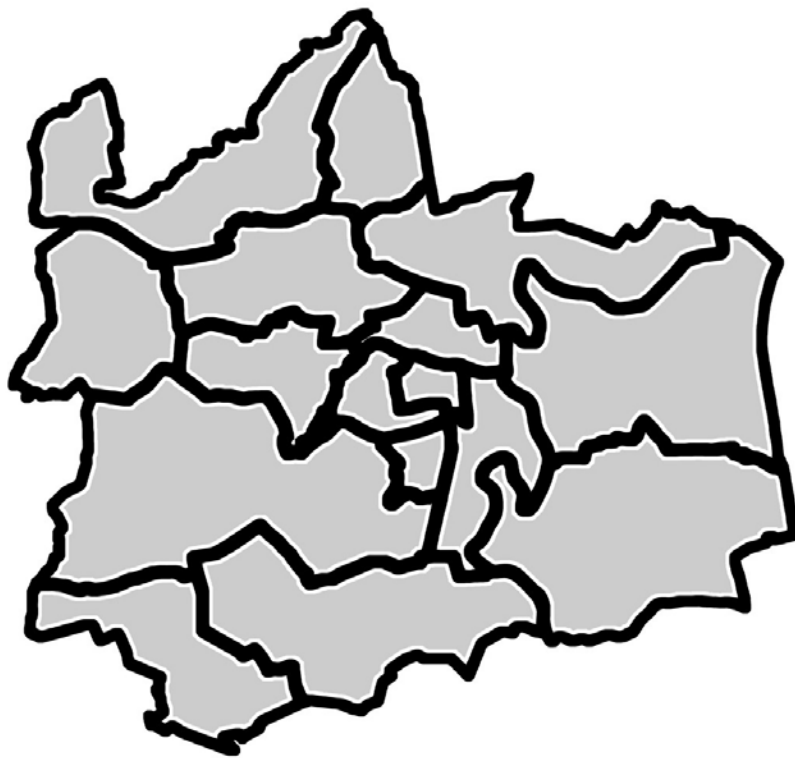


Chester-le-Street District Local Plan to 2006

Adopted Plan October 2003



Chester-le-Street
District Council





CHESTER-LE-STREET

DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN TO 2006

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ADOPTED PLAN

OCTOBER 2003

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Introduction and Strategy

INTRODUCTION AND STRATEGY

ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL PLAN

- 1 The Chester-le-Street District Local Plan is a statutory document which provides a land use framework in which the District's future needs for growth, protection and restraint are balanced. It forms the basis for making day to day planning decisions. The plan allocates areas which are appropriate in terms of their environmental impact, development demand and social need, to accommodate growth, and protects areas where development would be unsuitable. The Local Plan aims to ensure that land within the District is used in ways which are for the benefit of its residents as a whole, balancing the demands of business with the needs of the public within the environmental constraints of the District.
- 2 The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Town Planning and Compensation Act 1991. The 1991 Act places a mandatory duty on all local authorities to prepare a Local Plan for their area. In accordance with the legislative framework, the Local Plan:-
 - i) sets out the District Council's policies for the control of development;
 - ii) makes proposals for the development and use of land and allocates land for specific purposes.
- 3 Under Section 54A of the 1991 Act, statutory force is given to the role of the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan. Where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for development that are in accordance with the plan shall be allowed unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In determining an application for development, Chester-le-Street District Council will always take into account whether the proposal would cause demonstrable harm to the interests of acknowledged importance.
- 4 Hence, the purpose of the Local Plan will be that when determining planning applications, rational and consistent decisions will be made, and greater certainty will be provided to all interested bodies and/or individuals.
- 5 The Local Plan covers the whole of the administrative area of the Chester-le-Street District and will be valid for a period from the adoption of the Plan until the year 2006.
- 6 However, the Local Plan will be regularly reviewed and may be altered or replaced before the plan period, depending on circumstances.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- 7 The Local Plan will be the most relevant part of the statutory development plan for the Chester-le-Street District. It is, however, just one part of the development plan. The other parts are prepared at present by Durham County Council, taking an overview of the county as a whole. They comprise:-
- i) the County Durham Structure Plan Review – this development plan provides the broad strategic framework for planning in the District;
 - ii) the Durham County Minerals Local Plan; and
 - iii) the County Durham Waste Disposal Local Plan.
- 8 A Local Plan is required to be in general conformity with the relevant structure plan. The Chester-le-Street District Local Plan has been prepared almost in tandem with the County Durham Structure Plan Review. As such the Local Plan's policies and proposals are in general conformity with those of the Structure Plan Review.

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

- 9 In addition to the other parts of the development plan, the Local Plan needs to take into account current Government Planning Policy, both national and regional. National guidance is given mainly in the form of topic based Planning Policy Guidance Notes. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and Regions issued Regional Planning Guidance for the northern region in 1993. The Local Plan is generally in accordance with the Government guidance presently available. New regional planning guidance for the North East is expected shortly, which will provide the regional planning framework for the next Plan period to 2016.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS

- 10 The Deposit Draft Local Plan will provide the first district wide land use policy document produced by Chester-le-Street District Council and will supersede all the previously prepared statutory and non-statutory Local Plans including:-
- i) Chester-le-Street Town Centre Local Plan;
 - ii) Chester-le-Street District Housing Land Policy 1988-1996.

A GUIDE TO THE PLAN

- 11 The Local Plan will become a legal document and therefore the wording has to be precise and, at times, lengthy. Conversely, it has to be read and easily understood by a wide range of users. At various stages in its preparation the plan's contents has been subject to close scrutiny.
- 12 The Local Plan consists of a Written Statement (the text) and a Proposals Map. The Written Statement sets out in full the policies and proposals of the Plan and the reasons for them, whilst the Proposals Map illustrates them on an Ordnance Survey base.
- 13 The Written Statement is arranged in chapters by topics. Each chapter contains the most important part of the Local Plan, the policies and proposals. These are highlighted, and are followed by their reasoned justification. A glossary is provided to clarify terms and expressions used in the Local Plan.
- 14 'Proposals' define specific sites for particular developments or works of environmental improvement or traffic management. Policies will be used to guide and control the development and use of land, in particular the determination of applications for planning permission. Some policies relate to the whole district, others to specific areas.
- 15 The Proposals Map defines the areas to which the policies and proposals apply on a map base. All boundaries shown are intended to be precise and clear, unless specifically referred to in the text. The map includes a scale and explanation of notations.
- 16 In the event of a contradiction between the Written Statement and the Proposals Map the provisions of the Statement prevail.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 17 The Chester-le-Street District Local Plan is based on four strategy statements covering environmental, developmental, social and rural/countryside development issues. It is important that the implementation of the planning policies are regularly monitored in light of these strategies together with changing national and local circumstances and changes in Government policy and legislation. The status of the Local Plan and the weight given to the policies when challenged on appeal will depend on how up-to-date the content of Local Plan is.
- 18 Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to monitor and assess the progress of the Local Plan through the preparation of annual progress reports and the publication of various documents, for example:-
 - i) Housing Land Availability Schedules;
 - ii) New Retail Floorspace;

- iii) Employment Surveys;
 - iv) Economic Development and Housing Strategies;
 - v) Housing Need Information;
 - vi) The Chester-le-Street District Council Corporate Plan Community Profile.
- 19 The information gathered will be used to identify problems that have arisen, provide a context for setting priorities and measuring progress in implementation. It will be used as the basis upon which the Local Plan is reviewed which will take place at least every five years.
- 20 The aims of the Local Plan are:-
- i) to maintain the unique nature of the District of Chester-le-Street by protecting the built and natural environment;
 - ii) to regenerate the economy of the District;
 - iii) to ensure quality in all new development proposals;
 - iv) to ensure that by using constraint, protection and enhancement measures, all policies work towards sustainable development – enabling the needs of today’s generation to be met without harming the district for future generations; and
 - v) to ensure that conservation and development have due regard to the County Durham Bio-Diversity Action Plan.
- 21 Chester-le-Street District has an area of 6,800 Hectares and as at 1991 had a population of approximately 53,000. The population density of 7.8 persons per hectare is the highest in County Durham. The geographical position of Chester-le-Street, astride the main communication arteries of the County – the A1(M) and A167 roads, and the East Coast Main Line Railway – and in close proximity to the Tyne and Wear conurbation’s, has meant that the last three decades have seen a 24% increase in its population.
- 22 However, the population density and the proximity of the District’s settlements to each other, coupled with a significant rate of ‘greenfield’ housing developments, particularly over the last two decades, has led to the increasing erosion of the open countryside and the threat of the coalescence of certain settlements.
- 23 The basic aim of the Local Plan will therefore be one of constraint. The designation of Green Belt will not only protect the countryside for its own sake, but also keep in check the increasing development pressures to encroach into the open countryside. It will also prevent the coalescence of the District’s settlements and maintain their separate identities and individual character.

- 24 However, the Local Plan will allow new development to address particular needs, such as creating new employment opportunities wherever possible and catering for the special requirements for aged and single persons housing, and affordable accommodation. Provision for this and general housing development to meet the target population in the Plan Period, will primarily be sought on infill sites within the urban areas of settlements, but some 'greenfield' sites will be necessary, to accommodate projected growth. Dependent upon the individual circumstances of the development proposal, developers of green field sites will be expected to make significant environmental and community contributions, which are directly related to the proposal, and take the utmost care in their location and design, in order to mitigate the damaging effects on local environs and facilitate any needs borne from the development.
- 25 All new development will need to be aware of the conflicting demands of an increasingly mobile population and the desire for sustainability. This gives further support to the aim of constraint and the need to take due care in the design and location of new development.
- 26 Quality is also a principle aim of the Local Plan, not just in built development but also to enhance the recreational and employment prospects of the people of the District. For example, there are proposals to protect and improve the town centre of Chester-le-Street, by preventing potentially damaging 'out of town' shopping proposals, and making it a safer place to visit and live. Similarly the District's industrial estates should benefit from new development and improved security to help safeguard existing jobs and create new employment opportunities. Other proposals will address the shortfall in public open space, improve and extend the public footpath network, encourage cycling, and bring about district wide environmental improvements ranging from the continued support for the Great North Forest and the continued development of the Riverside for recreational use, to small community based improvement schemes to open spaces and allotments.
- 27 The development of Chester-le-Street District during the plan period will be achieved through development that is sustainable, enabling the needs of today's generation to be met without harming the District for future generations. The environmental capacity of the area to accommodate further development cannot be exceeded without reducing the environmental quality, hence the principle aim of constraint.
- 28 Protection and enhancement of this environment are therefore goals of equal status to those of new development. In addition, a high quality environment is a key component of the process of stimulating economic growth, and a buoyant economy provides the essential resources for environmental protection and enhancement, and the provision of opportunities for improving the quality of life for the residents of the district. The Local Plan provides the necessary statutory land use and policy framework to achieve these aims.

OVERALL STRATEGY FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

- 29 In preparing the policies and strategies in the Local Plan, Chester-le-Street District Council has had regard to the planning issues with an awareness of implementing strategies for sustainable development. It is recognised that the needs of the future must not be sacrificed to the demands of the present. Decisions taken at a local level can have a wider significance that transcends boundaries at the regional, national and even global levels.
- 30 Local Agenda 21 emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit and urged local communities to develop strategies for sustainable development. Local Planning Authorities are key members in implementing sustainable development initiatives. Chester-le-Street District Council is a member of the County Durham Local Agenda 21 Partnership.
- 31 Local Agenda 21 and sustainability is about the interdependence between economic, social and environmental issues, to which this Local Plan is committed, and as such, has produced four main strategies:-
- i) ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY
 - ii) DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
 - iii) SOCIAL STRATEGY
 - iv) RURAL/COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Environmental Strategy

- 32 The underlying strategy for the Local Plan is to meet the social and economic needs of the District without detriment to the environment. It is therefore vital to protect and enhance both the natural and built environment so as to make the Chester-le-Street District a desirable place in which to live and work. It is essential that all new developments seek to preserve and, where possible, enhance the environment and achieve the aim of sustainability, where the needs of the people are met without comprising the needs of future generations. In order to achieve this situation, the Local Plan must ensure that:-
- i) the environment does not suffer as a result of development. All development must therefore be sensitive towards the environment and seek to preserve, and where possible, enhance it.
 - ii) development in the countryside that does not require a countryside location will not be permitted, so as to prevent the outward sprawl of the settlements, prevent loss of agricultural land and protect the open space and countryside which surround the settlements in the District.
 - iii) the North Durham Green Belt and the Great North Forest are protected from any development that will fail to further protect and enhance them and ensure that they are used positively so as to improve the visual, educational and recreational aspects within the District.

- iv) areas of High Landscape Value, the Wear Valley and Beamish/ Causey Arch, are protected from any form of development that would detract from their appearance and be detrimental to their character.
- v) the significant views throughout the District (e.g. Lumley Castle) are protected from any form of development that would detract from their appearance.
- vi) areas of land that have become degraded or derelict and recycled are brought into use so as to reduce the continued development pressures on greenfield sites and to also improve the overall environment of the District. Action Areas (i.e. the railway station) will identify land that is in need of enhancement and management.
- vii) areas of nature conservation, historic interest, architectural interest and archaeological interest are given special protection and where appropriate new areas will be created during the Plan period. Such sites can also be important for educational, recreation and tourist activities and where there is no adverse environmental impact, these activities will be pursued positively.
- viii) the River Wear catchment areas are improved and enhanced with regard to the Environment Agency's River Wear Catchment Management Plan.
- ix) the effective use of passive solar energy and the generation of energy from renewable sources are encouraged. The generation of energy should be supply rather than demand determined, thereby increasing efficiency and reducing the level of pollution.
- x) special protection is given to settlements either designated or proposed as Conservation Areas, to the proposed Historic Parks and Gardens and to all scheduled and non-scheduled ancient monuments of architectural interest in the District.
- xi) there is a general presumption for the preservation of listed buildings and their settings, with any alterations to a listed building being required to follow the standards set out in the Local Plan.
- xii) areas of public open space are protected from development. These areas have an important recreational, wildlife and visual value and must be maintained and where possible enhanced.
- xiii) all new development is of a high standard in design and is appropriate in its scale, character and location to the surrounding area. Any development which unacceptably detracts from significant views, adversely affects a listed building or results in the deterioration of either the built or natural environment will not be permitted.

- xiv) the retailing and residential environments of the District are improved through a variety of measures including traffic management schemes, landscaping etc.
- xv) the overall quality of the environment in the main towns and settlements throughout the District is improved.

33 The Environmental Strategy is largely based on the core aim of the Chester-le-Street District Council Corporate Plan which is to protect, enhance and promote the environment of the District, and in so doing, contribute towards the protection of the national and global environment. However, this strategy is not designed to be a deterrent to development, but to ensure a high quality environment that will attract inward investment, jobs and revenue to the District. A good environment will also help to boost tourism and provide a pleasant environment in which the people of the Chester-le-Street District can live and work. The environment must be regarded as a non-renewable resource and therefore the concept of sustainable development is central to the strategy if future generations of the District are to enjoy the beauty and quality of the natural and built environment that exist today.

Development Strategy

34 The Development Strategy in urban areas is inextricably linked with the Environmental Strategy. Good development plays a fundamental role in the regeneration and revitalisation of the District and applies to residential, industrial and retail development. The Local Plan will therefore aim to:-

- i) meet the overall requirement of about 2,500 new dwelling units between 1991 and 2006.
- ii) create further industrial development within the District's industrial sites and develop new areas of land for industry to facilitate economic growth and employment regeneration in the District throughout the Plan period.
- iii) safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Chester-le-Street town centre and, where possible, bring new opportunities forward for town centre uses.

35 These three proposals will result in consideration being given to:-

- i) major housing development at Fencehouses to meet housing needs and help in the revitalisation of this area.
- ii) infill housing development in Chester-le-Street and Sacriston without extending the settlement boundaries, to provide new housing sites during the Plan period.
- iii) new industrial development taking place at Drum Lane, Stella Gill and on the land brought forward at Daisy Hill by Durham County Council.

- iv) the recycling of derelict and redundant land throughout the District, paying particular attention to any nature conservation interests that may exist so as to help in the regeneration and revitalisation of the affected areas, help to reduce the growing pressures for development on greenfield sites and to prevent any encroachment into the countryside.
 - v) directing retail development to appropriate locations throughout the District so as to protect the viability and vitality of the Chester-le-Street town centre and help regenerate depressed areas. In particular, land will be brought forward for new retail development in the Burns area to complement the town centre.
 - vi) ensuring that all new development is of high quality design and relates well in character, scale and location to its surrounding area.
 - vii) new housing, industrial and retail developments to ensure that they are located in close proximity to one another and where possible close to existing services and facilities so as to reduce the need for car travel, and thereby reduce pollution.
 - viii) ensuring that all new development is sensitive to the environment to prevent any potential damage to the landscape and wildlife.
- 36 The Development Strategy will integrate well with the proposals in the Environmental Strategy and will help to revitalise and regenerate run down areas within the District, bringing jobs to the local residents.

Social Strategy

- 37 The Social Strategy is closely linked with the Development and Environmental Strategies and is of equal importance. The Development and Environmental Strategies clearly aim to make Chester-le-Street District a better place to work, live and partake in recreational activities. However, other considerations need to be considered such as the community and social aspects. These include:-
- i) providing a wide mix of housing to meet the needs of the local residents in the District. The amount of affordable housing and housing specially adapted to meet the needs of the elderly or disabled will vary and will be provided according to the level of need in a particular area.
 - ii) maintaining a viable and vibrant retail sector in the town centre whilst also ensuring adequate provision and range of shops and services in other local centres.
 - iii) the expansion of retailing through the development of new areas providing such opportunities as the Burns area. The development of this area will further widen the choice available to the public and enhance the town centre.

- iv) the need to maintain, enhance and protect areas of open space and other recreational and leisure facilities. Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to comply with the National Playing Fields Association Standards by increasing the provision of open space by 41 Hectares and improving the quality of existing open spaces during the Plan period to provide adequate space to meet the recreational needs of the local residents.
 - v) the regeneration of derelict areas through new development accompanied by environmental improvement schemes.
 - vi) the provision and retention of community facilities, to meet the needs of residential areas within reasonable walking distance, for example small corner shops.
 - vii) a good provision of public transport to link the District's towns and villages to Chester-le-Street town centre and prevent these settlements becoming isolated from the rest of the District and to reduce the dependence of households upon the private car.
 - viii) the need to consider the potential of development schemes to contribute towards the reduction of crime and disorder in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- 38 The Social Strategy relies predominantly on the success of the Development and Environmental Strategies. The Social Strategy plays a major role in achieving the overall aims of the Local Plan. It examines what the local residents require with regards to services and facilities within the District and aims to provide and locate them appropriately, working towards the overall Plan objective of sustainability.

Rural/Countryside Development Strategy

- 39 The countryside makes up a very important part of the District, both economically and in recreational terms. It is therefore the aim of the Local Plan to maximise the potential of the countryside whilst ensuring its protection from unwanted development pressures. The Rural/Countryside Development Strategy will ensure that:-
- i) the countryside remains multi-functional. Agriculture accounts for 5,200 Hectares, or 76%, of the land in the District. Modest farm incomes and the limited resources being generated by the farming business will inevitably create increasing diversification into non-agricultural enterprise. It is however essential that the best and most versatile agricultural land, mainly situated in the Wear Valley, and the agricultural landscape are protected from development.
 - ii) opportunities for rural employment diversification continue for industries that can be successfully located in rural areas. As a result opportunities will arise to reuse existing rural buildings for new activities. Chester-le-Street District is in a good position in terms of a large customer base to promote farm diversification.

- iii) the general public has improved access to the countryside. Whilst there is a need to cater for tourists, the recreational needs of the local residents in the villages surrounding Chester-le-Street must also be carefully considered. Within the Local Plan, improvements are proposed to existing footpaths and bridle ways to provide better access to the countryside. Alongside this the continued development of the C2C (Coast-to-Coast) route and the adjoining green routes and walkways, improves access and increases the recreational opportunities throughout the towns in the District. The North Durham Green Belt and the Great North Forest will also greatly improve the quality of recreation for both local residents and tourists.
 - iv) the built environment is of a high quality and is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. The settlements and buildings in the countryside make a vital contribution to the quality and character of the landscape. The Local Plan will ensure that quality remains when new developments, conversions or extensions are proposed. The Local Plan will also afford additional protection to the old and new Conservation Areas as well as the Listed Buildings in the District. Chester-le-Street District Council will therefore encourage suitable uses for rural buildings that will be appropriate for the area and the building, and will help to prevent the building becoming derelict and dangerous.
- 40 The overall strategy of the Local Plan is to achieve sustainability through conserving, promoting, developing and improving all aspects of the District. The Local Plan will aim to meet the social and economic needs of the residents' today, whilst safeguarding and preserving the environment for the future generations of Chester-le-Street District.

Chapter One

Natural Environment

CHAPTER 1 - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The natural environment of the District is under constant threat, because of the increasing pressures for development particularly within the urban fringe. There are also other threats to the countryside that have intensified over the last ten years. These include changes in agricultural policy, increasing demand for recreation (and to a lesser extent, tourism), the need to secure land for industrial development and the growing awareness of the value of the natural environment, not only for today's but also for future generations.

Landscape Character

- 1.2 In order to identify new ways to enrich the quality of the countryside as a whole, whilst accommodating appropriate development in a sustainable manner, it is necessary to identify, describe and analyse the character of the landscape and then to identify specific opportunities to conserve or enhance its character. This is being achieved at two levels – the 'Countryside Character Programme' carried out by the Countryside Agency which provides the national perspective and the more detailed Regional Character and Sub-Regional/ Local Landscape Assessments undertaken by Durham County Council. Through this, Chester-le-Street District can be categorised into two distinct regional character areas:-
- i) Coalfield Pennine Fringe – the presence of urban land use and infrastructure has a significant influence on the character of the coalfield landscape. Some valleys are entirely rural in character with development restricted to agricultural settlements. Other valleys, while remaining largely rural, are heavily influenced by the presence of mining or industrial settlements. These may be described as semi-rural landscapes and are particularly characteristic of the coalfield.
 - ii) Wear Lowlands – can be broadly divided into three sub-regions, the "Incised valley" landscapes of the River Wear characterised by narrow ravines and broader floodplains bounded by steep wood buffs; the "Transitional valley" landscapes lying to the west covering the lower reaches of the Pennine fringe valleys, as they merge with the broader valley of the Wear are characterised by riparian woodlands along incised lower valleys and open undulating arable farmland and heathland; and "Valley Terrace" landscapes of undulating arable farmland lying to the east of the District.

