

Ponteland Greenbelt Group



Northumberland County Council (NCC) Core Strategy Final Draft for Housing, Employment and Greenbelt Consultation is upon us NOW.

This is the 3rd(and final) stage of NCC Core strategy 'consultation' process, which once again demonstrates NCC determination to unnecessarily release Green Belt land around Ponteland.

We say, NCC are continuing to use flawed and out of date data and do not appear to have listened to the valid, evidence based concerns from Ponteland residents.

This is our last opportunity to register concerns. NCC has had an unprecedented response to date from Ponteland residents ... 4,300 responses to previous consultations.

This local Plan must be examined independently by The Planning Inspectorate to determine soundness of the development plan. If we do not take this opportunity to respond it may look as though we now accept NCC plans for Ponteland.

We must therefore have one final overwhelming push to register your views with NCC and by so doing we can evidence the continued level of opposition to NCC plans for Ponteland Green Belt to the independent Inspector.

If you have responded to the previous NCC core strategy consultations great BUT we need you to do it once again.

Previous responses will not count against this new document and, as before, we ask that each and every member of your household completes an objection. We urge you to make your views known to the County Council before the deadline of 11th February 2015

You can register your views via the County's website

http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/csfd

Or by completing the accompanying letter of comment and:

- Hand deliver to 93 Cheviot View or 17 Darras Road
- E-mail to: PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk
- By post to: Spatial Policy and Delivery Team, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

The accompanying letter of comment is a suggested letter only – please feel free to amend. The document is available on our website www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk If you are using the County's website to respond you can complete a more comprehensive response. You may find some of the comments on the letter useful. Apologies if you have already responded.

Remember – a separate response from every member of the household will count!

Request for funds

Please continue to support the Ponteland Greenbelt Group in our efforts to stop the unprecedented removal of Greenbelt in and around Ponteland. This is our last chance of a voice and we need to stand together to protect and maintain the unique characteristics of the village, which we all love, live and share. The PGBG needs donations from residents to cover costs associated with creating, producing and circulating literature. Please give whatever you can.

Go to <http://www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk/donate/>

The Ponteland Greenbelt Group have been accepted with HMRC as charitable status under Paragraph 1 of Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and we can now make the gift aid claim on your very kind and generous donations. If you haven't already completed your gift aid declaration and are a current UK Tax payer please can you arrange to complete the Gift Aid form available on the website and return to our Treasurer at 17 Darras Road.

We thank you for your continued support.

Treasurer
Ponteland Greenbelt Group

Spatial Policy and Delivery Team,
Northumberland County Council,
County Hall,
Morpeth,
Northumberland NE61 2EF

Name:
Address:

Date:

Response to Northumberland County Council (NCC) Core Strategy Final Draft for Housing, Employment and Greenbelt

Question 1 (Page 10) - Do you have any comments on the introductory section?

Within the Introduction Councillor Alan Hepple acknowledges the need to use the most up to date information available; As the Core Strategy for Northumberland County Council has yet to be completed, National Planning Policy states that household projections published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) should be used as the starting point. Release of DCLG2012 is imminent; this document does not offer assurances that current assumptions will be reviewed to incorporate DCLG2012.

In Para 1.18 It is stated that it is essential that the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy is informed by wide community engagement, there is little benefit attached to a Consultation exercise if the views of residents are ignored.

Question 4 (Page 22) Spatial portrait for the Central Northumberland Delivery Area.

Para. 2.53 states that “Future growth in Ponteland is currently limited by the Green Belt.” As a definitive statement this is questionable; outline planning permission has already been given for 263 houses (with more possible) on the former Police Headquarters site (previously developed land).

Para 2.55 states In the former Castle Morpeth area, despite Morpeth and Ponteland being identified as the focus for new housing development in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan, the majority of housing development has taken place in the Morpeth hinterland and former coalfield areas and not the main settlements. This implies that Ponteland has not taken its share. This statement is not supported by actual and proposed future developments in Ponteland (Louiseville, Jameson Fields, Lairage, Medburn, McCarthy & Stone, Peel House, and Police HQ).

To be sustainable, service centres can only support limited new development before their character is destroyed and available infrastructure is overwhelmed. NCC do not appear to have considered this.

Question 9 (Page 36) - This is our preferred option for delivering sustainable development.

