4.1 THEME 1: A CITY WITH A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

4.1.1 Vision and Objectives

4.7
Vision
Ensuring that developments meet current needs without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs. All new development will contribute to a long-term sustainable future for Durham City by ensuring a satisfactory balance among environmental, social and economic outcomes.

4.8
Objectives

1. To ensure that sites approved for development will promote sustainable development;
2. To ensure that buildings approved for development will promote sustainable development.

4.1.2 Context

4.9 Sustainable development is the golden thread that runs throughout the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, para 14) and through our Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of planning is to promote sustainable development that achieves a successful balance among three functions (NPPF, para 7).

4.10 **The economic function** is to contribute 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. Durham City is

geographically constrained so our Neighbourhood Plan must make the very best use of the available sites. It must also identify and coordinate development requirements, including the provision of a modern transport and communications infrastructure.

4.11 **The social function** is to support strong, vibrant, balanced and healthy communities by meeting the housing needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services that meet the community's varied needs and support its health, educational, social and cultural well-being. In Durham City we face the particular challenge of accommodating a large student population.

4.12 **The environmental function** is to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, all of which are particularly rich in Durham City. This function will include helping to increase biodiversity, using natural resources prudently as we move to a low carbon economy, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change. In Durham City this requires particular attention to building resilience to flooding and safeguarding the high qualities of the built and natural environment.

4.1.3 Justification

4.13 The sustainable development policies presented below put forward overall requirements that sites and buildings proposed for planning approval should strive to meet. Not every requirement will be applicable to every proposal and detailed requirements will be specified in subsequent themes. The policies are intended to indicate that planning applications will receive support in so far as they optimise measures that promote sustainable development. These general development policies have been included to avoid unnecessary repetition in later sections and also to set a sustainable framework and tone for the whole Plan.

4.14 There are five key environmental sustainability issues relevant to Our Neighbourhood: resilience to climate change, air quality, water quality, flood risk, and protection and enhancement of green assets (covered in depth in Theme 2b: Green Infrastructure).

Resilience to climate change

4.15 Section 10 of the NPPF (para. 93 to 108) covers 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change'. it notes that " Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development." Proactive strategies are needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.

4.16 Durham County Council has addressed sustainability in their 'Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan' (County Durham Environment Partnership, 2015a,b). The strategy has seven key themes; relevant ones to this issue are:

- A low carbon economy including: encouraging green jobs, technology innovation (e.g. micro/community energy generation) and green tourism
- The built environment including: the challenge to ensure current buildings and businesses are energy efficient and to encourage uptake of Sustainable Urban Drainage
- The natural environment including: protecting and enhancing the network of green spaces and corridors, enhancing biodiversity and ensuring more resilience to climate change, encouraging water management
- Transport and infrastructure including: promoting travel choices and alternatives to private motor travel, and to diesel and petrol cars (e.g. providing electric vehicle charging points)
- Community engagement: which is integral to successful delivery of a low carbon future.

The Delivery Plan states that the Council wants to engage with residents, groups and businesses so as to successfully deliver the Strategy.

4.17 The Council further supports sustainability in the ' Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030' (County Durham Partnership, 2014). Relevant aspects include: Altogether greener - deliver a cleaner and more attractive sustainable environment; reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change. The County Durham 'Green Infrastructure Strategy' (Durham County Council, 2012b) supports green infrastructure which is important to manage flooding and to help to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Air quality

4.18 The government has produced a 'Draft UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide' and outlined a Clean Air Zone Framework (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017a,b). The aim of the draft Air Quality Plan is to reduce concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide around roads and to achieve the statutory limit values for the whole of the UK within the shortest possible time. Local authorities are required to take the lead in tackling this by establishing Air Quality Management Areas, where applicable, and drawing up an action plan detailing remedial measures. A Clean Air Zone is "an area where targeted action is taken to improve air quality [from all sources of pollution] ... in order to shape the urban environment in a way that delivers improved health benefits and supports economic growth". With "measures to accelerate the transition to a low emission economy ... and restrictions to encourage only the cleanest vehicles to operate in the city." (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017a, p.1,2)

4.19 Durham County Council declared an Air Quality Monitoring Area in May 2011, extended in July 2014, for those parts of the City where air quality is a risk to human health (i.e. the A690 from Gilesgate roundabout to Stonebridge; Gilesgate Bank (leading to Sunderland Road and Marshall Terrace); New Elvet; Claypath; Framwellgate Peth). In

order to address the issues an Air Quality Action Plan was approved in June 2016 (AECOM, 2016). Neighbourhood plans have limited means for addressing this issue as the cause is principally vehicular traffic exhaust emissions. However, the thrust of Theme 5: Transport in our Neighbourhood Plan is to promote and support alternatives to private motor vehicles, i.e. walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Water quality

4.20 The River Wear lies in the Northumbria river basin district. A management plan for this river basin has been produced (Environment Agency, 2016). The purpose of a river basin management plan is to provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment. Part of the way to do this is to inform decisions on land-use planning. Neighbourhood plans have limited means for addressing this issue. However, the policies in our Plan must try to ensure that developments do not undertake activities that negatively affect, either directly or indirectly, the quality of the water environment, and where possible they reduce their impact on the water environment.

Flood risk

4.21 The River Wear flows through Our Neighbourhood and there are Zone 3 Flood Risk areas on both banks: historically there have been serious floods every few years. The NPPF (para. 100 to 104) and Planning Practice Guidance on 'Flood risk and coastal change' cover the approach to development and flood risk and the Environment Agency has produced a flood map for planning (currently in beta version). The NPPF advocates a sequential approach to the allocation of sites for future development and/or regeneration, in which areas of very low, or no flood risk are sought as a priority. The Flood Zones comprise:

- Zone 3b - functional floodplain
- Zone 3a - high probability of flooding
- Zone 2 - medium probability of flooding
- Zone 1 - low probability of flooding

The sequential test requires that:

1. The overall aim of decision-makers should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1.
2. Where there are no reasonable available sites in Flood Zone 1, decision-makers should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonable available sites in Flood Zone 2.
3. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2 should decision-makers consider the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses.

Typically, residential development is considered ‘more vulnerable’ for planning purposes, whereas commercial development will fall into ‘less vulnerable’. Where a risk of flooding has been identified within a site, it will be necessary to incorporate design measures to ensure that this is mitigated safely, and does not result in increase in flood risk elsewhere. In our Neighbourhood Plan no designated housing sites lie within 'Zone 3a High

probability of flooding' and 'Zone 3b The functional floodplain' and no designated economic sites lie within 'Zone 3b the Functional floodplain'.

4.22 Durham County Council has a statutory requirement to consider the risk of flooding when determining where, and what type of development should be allowed within the County. The Council's strategic flood risk assessment (Golder Associates, 2010); Durham County Council, 2016i; Durham County Council, Regeneration and Local Services, Technical Services, 2016) has the primary purpose of providing an overview of areas in County Durham that will be susceptible to flooding in a range of design flood events. As well as river flooding, parts of Our Neighbourhood are at risk of surface water flooding when heavy rainfall causes flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater, and runoff from land, small watercourses and ditches.

4.23 The Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014c) outlines a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to flooding are: Modern infrastructure - flood mitigation measures with the Environment Agency. The saved policy U10 from the Durham City Local Plan (City of Durham Council, 2004; Durham County Council, 2015a) states that developments affecting watercourses are only permissible if they do not result in flooding or increased flood risk elsewhere, do not result in pollution of the watercourse, do not adversely affect nature conservation interests and the appearance of the landscape, and the environmental impact is properly assessed. This has informed policies in our Neighbourhood Plan, but reflecting the higher standards that are now in place since policy U10 was published.

4.1.4 Planning Policies and Proposals for Land Use

4.24

- Policy S1: Sustainable Development Requirements of All Development and Re-development Sites
- Policy S2: Sustainable Development Requirements of All New Building Developments Including Renovations and Extensions

Policy S1: Sustainable Development Requirements of All Development and Re-development Sites

Development proposals, subject to satisfying other relevant policies, will be approved where site development would promote as many as appropriate of the following measures:

1. provision for a mix of uses which meet development needs identified in the Local/County Plan and in this plan;
2. redevelopment of a brownfield site to protect the Green Belt, as long as its biodiversity value is protected;
3. protection of biodiversity / geodiversity, designated wildlife sites and protected species;
4. prudent and efficient use of natural resources and processed materials and in

particular land, energy, water and building materials;
5. resilience to climate change including avoidance of sites in the flood plain;
6. improvements in safety and active reduction in crime and fear of crime through use of the highest appropriate building standards that design out crime;
7. preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and heritage assets (listed buildings, ancient monuments, designated and non-designated heritage assets), including that derived from their setting, character and local distinctiveness, tranquillity and contribution to the sense of place;
8. preservation and enhancement of green assets;
9. the incorporation of public art and public facilities including provision of seating and toilet facilities;
10. provision of access and a coordinated approach to paving, lighting and signage to provide permeability of the site to meet all needs, especially the needs of people with disabilities, older people, and children;
11. ease of access by public transport, walking and cycling.

Policy S2: Sustainable Development Requirements of All New Building Developments Including Renovations and Extensions

Development proposals, subject to satisfying other relevant policies, will be approved where such development would promote as many as appropriate of the following measures:

1. harmony with the architectural styles and features of the area's built heritage, landscape, ecology and geology by the scale, layout, density, massing, height, materials, colour, hardscaping and landscaping used;
2. respect for privacy of neighbouring properties, avoidance of overlooking and consideration for the visual impact on the local context;
3. utilisation of sustainable building techniques and technology including the use of local materials that reduce the embodied carbon of construction and the use of re-used or recycled materials and the minimisation of carbon emissions from the development;
4. utilisation of the highest appropriate building standards to ensure minimal energy consumption and maximum energy generation and use from renewable resources, including the use of energy efficient solar design principles;
5. no negative effect, either directly or indirectly, on the quality of the water environment, and where possible an improvement of the water environment;
6. utilisation of a sustainable drainage approach i.e. Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS);
7. contribution and sharing of technologies wherever possible to meet some of all of the site's energy needs;
8. adoption of BRE Group best practice in waste reduction and recycling in both construction and after-use;
9. appropriate adaptation to re-use vacant buildings.

