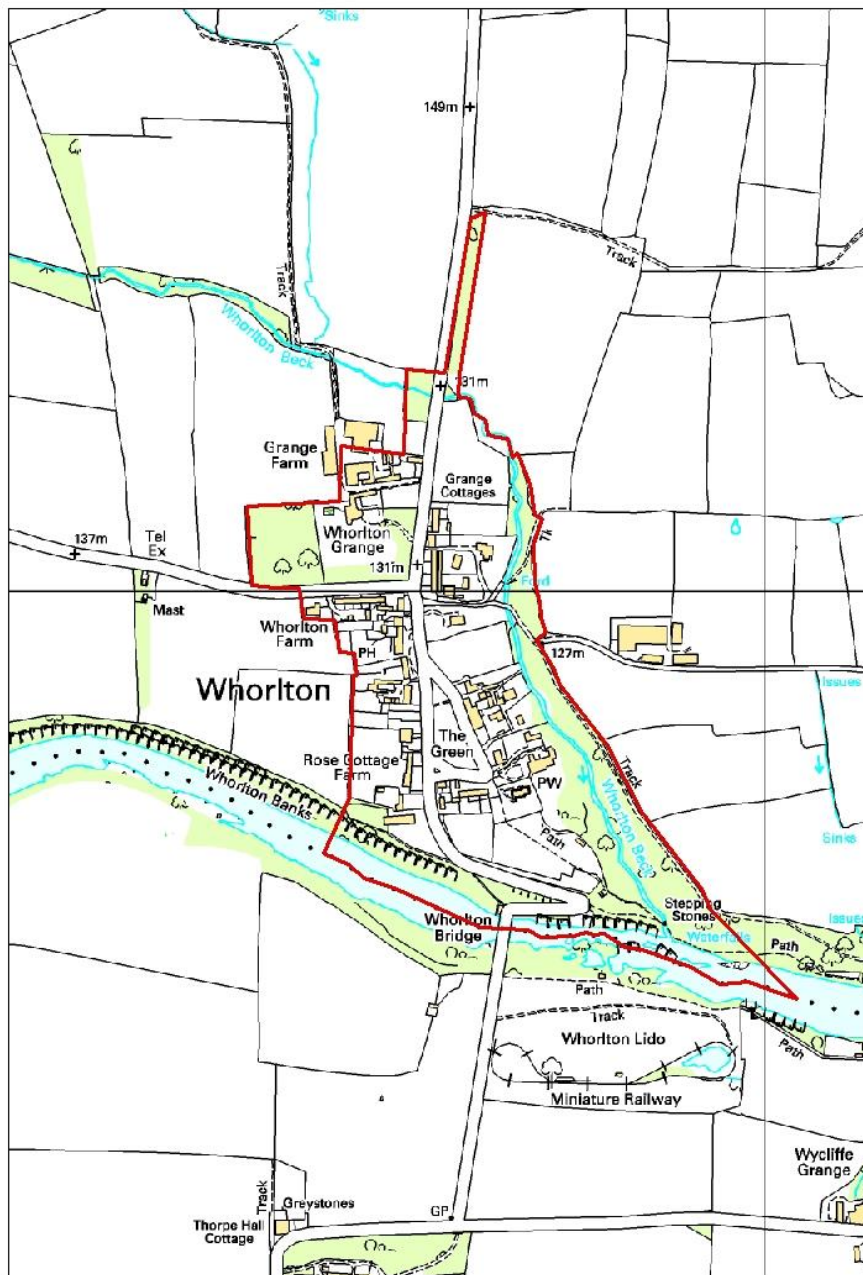
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# Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan

## Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report





	SCREENING SUMMARY	
.	SCREENING SUMMARY	iii
	REGION	
1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND	4
3.	SEA SCREENING	7
4.	HRA SCREENING	14

**Table 1 Summary of Neighbourhood Plan**

Details of Neighbourhood Plan	
Name of Neighbourhood Plan	Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan
Geographic Coverage of the Plan	Village of Whorlton
Key topics / scope of Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sets future limits to housing development</li> <li>● Enables home working</li> <li>● Seeks protection for non designated heritage assets</li> <li>● Seeks protection for existing amenities</li> </ul>

**Table 2 Summary of SEA Screening Opinion**

Local Authority Details	
Name and job title of officer undertaking screening opinion	Nadia Wetherell, Sustainable Strategy Officer
Date of assessment	January 2015
Conclusion of assessment	SEA is not required
Reason for conclusion	Due to the protective nature of policies within the WVNP and localised scale of likely effects the WVNP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
Name and job title of officer approving screening opinion	Stephen McDonald, Senior Sustainability Strategy Officer
Date of approval	13th February 2015
Date of final screening document	13th July 2015

**Table 3 Summary of HRA Screening Opinion**

Local Authority Details	
Name and job title of officer undertaking screening opinion	Nadia Wetherell, Sustainable Strategy Officer
Date of assessment	January 2015
Conclusion of assessment	The WVNP will not result in likely significant effects to European Protected Sites. Appropriate Assessment is not required
Reason for conclusion	The majority of policies will not lead to built development. The effect of Policy WP1 that could encourage new housing development within Whorlton and a subsequent, potential increase in recreational pressure to European Protected sites was screened out following Appropriate Assessment of the County Durham Plan.
Name and job title of officer approving screening opinion	Tammara Morris Hale, Senior Ecologist

Local Authority Details	
Date of approval	13th February 2015
Date of final screening document	13th July 2015

**Table 4 Summary of Consultations**

Statutory Consultee	Summary of Comments
Historic England	Insofar as the protection of the historic environment is concerned, the Neighbourhood Plan would be unlikely to result in significant environmental effects sufficient to require an Environmental Report to accompany it.
Environment Agency	Based on the issues within our remit, we did not feel an SEA would be required in this instance. – this is largely due to the NP NOT defining /allocating specific sites for new development.
Natural England	<p>Natural England agrees with the conclusion of the SEA screening report that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.</p> <p>Natural England agrees with the conclusion of the HRA screening report that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European Sites.</p>

## Background

**1.1** The Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan Area is situated on the north bank of the River Tees, approximately 5km east of Barnard Castle. The village is built around a triangular green and was first recorded as Queornington c. 1050 meaning farmstead by the mill stream (Whorlton Beck).

**1.2** With its old established triangular green and surrounding stone buildings, Whorlton is a very attractive Teesdale village elevated and largely hidden from the steep wooded banks of the Tees nearby. The village is inevitably linked to the river with its suspension bridge and network of footpaths and lanes down to and along the river bank.

**1.3** The Neighbourhood Plan Area contains a high proportion of listed heritage assets, is designated as a Conservation Area and contains within its boundary one Local Wildlife Site (Whorlton Banks) pertaining to the presence of ancient woodland. In addition to the need to protect such a high quality environment the area faces challenges common to many rural areas within County Durham including but not limited to:

- Access to services, facilities and employment
- Ageing population and retention of young people
- Hard to heat homes

**1.4** The objective of the Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter known as 'WVNP') is to retain and enhance the character and amenities of the neighbourhood area whilst ensuring that future development in Whorlton reflects the community's needs and aspirations and enables home working opportunities.

## Purpose of this Report

**1.5** This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the contents of the draft WVNP require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

**1.6** This report will also screen to determine whether or not the WVNP requires an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). An Appropriate Assessment is required when it is deemed that significant negative effects are likely to occur to protected European wildlife sites known as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA's) and Ramsar sites as a result of the implementation of a plan or project. The term Habitats Regulations Assessment, HRA for brevity, has come into use for describing the overall assessment process including screening and the specific Appropriate Assessment stage.

**1.7** The legislative background set out in the following section outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. Section 3, provides a screening assessment of both the likely significant environmental effects of the WVNP and the need for SEA. Section 4, provides the HRA screening assessment of the likely significant effects of the implementation of the WVNP and the need for Appropriate Assessment.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

**2.1** The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005).

**2.2** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required Local Authorities to produce Sustainability Appraisals (SA) for all local development documents to meet the requirement of the EU Directive on SEA. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA. This is also discussed within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 165.

**2.3** However, the 2008 Planning Act amended the requirement to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal for only development plan documents (DPD's), but did not remove the requirement to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment. A Neighbourhood Plan is not a development plan document and therefore does not legally require a Sustainability Appraisal. Where appropriate, however, an SEA assessment still needs to be undertaken in line with the SEA regulations.

**2.4** The purpose of SEA is to:

"Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."

(2001/42/EC)

## Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

**2.5** HRA is required by Article 6 (3) of the EU Habitats Directive and by regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) HRA requires that an Appropriate Assessment is undertaken of plans and projects where the potential for significant effects upon European Sites are deemed likely. If following Appropriate Assessment, adverse effects upon the integrity of a European site cannot be objectively ruled out or mitigated, the plan should not be consented unless further legal tests including Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest can be demonstrated. Regulation 61 states that:

A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which:

A) Is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

B) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,

Must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

**3.1** The WVNP committee has requested a SEA screening opinion of its Neighbourhood Plan. It is Durham County Council's responsibility to assess whether the policies and proposals in the WVNP are likely to have 'significant environmental effects'. The Plan does not have to be at a final stage to be assessed.

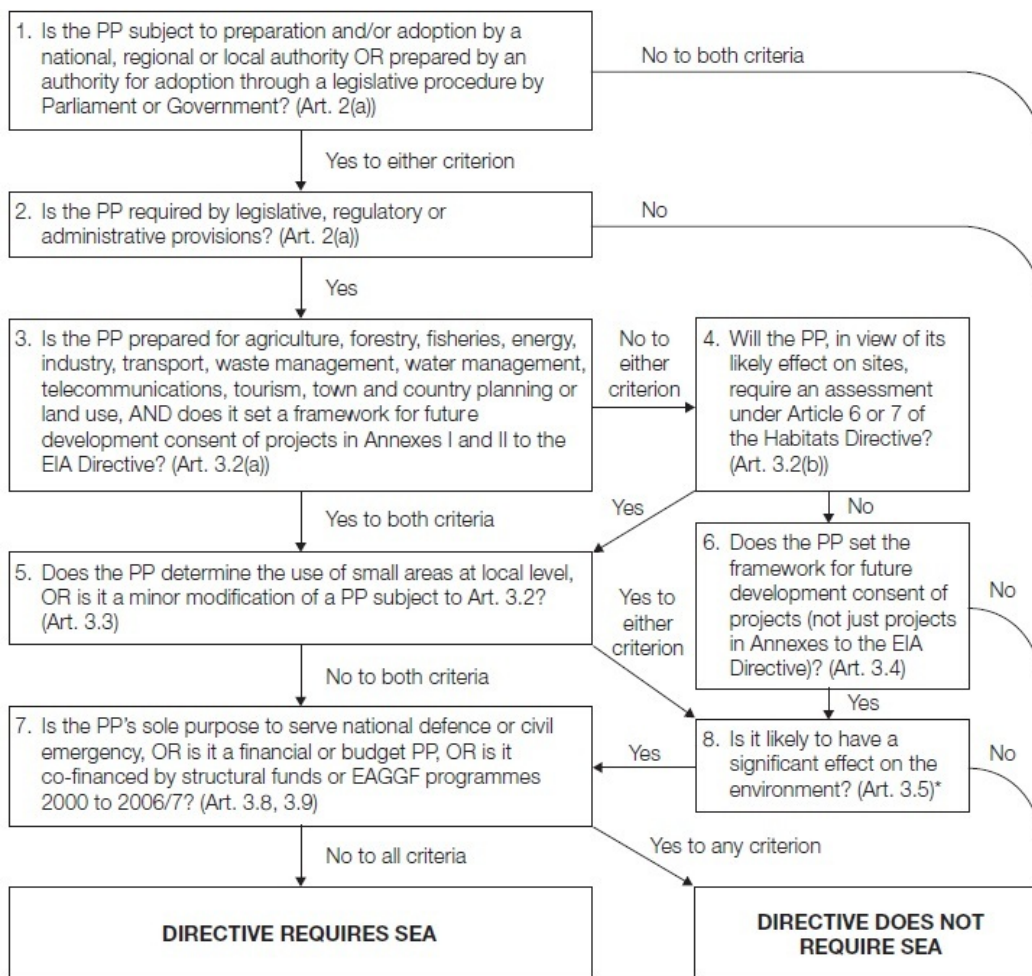
**3.2** The screening opinion assessment is undertaken in two parts: the first part will assess whether the plan requires SEA (as per the flow chart which follows); and the second part of the assessment will consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

**3.3** The three statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) will be consulted to determine whether they agree with the conclusion of this screening opinion, in establishing whether the WVNP may have a 'significant environmental effect'. Should it be concluded that SEA is required the WVNP committee will need to undertake a SEA with a SEA Scoping Report exercise as the first stage.

**3.4** The government guidance 'A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' sets out the following approach to be taken in determining whether SEA is required:

**Figure 1 Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



\*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

**3.5** The process in figure 1 has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in Table 5. Table 5 shows the assessment of whether the WVNP will require SEA. The questions in table 5 are drawn from the diagram above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied. Table 6 provides specific detail on question 8 in relation to the criteria for determining likely significant effects referred to in Article 3(5).

**Table 5 Assessment 1: Establishing the need for SEA**

Stage	Answer	Reason
1. Is the PP subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2 (a))	Y	WVNP is not a Development Plan Document, however if the document receives 50% or more 'yes' votes through a referendum it will be adopted by Durham County Council.



Stage	Answer	Reason
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2 (a))	N	Communities have a right to be able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, however communities are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan however is subject to 'provisions' that require it to be prepared in a formal way and if adopted would form part of the statutory development plan. Therefore it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if an SEA is required.
3. Is the PP required for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art.3.2(a))	N	The WVNP is prepared for town and country planning or land use but it does NOT set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art.3.2(b))	N	See HRA screening assessment in section 4 of this report
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	N/A	NOT APPLICABLE
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	The WVNP sets policies which planning applications within the WVNP area must adhere to.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7 (Art. 3.8, 3.9)	N/A	NOT APPLICABLE
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	N	Please see Table 6
<b>Conclusion</b>	The WVNP does <b>NOT</b> require SEA	

**Table 6 Assessment 2: Likely Significant Effects on the Environment**

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
<b>The characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:</b>	

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	The WVNP would, if made form part of the statutory Development Plan and as such does contribute to the framework for future consent of projects, albeit these will be localised in nature and are likely to have limited resource implications.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The WVNP will need to be in general conformity with the relevant Development Plan. Therefore the WVNP should not significantly influence other plans and programmes
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	<p>It is a condition of Neighbourhood Planning that Neighbourhood Plans are to demonstrably contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. The WVNP aims to promote sustainable development through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognition of the need for family housing to re-balance an ageing population and contribute to the retention of existing services and facilities.</li> <li>● encouraging development that enables home working in an area that is largely reliant on private car use</li> <li>● Seeking to enhance level of protection for existing local amenities and encourage local food growing opportunities</li> <li>● Identifying non-designated heritage assets for local 'listing'</li> </ul>
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor public transport links and limited community facilities (e.g. no local shop or school) and employment leading to reliance on private car use</li> <li>● The housing stock within Whorlton can be described as 'hard to heat' i.e. predominantly solid wall construction and off the gas network leading to carbon intensive heating methods unless renewable and low carbon technologies are employed</li> </ul>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	The WVNP is not directly connected to the implementation of European legislation
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Whilst the WVNP identifies a target housing provision of ten dwellings over the plan period, the probability of these coming forward is dependant upon the market and availability of suitable sites. Please note that records indicate that there have been no housing completions in Whorlton from 2011 and the WVNP does not allocate any sites, therefore land availability and suitability is unknown.

SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
	<p>Whilst the effects of new housing are generally considered to be irreversible, in the event that planning permission is granted for up to 10 dwellings Policy WP1: Housing Provision requires that these must be sited in appropriate locations. This policy along, with those in the County Durham Plan should ensure that significant adverse irreversible effects are avoided.</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>Policy WP5: Protection of environment has the potential for positive additive cumulative effects as it aims to secure protection for locally important heritage assets which are not currently listed or may not be within or form an important aspect of the setting of the conservation area. Given the geographic location and scale of the neighbourhood plan area no other cumulative effects are anticipated.</p>
The trans boundary nature of the effects	<p>There are not expected to be any significant trans boundary effects those that may occur are linked to the need for new residents to commute out of the area for employment purposes and greater access to community facilities and services. However, the scale of out commuting in terms of numbers of persons out will be minimal and the Plan aims to promote and encourage home working opportunities which may contribute towards minimising effects.</p>
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	<p>The draft policies do not provide unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. Policies consider quantity of new housing and criteria by which proposals will be considered (these take health related effect into account such as noise), home working, broadband, protection of non-designated heritage and existing facilities / services.</p>
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>The neighbourhood area follows the boundary of the conservation area and as such is small scale in nature comprising 75 dwellings and approximately 149 persons (population per unique postcode 2011). As discussed above, significant trans boundary effects are not anticipated and any effects would be localised only.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,</li> <li>- exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,</li> <li>- intensive land-use,</li> </ul>	<p>The WVNP contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 Local Wildlife Site (Whorlton Banks LWS), designated for ancient woodland</li> <li>● 10 Grade II listed buildings one of which (Whorlton Suspension Bridge) is Grade II* and also designated as a Scheduled Monument</li> <li>● 1 Conservation Area</li> <li>● The Landscape Strategy: <a href="http://www.durhamlandscape.info/Pages/Home.aspx">http://www.durhamlandscape.info/Pages/Home.aspx</a> classifies the majority of land around the</li> </ul>

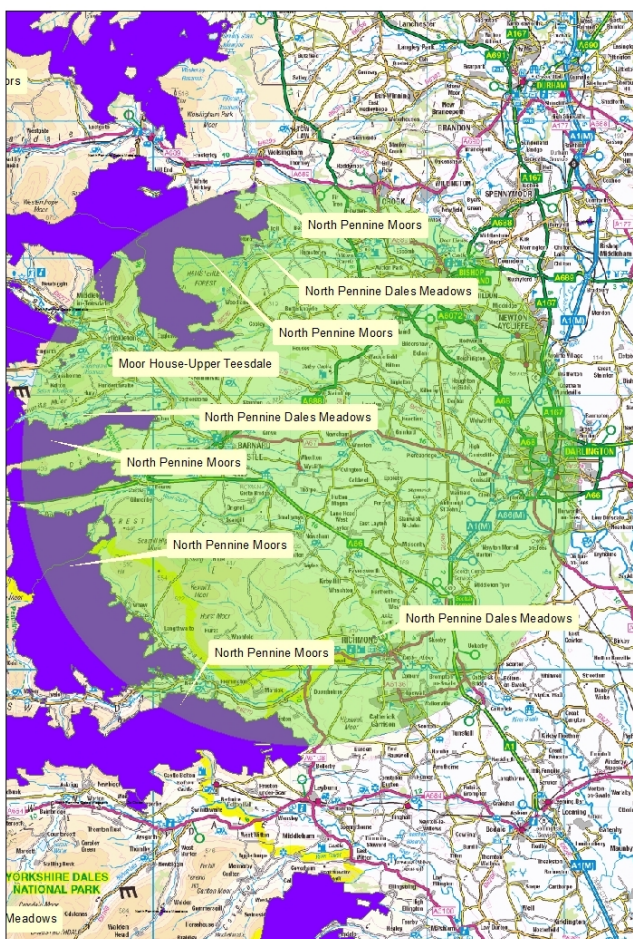
SEA Directive criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004	Assessment Commentary
	<p>Neighbourhood Area as a Landscape Conservation Area (many valued attributes and in good condition)</p> <p>There have been no known exceedances of national air quality objectives within the NP area and water quality (River Tees) is of good chemical and biological quality. The WVNP is not expected to exceed environmental limits</p> <p>The WVNP does not allocate any land for development. Proposals will be expected to make the most efficient use of land in conformity with the relevant Development Plan</p>
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Landscape is of local conservation status only
<b>Assessment 2 Conclusion</b>	Due to the protective nature of policies within the WVNP and localised scale of likely effects the WVNP is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

## Relevant European Protected Wildlife Sites

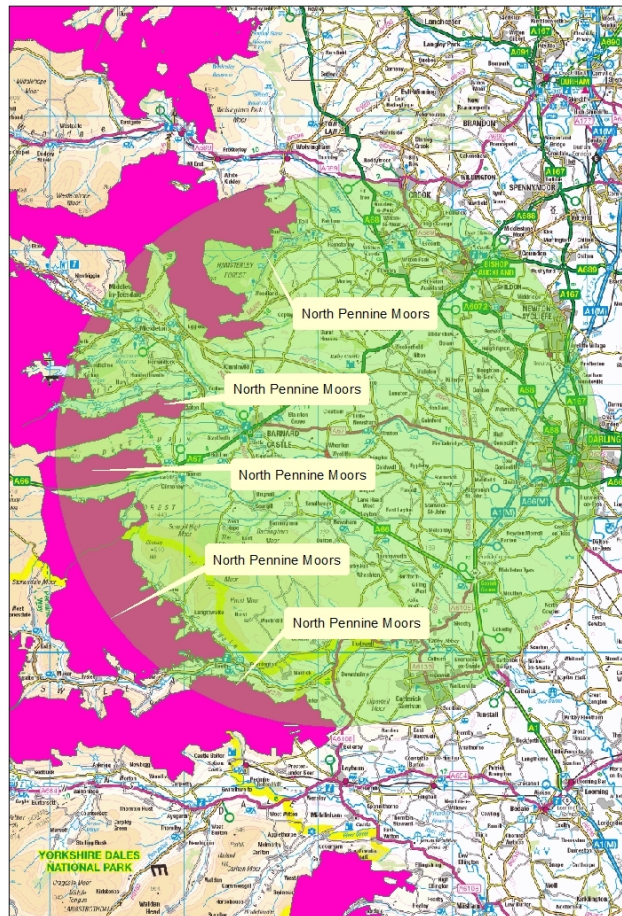
**4.1** In line with the agreed methodology of the HRA of the County Durham Plan, all sites within 20km of the plan area (in this case the neighbourhood plan area) should be included within the HRA screening exercise, in addition to those outwith the 20km radius that are ecologically / hydrologically linked or are likely to be subject to increased recreational pressure. Maps 1 and 2 show that sites falling within the 20km radius include:

- Moor House Upper Teesdale SAC
- North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC
- North Pennine Moors SAC
- North Pennine Moors SPA

**Map 1 SAC's within 20km of Whorlton Village  
Neighbourhood Plan Area**



**Map 2 SPA's within 20km of Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Area**



**4.2** As the River Tees is within close proximity to Whorlton Village neighbourhood area, consideration was also given to determining whether Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA situated downstream of the neighbourhood area should be included within the HRA. However, it is considered that adverse effects are extremely unlikely to occur based upon the distances involved between points of discharge and the SPA at Teesmouth (approximately 45km).

**4.3** The sensitivities and vulnerabilities of the sites subject to screening have been identified in the HRA of the County Durham Plan and are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7 Description of Relevant European Sites

Site	Overview	Qualifying Features	Vulnerability	Key Environmental Conditions
Moor House Upper Teesdale	Moor House Upper Teesdale has the most extensive area of Alpine and Boreal Heaths south of Scotland and has the most extensive area of juniper scrub in the UK. The summit of Cross Fell has the best developed and most extensive area of Siliceous alpine and boreal grassland in England. The site includes the least damaged and most extensive tracts of typical blanket mire in England and shows this community type up to its highest altitude in England.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp;</li> <li>Calcium-rich nutrient-poor lakes, lochs and pools.</li> <li>European dry heaths</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths; Alpine and subalpine heaths</li> <li><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands;</li> <li>Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands</li> <li>Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>; Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals</li> <li>Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands; Montane acid grasslands and Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone</li> <li><i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>); Purple moor-grass meadows</li> <li>Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels</li> <li>Mountain hay meadows</li> <li>Blanket bogs</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>); Hard-water springs depositing lime</li> <li>Alkaline fens; Base rich fens</li> </ul>	<p>Ecologically unsustainable grazing, driven by agricultural support mechanisms, has had a deleterious effect on virtually all the Annex I habitats listed, to the extent that for some habitats it is difficult to make the necessary assessments of conservation structure and function required here. This serious problem has so far been very difficult to solve, requiring fundamental policy change as well as targeted local action. Some successes have been achieved however through Wildlife Enhancement Schemes geared at moorland and pasture, and through the ESA and Countryside Stewardship schemes, while issues impacting on meadows have been largely addressed through meadow schemes. Refining scheme prescriptions in the light of monitoring feedback is an important part of delivering favourable condition. Inappropriate burning and drainage of bogs also need tackling; much progress has been made on the latter through partnerships. Acid deposition and the microclimatic shifts stemming from reservoir construction may also have implications for the vegetation, as may increased access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No loss in extent through afforestation or human activities</li> <li>No planting of conifers within the hydrological unit of blanket bog</li> <li>No significant erosion associated with human impacts (e.g. Drainage, fires, peat extraction, livestock grazing, recreational activities or military training)</li> <li>Limited air pollution</li> <li>Limited burning</li> <li>Adequate supply of water-limited drainage of wet areas</li> <li>Control of grazing pressures</li> </ul>

Site	Overview	Qualifying Features	Vulnerability	Key Environmental Conditions
North Pennine Dales Meadows	<p>The series of isolated fields that comprise this SAC encompass the range of variation exhibited by Mountain hay meadows in the UK and contains the major part of the remaining UK resources of this habitats type. The grasslands included within the SAC exhibit very limited effects of agricultural improvement and show good conservation of structure and function. A wide range of rare and local meadow species are contained within the meadows.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alpine pioneer formations of the <i>Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae</i>; High-altitude plant communities associated with areas of water seepage</li> <li>● Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>); Acidic scree</li> <li>● Calcareous and calcichist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>); Base rich scree</li> <li>● Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks</li> <li>● Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices on acid rocks</li> <li>● Limestone pavements</li> <li>● <i>Vertigo genesii</i>; Round-mouthed whorl snail</li> <li>● <i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>; Marsh saxifrage</li> </ul>	<p>These grasslands are dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with hay-cutting and no or minimal use of agrochemicals. Such management is no longer economic. Management agreements and ESA payments are being used to promote the continuation of traditional management. The refining of the prescriptions underpinning these schemes in the light of the findings of monitoring programmes is an important, continuing, part of delivering favourable condition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No reduction in area and any consequent fragmentation</li> <li>● Appropriate management (grasslands are dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with hay cutting)</li> <li>● No exposure to inorganic fertilisers and pesticides</li> </ul>



Site	Overview	Qualifying Features	Vulnerability	Key Environmental Conditions
North Pennine Moors SAC	<p>The North Pennine Moors (along with the North York Moors) hold much of the upland heathland of northern England. At higher altitudes and to the wetter west and north of the site complex, the heaths grade into extensive areas of blanket bogs. The site is considered as supporting the major area of blanket bog in England. A significant proportion remains active with accumulating peat, although these areas are often bounded by sizeable zones of currently non-active bog, albeit on deep peat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath</li> <li>● European dry heaths</li> <li>● <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands;</li> <li>● Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands</li> <li>● Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>; Grasslands on soils rich in heavy metals</li> <li>● Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands; Montane acid grasslands</li> <li>● Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone</li> <li>● Blanket bogs</li> <li>● Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>); Hard-water springs depositing lime</li> <li>● Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens</li> <li>● Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galepsietalia ladani</i>); Acidic scree</li> <li>● Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks</li> <li>● Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices on acid rocks</li> </ul>	<p>All interest features have been affected by excessive livestock grazing levels across parts of the site. These have been, and are still, encouraged by headage payments, but agreements with graziers and moorland owners, including those in Wildlife Enhancement and Countryside Stewardship schemes, are starting to overcome the problems of overgrazing. In places, the difficulty of reaching agreements on commons, which cover much of the site, means that successes are limited at present, and continues to prevent restoration. Drainage of wet areas can also be a problem; drains have been cut across many areas of blanket bog, disrupting the hydrology and causing erosion, but in most parts these are being blocked and the habitat restored under agreements. Burning is a traditional management tool on these moorlands, which contributes to maintaining high populations of SPA breeding birds. However, over-intensive and inappropriate burning is damaging to heath and blanket bog and further agreements are needed with the landowners to achieve sympathetic burning regimes. Restoration, to some degree, of a mosaic of more natural habitats across parts of the site is desirable. Acid and nitrogen deposition continue to have damaging effects on the site. Recreational activity may also be problematic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited air pollution</li> <li>● Control of grazing</li> <li>● Appropriate moorland management including management of scrub/tree/bracken encroachment</li> <li>● Limited air pollution</li> <li>● No drainage of wet areas - maintenance of wet areas</li> <li>● Maintenance of water quality - organics/silt form physical disturbance</li> <li>● Limited erosion by human impacts (e.g. Recreation)</li> <li>● Very little peat extraction (no mechanised extraction)</li> </ul>

Site	Overview	Qualifying Features	Vulnerability	Key Environmental Conditions
North Pennine Moors SPA	The habitat of North Pennine Moors SAC supports breeding pairs of Hen harrier, Merlin, Peregrine falcon, European Golden plover, Dunlin and Eurasian curlew.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles; Western acidic oak woodland</li> <li>● <i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>; Marsh saxifrage</li> <li>● <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Breeding)</li> <li>● <i>Falco columbarius</i>; Merlin (Breeding)</li> <li>● <i>Falco peregrinus</i>; Peregrine falcon (Breeding)</li> <li>● <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>; European golden plover (Breeding)</li> <li>● <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Breeding)</li> <li>● <i>Numenius arquata</i>; Eurasian curlew (Breeding)</li> </ul>	As for North Pennine Moors SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No loss of area of habitat</li> <li>● Grazing to maintain suitable moorland</li> <li>● Control of erosion and peat extraction</li> <li>● Diversity, age and structure of vegetation</li> <li>● Food availability (birds, day flying moths, small mammals, soil and ground surface invertebrates)</li> <li>● Open landscape</li> <li>● Lack of disturbance and persecution (moor burning, vehicles, stock, dogs and walkers)</li> </ul>

## Assessment of Effects

**4.4** Categorisation has been set up to identify the effect of policies upon the relevant European sites. Table 8 identifies the categories used in the assessment of effects of the WVNP.

**Table 8 Categorisation of Likely Effects**

Category	Sub Category	Description
1. No negative effect	A	Policy will not lead to built development. For example it relates to green infrastructure, design or other qualitative criteria, or it is not a land-use planning policy
	B	Policy may encourage new development but due to development type, distance from European Protected Sites and absence of connected impact pathways no negative effect is likely to occur.
	C	Policy intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures may have a positive effect on a European Site.
	D	Policy intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European Site.
	E	Policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas
	F	Policy is similar to existing County Durham Plan policy which has already been assessed as having no likely significant effects
2. No significant effect	-	No significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, because effects are trivial or minimal.
3. Likely significant effect alone	-	Policy could impact upon a European Site because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected. Alternatively, it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressure
4. Likely significant effect in combination	-	The policy would have no significant effect alone but the cumulative effects when combined with those of other policies or projects are likely to be significant

**4.5** An assessment of likely significant effects has been undertaken for all policies of the WVNP resulting in the following categorisation.

Table 9 Categorisation of WVNP Policies

Policy	Moor House Upper Teesdale SAC	North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	North Pennine Moors SAC	North Pennine Moors SPA
WP1: Housing Provision	2	2	2	2
WP2: Housing allocation	1A	1A	1A	1A
WP3: Working from home	1A	1A	1A	1A
WP4: Superfast broadband	1A	1A	1A	1A
WP5: Protection of environment	1D	1D	1D	1D
WP6: Amenities	1A	1A	1A	1A

**4.6** The findings of the assessment show that the majority of WVNP policies will have no effect upon European Protected Sites. Policy WP1 which identifies a target housing provision of ten dwellings over the plan period is considered to have no significant effect for the following reason.

**4.7** The risk of significant adverse effects as a result of increased recreational pressure arising from policies which may encourage an increase in housing numbers in Teesdale / Weardale were screened out following Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the County Durham Plan. The AA concluded that within the designated sites, the majority of users stick to PROW routes and dogs are either kept under control or restricted from sensitive areas. Visitor numbers are generally low in the area with the exception of the popular Cow Green reservoir which is well equipped and managed in respect of controlling visitor activities and nature conservation interests. In addition, the North Pennines AONB Partnership aims to allocate sufficient resources to enable a high standard of management of the Pennine Way and Teesdale Way and provide guidance and advice on exploring the North Pennines in a responsible fashion.

## Conclusion

**4.8** Following assessment it can be concluded that the implementation of the WVNP will **not result in likely significant effects** upon any of the relevant European Protected Sites.

Contact us at:

Write to: Sustainability and Climate Change  
Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Floor 5  
Rm 66-72  
Durham  
DH1 5UQ

Telephone: 03000 265543

Email: [sustainabilityappraisal@durham.gov.uk](mailto:sustainabilityappraisal@durham.gov.uk)

Date: 19 June 2015  
Our ref: 155852  
Your ref: Whorlton NP



Durham County Council  
Regeneration and Economic Development

FAO Nadia Wetherell

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Customer Services  
Hornbeam House  
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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Nadia

**Planning consultation:** Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Opinions

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 04 June 2015 which was received by Natural England on 04 June 2015.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion**

Natural England agrees with the conclusion of the SEA screening report that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

**Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion**

Natural England agrees with the conclusion of the HRA screening report that the plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European Sites.

**Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan – Draft**

**Local Sites:** The plan boundary incorporates part of the Whorlton Banks Local Wildlife Site (LWS). It should be ensured that sufficient information is available to understand the impact of the plan on the LWS. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to avoid impacts on the LWS by directing development away from the most sensitive areas with mitigation only considered when this is not possible.

**Ancient Woodland:** The plan boundary incorporates areas of semi-natural ancient woodland. Natural England have produced Standing Advice on ancient woodland and veteran trees which provides advice on how protect them from development in accordance with the requirements of Para 118 of the NPPF.