Para. 4.9 states that “The objectively assessed housing need is for the provision of 23,520 new dwellings over the plan period.” - This is based on assumed and averaged data.

As the core strategy for Northumberland County Council has yet to be completed, National Planning Policy states that household projections published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) should be used as the starting point.

Data released between Stage 2 consultation and this final consultation has shown that NCC overestimated population projections for Northumberland. Data to be released by DCLG regarding housing projection is anticipated to indicate that NCC continues to overestimate the population projection for Northumberland and, if so, the provision of 23,520 new dwellings will necessitate revision.

Question 14 (Page 55) - This is our preferred policy for the hierarchy of centres.

Para. 5.64 - in order to justify the inclusion of Ponteland as a Smaller Commercial Centre the document claims that “there are aspirations to bring the centre to the level of the other smaller commercial centres.” Without any substantial improvement schemes this is the wrong designation for Ponteland. Para 5.64 is therefore wholly aspirational. It is suggested that NCC have designated Ponteland as a Smaller Commercial Centre in order to justify its disproportionate allocation of housing compared to its true size and actual function. It is unfair for NCC to designate Ponteland as a Smaller Commercial Centre without first making substantial investment in the infrastructure.

Question 21 (Page 80) - This is our preferred policy for strategic sites.

For Policy 13 the “objectively assessed housing needs” as defined in Table 6.2 must be regarded as interim figures only. A full re-assessment must be carried out as soon as possible following the release of figures from DCLG 2012. NCC suggestion of housing requirement for Ponteland of 640 dwellings, is currently based on assumed and averaged data. Ponteland is still being asked to carry a disproportionate burden of housing provision relative to its size. NCC Stage 2 consultation document stated that an acceptable increase in population for service centres (as Ponteland is designated) is 4% to 8%. (Para 5.1) The proposed allocation of 640 houses in Ponteland provides a population increase of 16% - double the acceptable maximum population increase as advised by NCC.

Question 28 (Page 104) - This is our preferred policy for the strategic approach to Green Belt.

Proposed Policy 20 b. states that part of the Strategic approach is to “check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear.” It is equally important that Ponteland should not extend towards Newcastle as it is that Newcastle should not extend towards Ponteland. The suggestion by NCC that the land to the south east of Ponteland is the area of least impact and landscape sensitivity is completely at odds with the perception of the community, the outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group consultation, common sense and the Community Character Statement produced by the Ponteland Civic Society and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Proposed Policy 20d will preserve the setting and special character of Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth. Why has the special character of Ponteland not been recognised? The open nature of the approaches to Ponteland Village are essential to its special character as described in the Community Character Statement.

Question 30 (Page 111) - Preferred approach and Green Belt boundary amendments for Ponteland

The housing requirement for Ponteland is 640 dwellings, this projection is based on assumed and averaged data; more accurate DCLG projections are imminent. Is it premature to be consulting on such an important issue as Green Belt deletion before this data is available (Anticipated Feb 2015).

The proposals for amendments to Ponteland’s Green Belt contravene your Policy 20 (See response to Q. 28) NCC have stated the latest allocation of housing for Ponteland is 640 – Allowing for the number of planning permissions already in the system (including those allocated at the Police HQ site) less than 70 houses are required to meet the 640 target over the 16 year remaining plan period. Allowing for the likelihood of “windfall” sites coming forward there is absolutely no need for Green Belt deletion.

This consultation document does not reflect the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Government guidance which seek to prioritise the development of brownfield land.

NCC, when objecting at the recent Birney Hill Inquiry stated that the release of 82 hectares of Green Belt land to accommodate 280 houses is not justified. The proposed Green Belt boundary amendments for Ponteland to accommodate less than 70 houses therefore conflicts with NCC statement made to the Inquiry Inspector in that the proposed release of Green Belt in South East Ponteland is totally disproportionate to the number of houses required.

Ponteland schools and leisure facilities do need upgrading; school buildings in Ponteland need investment in the future. However there is no reason for Green Belt deletion to rebuild our schools. Rebuilding of Prudhoe High School will see the school built on exactly the same existing site. There is no reason why that can't happen in Ponteland. Green Belt deletion is not required in order to rebuild our schools and leisure facilities.

Removing this land from the protection of the Green Belt will place it at the mercy of speculative development.

Signature: