

West Bedlington Neighbourhood Plan

Draft vision, objectives and potential themes for planning policies and community actions

Draft vision

The draft vision sets out what the West Bedlington Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve over the plan period to 2036, it will inform all of the draft policies and community actions contained within the emerging plan.

Draft Vision

By 2036 West Bedlington will comprise a sustainable and cohesive community. There will be an appreciation of the importance of the heritage of the area, which is vital to the areas sense of place, as well as giving local communities a sense of belonging.

Improvements will have been made to the local environment, employment opportunities, services and facilities which will enhance the quality of life of residents. Communities will be well-connected, via sustainable transport routes to major employment opportunities as well as and greater services and facilities beyond the plan area.

The important environmental and historic character of the area will have been maintained and enhanced by ensuring new development is of an appropriate scale and design, as well as reflecting the rural setting of the plan area. Important green spaces will be protected for the benefit of future generations.

Draft objectives

To deliver the vision, four draft objectives have been developed. The objectives clearly relate to the issues identified through early engagement. The draft planning policies and community actions contained within the plan will deliver the objectives.

Draft Objectives

Objective 1 – Quality of life

- Ensuring new development is sustainable, contributes positively to the built, historic and natural environment of the plan area. New development will achieve a balance between development and protecting important green spaces.

Objective 2 – Community well-being

- Building on the strong sense of community across the plan area and recognising the diverse needs of existing and future residents. Supporting the provision of different types of housing that people can afford and meet identified needs, including those of an ageing population. Ensuring the local community have access to the services and facilities they need.

Objective 3 – Local economy

- Supporting both existing and the creation of new employment opportunities across the plan area, as well as protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Objective 4 - Accessibility

- Promoting access to sustainable modes of transport, to connect local communities to the services and facilities which they require. Whilst ensuring the environmental quality of the plan area is protected by effectively managing traffic.

Draft Planning Policy Themes

Draft areas for potential planning policies have been identified under each of the relevant objectives.

Quality of life

Sustainable development:

- Overarching policy setting out what the presumption in favour of sustainable development means within the plan area;
- Promoting good quality design in new development to ensure new development reflects the character, scale, layout, mass, materials etc of the area;
- Define a settlement boundary – to manage the location of new development and identify what development can take place in the open countryside (relationship with Northumberland Local Plan).

Natural environment:

- Protecting/ enhancing green infrastructure assets – if they can be mapped;
- Biodiversity – protecting/ enhancing;
- Identification of areas of local green space – where they meet the tests of national planning policy and guidance;
- Identification of areas of protected open space.

Built and historic environment:

- Listed buildings;
- Conservation Area.

Community well-being

Housing:

- Identification of housing sites – would need to be informed by an assessment of potential sites and understanding of the level of housing need;
- Rural exceptions site policy – to identify when development could take place outside the settlement boundary

Community services and facilities:

- Protection and enhancement of community services and facilities

Local economy

- Support for employment development;
- Enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Accessibility

- Active travel routes – routes used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. They can include established pathways and cycle routes, public rights of way, bridle paths and paths of a more informal nature;
- Transport and new developments.

Draft community action themes

- Village enhancements
- Opportunities to enhance access to leisure facilities
- Any local projects already planned/ underway e.g local history?
- Facilities for older and younger people;
- Walking opportunities e.g. heritage walks/ health walks and improvements to existing paths
- Public toilets