<https://www.gov.uk/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Colin Godfrey on 03000 601164. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation



please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Colin Godfrey  
Northumbria Team

## Whorlton Neighbourhood Plan Checklist

**This checklist is for Neighbourhood Plan covering Whorlton. Due to the high volume of neighbourhood plans across the county we have had to focus our detailed engagement to those areas where the environmental risks are greatest.**

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/lit\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/lit_6524_7da381.pdf)

The below checklist takes you through the issues we would consider in reviewing your Plan. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment.

We recommend completing this to check whether we are likely to have any concerns with your Neighbourhood Plan at later stages.

### Flood Risk

Your Neighbourhood Plan should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:

- National Planning Policy Framework – para.100  
‘Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.’

If your Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations.

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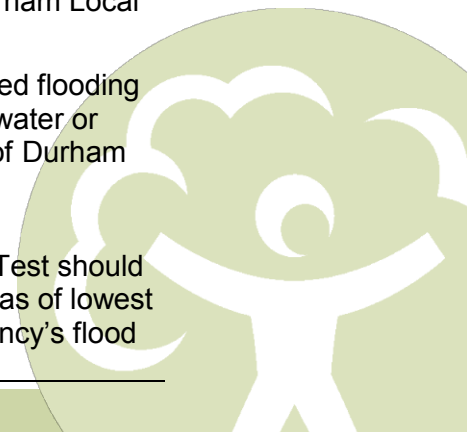
How?                      Input postcodes or place names at:  
<http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=357683.0&y=355134.0&scale=1&layerGroups=default&ep=map&textonly=off&lang=e&topic=floodmap>

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If there are no areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3:                      We note that there is no sites specifically identified for the construction of new development through your Neighbourhood Plan, but we would advise that any future proposals are directed away from areas where there is a risk of flooding. This is consistent with the aims of national planning policy and the emerging policies in the County Durham Local Plan.

If you are aware that any of the sites have previously suffered flooding or are at risk of other sources of flood risk such as surface water or groundwater flooding we recommend you seek the advice of Durham County Council.

If sites proposed include areas at risk of flooding:                      In accordance with national planning policy the Sequential Test should be undertaken to ensure development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk. This should be informed by the Environment Agency’s flood





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map for planning and Durham County Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). We recommend you contact Durham County Council to discuss this requirement further.

We would have concerns if development is allocated in this high risk flood zone without the Sequential Test being undertaken.

It is important that your Plan also considers whether the flood risk issues associated with these sites can be safely managed to ensure development can come forward.

**Next steps** Please contact us (see details below) for further advice if any sites include areas of Flood Zone 3, which is defined as having a high probability of flooding, as we may have concerns with your Plan.

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## **Wastewater Treatment**

The Durham County Water Cycle Study 2012 did not identify Whorlton as a specified settlement where sewerage headroom and water supply had been assessed against future capacity. It is noted however, that Northumbrian Water Ltd have been consulted during the preparation process of the Neighbourhood Plan and have confirmed that the proposed number of dwellings can be serviced from the existing network assuming development occurs as forecast. The recent extension and upgrade to the Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) serving the village ensure that adequate provision has been made to maintain high quality chemical and biological health to the River Tees.

Surface water comprises the greatest proportion of volume in combined sewer systems therefore removing it can have the beneficial effect of reduce the flow arriving at the STW, freeing up headroom within the sewer system. Surface water can be managed on sites with Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) instead of being directed to a public sewer and we would recommend that any proposed housing site should be designed to mimic natural catchment processes using a sustainable drainage approach i.e. SUDS. Mimicking natural catchment processes will help to limit surface water on the site.

## **Water Management**

In February 2011, the Government signalled its belief that more locally focussed decision making and action should sit at the heart of improvements to the water environment. This is widely known as the catchment-based approach and has been adopted to deliver requirements under the Water Framework Directive. It seeks to:

- deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level; and
- to encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision-making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the environment.

Whorlton Neighbourhood is within the Northumbria River Basin Management Plan area. This area is subdivided into catchments. The relevant catchment for your District is the Tees catchment. A Catchment Partnership has been established for each of these to direct and coordinate relevant activities and projects within the catchment through the production of a Catchment Management Plan. The Catchment Partnerships are supported by a broad range of organisations and individuals representing a whole host of interests.

The following website provides information that should be of use in developing your Neighbourhood Plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-basin-management-plan>

## **Protection of Biodiversity**

We would recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account when looking to fund local infrastructure. The environment Agency approve of the use of local policies within the Neighbourhood plan identifying specific sites of high environmental value combined with an overarching conservation approach to the parish as a whole.

## **Protection of Environment: other issues**

It is noted that within the Neighbourhood Plan that there is an aspiration for the extension to the Parish Cemetery. Whilst any application for planning permission for this type of proposal would require the Environment Agency to be consulted, it should be noted that such proposals will require a screening assessment to ensure groundwaters and outfall into the River Tees are not affected.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy**

We would recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account when looking to fund local infrastructure where applicable ( and in conjunction with any policies contained within relevant plans concerning the County Durham Council area) .