Nature Conservation

- 1.3 The District contains a variety of areas protected for their nature conservation interests in both urban and rural locations. These are designated according to their importance at the national, regional/county or District level.
- 1.4 There are currently twenty-six sites, either at a County or District level, designated for their nature conservation value. These are collectively termed as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. However, Waldridge Fell is of

considerable importance as the only lowland site where semi-natural vegetation is widely developed over acidic substrates. It includes a range of heathland, grassland, wetland and woodland habitats several of which are rare or absent in the rest of the County. The fell constitutes the District's only Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – a site of both national and county ecological importance, however, the SSSI series is constantly under review and further sites may be identified during the Plan period.

- 1.5 Care for the different areas of the District has to be at the heart of the development plan process. Over recent years the concept of sustainability has emerged as a guiding principle. This means that development plans are expected to make provision for such development, which is considered necessary for economic and social needs whilst safeguarding the overall quality of the environment for the benefit of future generations.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.6 Sustainability cannot be considered in isolation within the Natural Environment Chapter – instead this is underpinned in all of the Local Plan's policies and proposals and will include broader concerns for the environment as well as the more established concerns such as the appearance of new development and environmental improvements.

- 1.7 Therefore the aims of the Local Plan are:-

- i) to sustain the balance between meeting the need for development and maintaining the quality of the environment;
- ii) to ensure that all sites of ecological, geological, scientific or visual value are protected from harmful development;
- iii) to undertake a reclamation programme that will improve areas of derelict or despoiled land;
- iv) to support and encourage the creation of new areas of wildlife and nature conservation interest;
- vi) to support and assist the implementation of the Great North Forest;
- vii) to promote changes within Chester-le-Street District Council and encourage landowners in the management of the natural environment in order to achieve techniques that are sympathetic to nature conservation.
- viii) to ensure that all new development respects its setting and the wider environment;
- ix) to reduce all forms of pollution as far as practicable; and
- x) to reduce energy consumption and to conserve non-renewable resources.

POLICIES

NE1 - GENERAL POLICY

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to implement sustainable development, which is both environmentally friendly and meets the social and economic needs of the District. All development proposals must reflect the need to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all residents by balancing new development needs with the protection of valued and important aspects of the natural and built environments. The impact of development proposals will be considered against the need to respect the long term welfare of the environment by:-

- i) making the most efficient use of land, energy and other resources;**
- ii) reducing the reliance on the use of the private motor car;**
- iii) avoiding the risk of serious environmental damage, especially damage which may be irreversible or very difficult to undo.**

1.8 Some development may have a negative impact on the quality of the environment but it is expected that it will be able to contribute more than it takes away. Change of any sort needs to be carefully managed in order to ensure this. Both social and economic needs must be met without detriment to the environmental quality and it is Chester-le-Street District Council's intention that the overall quality of the environment must not suffer as a result of development.

1.9 The advice of appropriate agencies will be sought in assessing development proposals to determine their environmental impact.

NE2 - DEVELOPMENT BEYOND SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

Outside the settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, development will be strictly controlled. Permission for new dwellings will be granted only where there is a need to support existing agricultural or forestry activities, in the circumstances set out in Policy AG9. Where planning permission is required, development should:-

- i) Protect or enhance the character and quality of the countryside;**
- ii) Be consistent with maintaining the economic sustainability of agriculture and other rural businesses;**
- iii) Comply with the criteria of other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

(NE4-NE6, R20, R22, IN8, IN9, RL9, RL10, TM3-TM6, AG1, AG3-AG9, AG11)

1.10 Chester-le-Street District comprises an urban core with scattered villages, with well-defined boundaries, between built up and rural areas. Chester-le-Street District Council has identified development limits, within which most

new development will be situated, with the intention of maintaining these well-defined boundaries and safeguarding the character and appearance of the countryside. Policies HP6, HP7 and HP8 identify those settlements for which development limits have been drawn.

- 1.11 As the District is relatively compact most social and economic needs can be catered for within the urban area. This is the most appropriate location for most housing, business and retail development.
- 1.12 In certain instances, new development can be implemented which does not require planning permission. These are covered by the permitted development rights of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995 and advice on these rights can be obtained from the Local Planning Authority. Beyond the development limits, where planning permission is required, development will be strictly controlled, but some forms of development need to be located in the countryside, to maintain or diversify the rural economy or to otherwise meet the needs of rural communities. Development may also be appropriate for countryside based sport, recreation and tourism uses or where it would help enhance the environment and/or meet the needs of the Great North Forest. In certain circumstances, where planning permission is required and the development is acceptable, consideration will be given to withdrawing the permitted development rights in order to mitigate the cumulative harm that could occur through development.
- 1.13 Policies AG6 and AG7 seek to ensure that employment diversification uses are explored when converting rural buildings, whereby residential reuses will only be considered as the last resort. Policy AG9 sets out the circumstances in which new residential housebuilding will be acceptable.

NE3 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH DURHAM GREEN BELT

As shown on the Proposals Map, Chester-le-Street District Council will implement and maintain a North Durham Green Belt from the north of Chester-le-Street town and the C2C cycle path to the County boundary, in the Lambton Park area and the River Wear Valley, south of Lambton Park, including the A167 and East Coast Main Line railway which will:-

- i) Check the unrestricted sprawl of the Tyne and Wear Conurbation**
- ii) Prevent Chester-le-Street town and its surrounding villages from merging into each other, and prevent the merging of:**
 - a) Chester-le-Street town and Ouston/Urpeth Grange with the Tyneside conurbation;**
 - b) Chester-le-Street town, Chester Moor, Plawsworth, Nettlesworth, Kimblesworth and Great Lumley with Durham City; and**
 - c) Chester-le-Street town, Bournmoor and Fencehouses with the Wearside conurbation**

- iii) Assist in safeguarding the District's countryside from encroachment; and**
 - iv) Assist in the regeneration of the District's built up areas by recycling brownfield sites and other urban land.**
- 1.14 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 on Green Belts sets out five main purposes of a Green Belt, four of which are applicable to the North Durham Green Belt. These are reflected and interpreted in this Policy. The Note also stresses that the fundamental attribute of a Green Belt is its openness, and an essential characteristic is its permanence. Green Belt protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead, and would be expected to last beyond the immediate time scale of existing structure plans and local plans.
- 1.15 In the first instance, proposals for new Green Belts are considered through the Regional Guidance and Structure Plan process. Regional Planning Guidance sets out the broad framework for Green Belt policy and structure plans provide the strategic policy context for planning at a local level and determine the general extent of Green Belts. It is the role of local plans to determine the detailed boundaries of Green Belts.
- 1.16 Regional Planning Guidance Note 7 for the Northern Region first suggested the proposal to extend the Tyne and Wear Green Belt into North Durham, which was subsequently proposed in the Deposit Draft of the County Durham Structure Plan Review. Following receipt of the Panel Report of the Examination-in-Public into the Durham Structure Plan Review in 1996, a wider Green Belt was recommended by the Panel which would have effectively enveloped the entire District within the North Durham Green Belt.
- 1.17 The Panel Report's recommendation was not accepted by Durham County Council and a more compact Green Belt is now identified in the County Durham Structure Plan Review (adopted in 1999). The Green Belt boundaries identified in the Local Plan accord with strategic extent endorsed by the Structure Plan Review. Chester-le-Street District Council has sought to designate an 'irretrievable' minimum of Green Belt land which fulfils the criteria contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 and needs to be kept permanently open.
- 1.18 To the north and north west of Chester-le-Street town, Green Belt would protect the setting of Ouston/Urpeth Grange and prevent the coalescence of Perkinsville, Pelton, Beamish, High Handenhold, Kibblesworth and Birtley, and would maintain the open countryside between Chester-le-Street and Pelton itself. To the east, Green Belt would prevent encroachment into the Lambton Park area and ensure the maintenance of the open countryside between Shiny Row, Washington (Fatfield, Harraton and Rickleton) Bournmoor, Fencehouses and Chester-le-Street town.
- 1.19 To the south-east of Chester-le-Street town (including the Lumley Park area and River Wear Valley), Green Belt would provide a more robust policy framework. Under the earlier County Durham Structure Plan (adopted in 1982), these areas had previously been afforded significant policy protection

as Areas of Special Landscape Value and Areas of Great Landscape Value respectively. These designations are now replaced by the classification Area of High Landscape Value under the now adopted Structure Plan Review.

- 1.20 Whilst the proposed AHLV is primarily concerned with landscape quality, the prime aim of a Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl, and the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of the land within the Green Belt or its continued protection. A strong policy is needed to address the pressures outlined above, the Green Belt will provide a robust and more appropriate framework to control development than would be possible with an AHLV and normal development control measures.
- 1.21 The area between Chester-le-Street town and Durham City is subject to increasing development pressures, particularly around Chester Moor, Plawsworth, Nettlesworth, Waldrige and north of Pity Me. Undoubtedly Chester-le-Street District is a popular commuter area, with the potential to attract considerable amounts of new residential and other related developments. However, the District is relatively small and densely populated and it is important to retain the identity of its villages and to prevent coalescence. Unchecked development would seriously erode the District's environmental qualities, encourage more commuting and may prejudice the beneficial effects which new housing would provide in terms of regeneration elsewhere. It is, therefore, essential that a robust land use planning policy should be set to check the loss of land released for housing.
- 1.22 In accordance with the County Durham Structure Plan Review, Chester-le-Street District Council further proposes the area of the Wear Valley, including the A167 road and East Coast Main Line Railway as Green Belt. This will form a logical link between the Tyne and Wear Green Belt and that proposed by the City of Durham District, and afford stronger protection to this sensitive area.

Safeguarded Land

- 1.23 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 advises that in defining Green Belt boundaries, the local planning authority will need to ensure that these boundaries will not have to be altered at the end of the plan period, as once these boundaries are approved, they should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. In order to ensure protection of Green Belts within this longer time-scale, this will in some cases mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer term development needs.
- 1.24 The policies and proposals set out in this Local Plan are designed to meet the future development needs of the Chester-le-Street District until 2006, and are met within confines of the Green Belt boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map.
- 1.25 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 suggests that regional/strategic guidance should provide the framework for considering the issue of safeguarded land in terms of how much might be needed and where it might suitably be located. At present, neither Regional Planning Guidance Note 7 for the Northern

Region nor the adopted County Durham Structure Plan Review provides guidance as to the allocation of safeguarded land in Chester-le-Street District. Without this guidance, any attempt by Chester-le-Street District Council to accurately anticipate longer-term development needs beyond 2006 would be ill advised and premature.

- 1.26 As part of the preparation of the emerging Regional Planning Guidance for the North East to 2016, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions requested that further consideration be given to the extension of the North Durham Green Belt (in accordance with the recommendations of the Panel Report into the Examination in Public of the Structure Plan Review Deposit Draft) when the Structure Plan is next reviewed. Following a Public Examination into the emerging Regional Planning Guidance held in 2000, the panel recommended against the further extension of the North Durham Green Belt and this has since been accepted in the latest draft of the RPG published in April 2001.
- 1.27 It is intended that those inner Green Belt boundaries defined on the proposals Map are to remain permanent and unchanged beyond this Plan period. With the exception of safeguarding the long term industrial development option to the east of Stella Gill Industrial Estate (see New Industrial Policy at Proposed Modification 128) which lies outwith the Green Belt, Chester-le-Street District Council therefore proposes to identify its other longer term development needs from either within its existing urban areas or outwith those Green Belt boundaries defined on the Proposals Map (having taken into account assessments of the needs and capacities of those settlements to provide for sustainable communities).

NE4 - APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

Within the Green Belt, planning permission will only be granted for the construction of new buildings for the following purposes:-

- i) agriculture and forestry unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn;**
- ii) essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, for cemeteries and other uses of land that preserve the openness of the Green Belt;**
- iii) proposals for the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, subject to policies in the Housing, Agriculture and Built Environment Chapters being satisfied;**
- iv) the re-use or conversion of an existing building providing it conforms to the requirements of Policies AG6, AG7 and AG8 and it does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt;**
- v) the extraction of minerals provided that high environmental standards are maintained and the site is restored to the satisfaction of the Minerals Planning Authority and to a use which preserves the openness of the Green Belt.**

It is recognised that farmers in the Green Belt may need to introduce new non-agricultural enterprises in order to maintain and enhance their economic prospects. Their establishment will be permitted provided the proposals conform to Policy NE4.

- 1.28 Chester-le-Street District Council will impose strict controls on the nature and form of development within the Green Belt, in order to protect its purpose and character, whilst recognising the need to diversify the rural economy by encouraging its positive use.
- 1.29 Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:-
- i) to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
 - ii) to provide opportunities suitable for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas;
 - iii) to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
 - v) to improve damaged and derelict land around towns to secure nature conservation interest;
 - vi) to retain land in agriculture, forestry and related uses.
- 1.30 Within the Green Belt planning permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings for purposes other than agriculture and/or forestry, or other uses, which preserve the openness of the Green Belt. At present a wide range of agricultural and forestry developments do not require planning permission, they are permitted development. In certain instances, where possible, it may be necessary to withdraw permitted development rights when granting planning permission for new farm buildings in order to avoid a proliferation of buildings – particularly in locations where such development could have a detrimental effect on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.31 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, inappropriate development, i.e. development that does not fall within the criteria of Policy NE4, is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why any such permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm generated by the nature of the development is clearly outweighed by other planning considerations.

NE5 - NEW DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT

There will be a presumption against the construction of new dwellings in the Green Belt. Planning applications in the Green Belt for:-

- i) **converting or extending an existing dwelling to provide an additional dwelling; or**
- ii) **siting or replacing a residential caravan or chalet.**

will be treated in the same way as proposals for one or more new dwellings in the Green Belt.

(NE2, TM4)

1.32 The countryside of the District represents a significant natural asset. Protection of this asset accords with Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 “The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development”. The fact that a single dwelling on a particular site would be unobtrusive is not by itself an argument – it could be repeated too often. The strategy of this Local Plan is to provide sufficient land for housing to meet anticipated future needs in locations that relate to the availability of existing services and facilities.

1.33 Some flexibility is necessary in limited cases in order to provide homes for genuine agricultural or forestry workers and applications will be judged against policies in the Agriculture Chapter. Need will normally be interpreted as the proven necessity for on site supervision, the absence of which would threaten the viability of the undertakings concerned. Chester-le-Street District Council will require proposals to be substantiated by an alternative independent professionally qualified source.

NE6 - DEVELOPMENT THE AFFECTING VISUAL AMENITY OF THE GREEN BELT

Development within, or conspicuous from, the Green Belt will not be granted where the proposal by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design is detrimental to the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

1.34 The appearance of the Green Belt can be further enhanced by ensuring strict control of the form and footprint of any development sited either within the Green Belt, on land that is adjoining the Green Belt or on land visible from within the Green Belt boundary. All development proposals considered acceptable in principle will be required to minimise the visual intrusion through appropriate landscaping, design, scale siting and materials.

NE7 - SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

Proposals for development in or likely to affect existing or proposed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be subject to special scrutiny. Chester-le-Street District Council will not permit development which might destroy or could have an adverse impact, either directly or indirectly on the conservation value of a designated or future SSSI unless it can be proven that the development is of overriding national importance and no alternative site is available.

In the exceptional case or circumstance where development is to be permitted which could adversely affect any such site, Chester-le-Street District Council will consider the use of planning conditions or seek to enter into Section 106 planning obligations with the developer to include measures to conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest in an appropriate location and where practical to provide replacement habitats and features where damage is unavoidable.

- 1.35 There is at present only one Site of Special Scientific Interest within the District of Chester-le-Street – Waldrige Fell, although these sites are under constant review by English Nature and further Sites may be identified during the Plan period. Therefore, it is very important to maintain the integrity of any SSSI, especially as pressures for development and the intensification of agriculture increase. In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 – “Nature Conservation”, a local authority has an essential role to play in ensuring the effective conservation of its nature and wildlife and this Policy aims to protect the nationally important sites of the District.
- 1.36 Where development is considered acceptable, in the interests of nature conservation, Chester-le-Street District Council will consider the use of conditions, for example, requiring areas to be fenced off or to restrict operations or specific uses to specific times of the year. Similarly, planning obligations may accompany permissions for example, to secure the long term management, to provide funds for management, or to provide nature conservation features to compensate for any such features lost as a result of development.
- 1.37 In some instances, an Environmental Assessment will be required to accompany development proposals (subject to the provision of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, which affect land either within SSSIs or on land that abuts their boundaries.

NE8 - SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE AND LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and other similar sites of nature conservation interest, which may be designated during the Plan period, will be protected according to their significance to nature conservation. Planning permission will be granted only for development proposals which:-

- i) Enhance the designated site; or**
- ii) Do not harm the nature conservation interest of the site; or**
- iii) Minimise damage to the designated site and compensate fully for the damage by habitat creation or enhancement elsewhere within the site or local area.**

Where necessary, appropriate compensatory measures will be sought through the use of planning conditions and/or Section 106 planning obligations.

The designated sites are shown on the Proposals Map and include the following:-

Local Nature Reserves at:-

- 1) Congburn Wood

SNClS of County Importance in wildlife terms at:-

- 1) Walters Wood, Ouston
- 2) Whitehill Hall Wood
- 3) Congburn Wood
- 4) East Farm Pond
- 5) Sacriston Wood
- 6) Lumley Woods
- 7) Forgebank Woods
- 8) Pelaw Hill Railway
- 9) Chester Dene
- 10) Brough's Gill Wood
- 11) Twizell Wood
- 12) River Team Woodlands
- 13) Waldrige Pit Heap Pond
- 14) Pockerly Hill Wood
- 15) Morton Hill Wood
- 16) Howlmire Gill
- 17) Hermitage Woods/Southburn Dene

SNClS of County importance in geological terms at:-

- 1) Land adjacent to and encompassing part of Sacriston Wood
- 2) Land from Waldrige Fell through to Hermitage Woods/Southburn Dene
- 3) Land adjacent to A167 through to Blackdene Wood

SNClS of District importance in wildlife terms at:-

- 1) Woodland adjacent to Blackburn Bank, Sacriston
- 2) Land adjacent to C2C cycle route, North Lodge, Chester-le-Street
- 3) Land to north of Southburn Dene, Chester-le-Street
- 4) Pelton Fell Banks, north of Pelton Fell
- 5) Harbour House Woods, Plawsworth

(NE16, NE18)

1.38 Twenty-six locations have been identified as important nature conservation areas in the District, and are under constant review by Durham County Council, Durham Wildlife Trust and Chester-le-Street District Council in order to consider their re-designation. These sites are designated under the umbrella term 'Sites of Nature Conservation Importance' (SNClS). Of these SNClS, Durham County Council have identified seventeen County Wildlife Sites, one Local Nature Reserve and one County Geological Site. The five

remaining locations are considered to be of District importance and are identified as Local Sites of Nature Importance by Durham Wildlife Trust.

- 1.39 These sites form a significant part of the nature conservation resource of the District and they must be protected from the unacceptable effects of development. Where no suitable alternative site for development (including agricultural development where this requires planning permission) is available, any loss of habitat caused by the development must be compensated for elsewhere.
- 1.40 Whilst development proposals will be judged against all policies in the Local Plan together with any other material considerations, the weight to be accorded to nature conservation interests will increase directly in relation to the scale of importance of the nature conservation designation identified in the Local Plan. Policy NE8 reflects the tiered approach, which is advocated within PPG9 - 'Nature Conservation'.
- 1.41 In some instances an Environmental Assessment will be required to accompany development proposals (subject to the provision of Schedules 1 and 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) regulations 1998), which affect geologically or ecologically sensitive areas.
- 1.42 Chester-le-Street District Council will support the creation and future designations of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and will seek to declare further Local Nature Reserves over the Plan period in recognition of their ecological value.
- 1.43 As Chester-le-Street District Council undertakes its environmental improvement schemes as identified in Policy NE18, opportunities will arise for the creation of new sites of nature conservation importance ranging from Sites of Nature Conservation Importance to Local Nature Reserves and Local Sites of Nature Importance. It is not only the Council who can help create sites for nature conservation interest, local communities have a large part to play. Residents can change management techniques in their gardens and can also notify the local Parish Council of any areas that they consider suitable to be classed as a site of nature conservation importance. Local industries also have a large part to play, especially on areas of large industrial development such as the Drum Industrial Estate. Chester-le-Street District Council, together with other agencies, will also encourage local landowners to enter into agreements to ensure the suitable management of agricultural land, woodlands, grasslands etc.

NE9 - WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Development which would harm the continuity or integrity of the wildlife habitat value of a Wildlife Corridor, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted. Harm will be assessed according to the impact of development on the value of the feature in terms of its continuity and ecological structure and diversity. The landscaping of new development within or adjacent to wildlife corridors will be required to make a positive contribution to their wildlife value.

- 1.44 Wildlife corridors are linear features providing corridors within which wildlife can move and live. They include the open land network within the urban area where they form continuous corridors, rivers and streams, road and rail corridors, woodland, hedgerows and green lanes. They provide a continuity of habitat beneficial to wildlife and have an important function to play in the colonisation and regeneration of any plant and animal species and may also provide an attractive green route for residents and visitors. In accordance with PPG9 and RPG7 Chester-le-Street District Council recognises the importance of providing such wildlife corridors to ensure the maintenance of the current range and diversity of our flora, fauna, geological and other landform features and the survival of important species. They can therefore provide a multi-functional role in terms of ecology, amenity and environment as a whole.
- 1.45 Proposals for the town centre of Chester-le-Street (identified in Appendix III) provide a valuable opportunity for establishing a new wildlife corridor in the District as does the C2C cycle path from Consett to Sunderland. Durham County Council is currently in consultation with English Nature and the District Councils in order to establish a network of wildlife corridors, as wildlife has no awareness of District boundaries.

NE10 - ANCIENT WOODLANDS

Proposals which are detrimental to the nature conservation value and landscape quality of ancient woodlands, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value and landscape importance of the woodland. In reaching such decisions, Chester-le-Street District Council will have full regard to the irreplaceability of these habitats.

Where development is permitted, Chester-le-Street District Council will consider the use of planning conditions and Section 106 Obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

- 1.46 Ancient Woodlands are identified in the Durham Inventory by English Nature. These woodlands have been in existence since before the 1600's and now consist of mature trees with associated flora and fauna at a macro and micro level. They are identified on the Proposals Map and their maintenance is vital not only because of their high nature conservation value but also their historic value. The direct and indirect impacts of development proposals on Ancient Woodlands will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Planning permission will not be refused if development can be subject to conditions that will prevent damaging impacts on wildlife habitats or important physical features or if other material factors are sufficient to override the nature conservation or landscape considerations.
- 1.47 In the determination of planning applications that affect Ancient Woodlands, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek the specialist advice of English Nature, Durham Wildlife Trust and Durham County Council.

NE11 - TREE PRESERVATION AND PLANTING

Consent will only be granted for the cutting down, lopping, topping or uprooting of any tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order if the proposed work is necessary because:-

- i) the survival or growth prospects of other protected trees is threatened; or
- ii) it can be proven that the tree is causing structural damage and no remedial action to the tree is possible; or
- iii) the tree is a danger to life or limb.

NE12 - TREES AND HEDGEROWS

Development proposals will be required to take full account of trees, woodlands and hedgerows on, or adjacent to the site. If possible, development should avoid the need to remove trees and hedgerows. If removal is necessary, replanting of species appropriate to the existing nature conservation interest at a scale to be negotiated with Chester-le-Street District Council will be required on or adjacent to the site.

- 1.48 At present there are a total of 31 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in Chester-le-Street District. New orders are regularly made by the District Council where there is a perceived threat to important trees within the landscape or townscape.
- 1.49 Local Planning Authorities have specific powers to protect important trees by making TPOs. It is an offence to cut down, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree without the consent of the planning authority.
- 1.50 Whether an isolated specimen or in a small group, trees and hedgerows are often significant features in the formation of the character and attractiveness of an area. They also contribute significantly to nature conservation providing habitats for invertebrates and lower plants. As such, development proposals will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that important trees and hedgerows will not be harmed.
- 1.51 Individual trees or groups of trees are often lost to new development, or subsequently perish through lack of thought at the earliest stages of the design process. Chester-le-Street District Council will aim to protect all trees worthy of retention. Trees should therefore be treated as a constraint from the earliest stages of the planning application and their retention and integration should be included in the design scheme. Where it is considered necessary, the developer will be required to provide a survey which grades a tree's physical condition. The District Council will then take account of the species, age and amenity value of the trees and determine whether they are suitable for retention. In addition, Chester-le-Street District Council would require that attention is given to the 1995 National Joint Utilities Group document "Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Services in

Proximity to Trees” in order to protect the root systems from damage caused by the provision of underground services or utilities located too close to a tree.

- 1.52 If necessary, Chester-le-Street District Council may consider the designation of Tree Preservation Orders on certain individual and groupings of trees. Where an approved development would result in the loss of statutorily protected trees, Chester-le-Street District Council will require the developer to plant suitable replacements. Extensions falling within ‘permitted development rights’ are exempt from requiring planning permission and may result in a building encroaching on a tree so that its health and stability are threatened. In appropriate instances, and where possible, ‘permitted development rights’ will be removed. Any unnecessary loss of trees and hedgerows should be avoided. However, where the felling of trees and hedgerows is necessary, such work should be timed to avoid when birds will be nesting as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offence to disturb, damage or destroy birds or their nests whilst in use or being built.
- 1.53 Notwithstanding the contents of Policy NE12, the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, have introduced additional arrangements to secure the retention of important countryside hedgerows. Prior consent is required from Chester-le-Street District Council to remove all or any sections of hedgerow over 20 metres in length, or less than 20 metres if it meets another hedgerow at each end and it is on or runs alongside any of the following:-
- i) agricultural land; or
 - ii) common land, including town or village greens; or
 - iii) land used for forestry or the breeding or keeping of horses, ponies or donkeys; or
 - iv) a local nature reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 1.54 Development proposals will be required to incorporate hard and soft landscaping with both regard to the setting of development and the enhancement of its appearance.
- 1.55 Land outside buildings is of great importance in ensuring that there is quality of environment in any development. The form, layout and design of landscaping should be considered in the earliest stages of the design process. Preference will be given to landscaping schemes that incorporate low maintenance regimes, wildflower/grass mixes and appropriate tree planting, in line with the policies of the Great North Forest. In relation to hedgerows, attention should be given to the local planting and design techniques. Many parts of the County and District have individually distinctive hedgerow construction techniques, for instance raised ‘stone-faced’ banks. Some of these are associated with historic periods of specific estate practices. Where evident, these distinctive styles and methods should be retained.
- 1.56 Chester-le-Street District Council will seek off site planting, avoiding Leyland Cypress, specifically in relation to development on the edge of built up areas in order to screen development, to create buffer zones between new

development and agricultural land, provide recreational opportunities for local residents and enhance access to public rights of way in adjoining countryside.

NE13 - PROTECTED SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS

Chester-le-Street District Council will not permit development which would adversely affect protected species or their habitats, unless it can be shown that the reasons for the proposed development outweigh any adverse affect on the species or their habitat. Where development is to be permitted, Chester-le-Street District Council will consider the use of planning condition and/or seek Section 106 Planning Obligations requiring the developer to implement measures necessary for species protection and/or habitat replacement.

(NE7-NE12, BE4, BE5, BE15, BE18, HP11, HP12, HP17, AG6 and AG7)

- 1.57 Together, Part I of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1982 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats and C.) Regulations 1994 set out the protection to be afforded to certain plant and animal species (including all birds) and their habitats. It is an offence to ill-treat, kill, injure, sell or take protected species or recklessly or intentionally damage their resting places or breeding sites. Whilst there are no protected plants within the District, the District Council will upon request provide details of protected animal species in the District.
- 1.58 Where protected species might be present, the planning authority requires that applications for development should be preceded by an assessment of the species interest and include details of how the development will be planned and implemented to avoid or minimise impact and, if damage or disturbance is unavoidable, of the mitigation measures to be implemented.
- 1.59 Where it is known or considered likely that the development proposal will affect protected species or habitats, Chester-le-Street District Council will consult English Nature and Durham Wildlife Trust who are available to provide guidance on species including otters, bats, badgers, Great Crested Newts and Water Voles. The presence of such species can necessitate modifications to plans in terms of design, location and timing of works so as to minimise damage or disturbance whilst these habitats are in use.

NE14 - SURFACE WATER QUALITY

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to protect and enhance the quality of surface water and groundwater by:-

- i) preventing development in areas liable to flooding;**
- ii) restricting development on unsuitable land unless it can be demonstrated that the development will not lead to the pollution of controlled waters;**
- iii) preventing development which would damage surface and groundwater resources and their uses;**

iv) resisting development which would damage historic watercourses or compromise water quality.

- 1.60 Deteriorating water quality can affect the supply of water for domestic, industrial and agricultural uses, general amenity, water based recreation, fisheries and nature conservation.
- 1.61 It is essential that new development is not at risk from flooding and that it does not put other areas at risk. Flood plains and new areas of low lying land adjacent to watercourses are liable to flood under certain circumstances. Development in upper parts of a catchment area can also have a significant impact upon others downstream by increasing surface run-off. Suitable mitigating measures will be necessary where this situation applies. As an interim measure to determining development proposals, Chester-le-Street District Council will have due regard to the Local Environment Agency Plans. However, at the earliest opportunity supplementary planning guidance will be prepared in association with the Environment Agency to provide more detailed advice on the issue of development in flood risk areas.
- 1.62 The disturbance of contaminated land can affect pollutants causing pollution of water resources. Leachates and drainage from contaminated land can cause serious risk of pollution to both watercourses and groundwaters. Groundwater resources are a vital component of drinkable water supplies but once polluted the damage can often be permanent. It is essential, therefore that development which threatens this resource is prevented.
- 1.63 The most environmentally effective means of disposal of foul sewage and trade effluent is normally through a recognised sewage treatment works where capacity exists. It is often difficult to guarantee a consistent quality of effluent from small privately operated treatment plants. Consequently their use should be avoided except in such circumstances where controls over quality of discharge can be assured.

NE15 - AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE

Chester-le-Street District Council will give special attention to maintaining and enhancing the landscape character and quality within the Beamish/Causey Arch and Wear Valley Areas of High Landscape Value, as defined on the Proposals Map. Proposals for development either within or on the edges of built up areas adjacent to AHLVs will only be permitted where they:-

- i) are of a high standard of design;**
- ii) reflect the scale and character of buildings in the area; and**
- iii) do not detract from the high landscape quality.**

(NE4)

- 1.64 The Beamish/Causey Arch and River Wear Valley areas have been identified in the County Durham Structure Plan Review as landscapes of countywide importance within which the maintenance and enhancement of the landscape

and nature conservation character must be the prime objective and any new development should accord with these principles. As the AHLVs cover a variety of landscape type this should be reflected in the design, styles, materials and landscape features in the locality of the new development.

- 1.65 In some circumstances, an Environmental Assessment will be required to accompany development proposals (subject to the provision of Schedules 1 and 2 of the Town and Country (Assessment of Environmental Affects) Regulations 1988) which affect land either within AHLVs or on land that abuts their boundaries.

NE16 - PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The following significant views will be protected from inappropriate development:-

- 1 of Lumley Castle from the Riverside and vice versa;**
- 2 of Waldrige Fell and the Congburn Local Nature Reserve;**
- 3 of the skyline of Chester-le-Street Town Centre including the Spire of St Mary's and St Cuthbert's Church.**

Proposals for development within these vistas will be considered against the following criteria:-

- i) the scale, height, siting or design of proposals;**
- ii) the incorporation of features that enhance the character of the existing vistas through mitigating the effects of the development; and**
- iii) the relevant policies of the Natural, Built Environment, Housing and Agriculture Chapters are satisfied.**

- 1.66 Within the District the landmark buildings that make up an important component of its character are Lumley Castle and the spire of the Parish Church of St Mary and St Cuthbert, both clearly visible from many parts of the district, and which dominate views from the new Riverside complex. Whilst modern buildings also feature on the skyline these mediaeval and Victorian structures both dominate and dictate its character.

- 1.67 Broader landscape vistas also underpin the District's visual, quality. Of particular importance are the views across Waldrige Fell and the Congburn Local Nature Reserve. All of these key views and vistas should be protected from intrusive development. Of equal importance is the impression received by travellers as they pass through the District on either the main road or rail links.

NE17 - THE DISTRICT AND MAIN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

The appearance of the District from the A1(M), A167, A693, the East Coast Main Line Railway and Leamside Railway Line will be maintained and, where necessary, enhanced by:-

- i) Appraisals of the routes to identify constraints and opportunities;**
- ii) Encouraging, assisting and carrying out improvements to unsightly land and buildings as shown on the Proposals Map;**
- iii) Requiring new development which complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, to respect its setting, and not detract from its surroundings through its design and landscaping.**

(NE18, RL14, RL15, TM2 [Great North Forest])

1.68 The views from the principal transport corridors running through the District give an immediate visual impression of the District. It is estimated that about eight million people pass through the District annually on the East Coast Main Line Railway alone. An East Coast Main Line Study undertaken in partnership with Groundwork West Durham and the Great North Forest highlighted the positive benefits that can be derived for the District as a place to live and work by creating an attractive landscape alongside the major roads and railway corridors.

1.69 Along the main transport corridors set out above lie a considerable number of buildings and activities occupying prominent locations that are visually intrusive and do little to enhance the image of the District. These sites are shown on the Proposals Map under Policy NE18. Over time there may be other sites identified during the life of the Plan. Environmental improvements such as the reclamation and appropriate re-use of derelict land and vacant sites, screening, tree planting, the provision of new wildlife habitats and the provision of new amenity open space would serve to enhance the image of the District.

NE18 - ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION AREAS

Opportunities will be sought for the improvement of poor areas of degraded wildlife and landscape character by:-

- i) reclamation of land that becomes derelict and its subsequent improvement and management through tree planting, landscape and wildlife habitat creation;**
- ii) the promotion of 'Action Areas', in order to identify at an early stage land that is in need of enhancement and management. Where such improvements are carried out, due regard will be given to existing nature conservation interest which may have developed since the land was abandoned;**

- iii) **promotion of suitable wildlife habitat creation in conjunction with Great North Forest programmes and Policies IN3, IN4, IN5, IN6, IN7, IN8, IN9 and TM2. Heathland establishment, a habitat type particularly characteristic of the District, will be especially favoured.**

The identification of the area around Chester-le-Street Railway Station, the East Coast Main Line north of Chester-le-Street, land north of Fencehouses and west of the Leamside railway line as ‘Action Areas’ is a priority.

1.70 Most of the derelict land in the District has been reclaimed over the years in a wide variety of programmes. However, Chester-le-Street District Council will keep under review its Action Areas and where necessary identify additional priority locations. Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that any land remaining will become part of a new programme of improvements in order to ensure the efficient re-use of land. This will be achieved through planning conditions on new development, derelict land reclamation schemes, through partnerships and with its own capital programme.

1.71 The area around the railway station deserves special attention as it is a gateway entrance to the District and is also a passing point through the Town Centre for local residents.

NE19 - IN-HOUSE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to promote in-house changes in the management of the natural environment, using best practice measures, in order to achieve techniques that are sympathetic to nature conservation.

1.72 Changing management techniques on Council maintained open space can encourage wildlife. This may include revised spraying and mowing regimes on certain areas, but will also certainly look at creating new habitats for flora and fauna that need to be linked in with the wildlife corridors as proposed at Policy NE9.

NE20 - GREAT NORTH FOREST

Chester-le-Street District Council will support the long term strategy for the implementation of a Community Forest in the North East. Development that is permitted within the Great North Forest, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be required to support the long term Forest Plan strategy and objectives of, where appropriate : -

- i) **Providing for the retention and restoration of existing trees, hedges and woodland;**
- ii) **Providing for the integration of woodland planting into the development;**
- iii) **Protecting high quality landscape and improving the landscape of the area;**
- iv) **Protecting sites of ecological value and creating new opportunities for nature conservation;**

- v) **Providing opportunities for the diversification of farm business;**
- vi) **Increasing opportunities for employment, access, leisure, recreation, artistic, cultural and educational activities compatible with the Great North Forest objectives set out at Appendix VI and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

Where relevant, in its consideration of applications within the Great North Forest, Chester-le-Street District Council will require proposals to be accompanied by appropriate landscaping and planting details.

(NE2, NE4, HP4, HP6-HP8, IN2-IN10, AG3, AG11, T2)

- 1.73 The Great North Forest is a Community Forest Project with the principle aim of creating a well-wooded landscape, to improve the appearance of many open areas around built up areas, providing opportunities for leisure activities, a natural history resource and a timber crop. Its main objectives are set out at Appendix VI.
- 1.74 Launched in 1989, it now covers an area of 96 square miles across Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside and in the north of County Durham (including much of the Chester-le-Street District). The Forest Plan, published in January 1994, is prepared by the Great North Forest and is a guide for the long term development of the Forest area. The District Council has subsequently adopted the guide as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Although this is a non-statutory plan, it is a material consideration in determining proposals for development within the Forest area. The Forest Plan arranges the District into two broad Local Management Zones, within which smaller, more localised zones are identified which can overlap into other administrative areas. These are : -
- i) Western Hills – made up of the “Beamish Parkland”, the “West Pelton Hills”, “Congburn/Twizell Dene” and the “Ouston Hills” management zones
 - ii) The Central Lowlands – made up of the “Team Valley”, “Wear Valley”, “Chester Riverside”, “Lumley Parkland”, the “Sedgeleth Fringe” and “Rainton Farmland” management zones.

Each local management zone contains a broad implementation strategy and is detailed in the Forest Plan.

- 1.75 The majority of the land within the Great North Forest is privately owned and is largely used for agricultural purposes. Efficient and productive farming will continue to play an essential role within the Forest area in relation to the landscape, wildlife and recreation according to the landscape strategies identified to each management zone. In terms of the leisure potential of the Forest, the aim is to create a robust and attractive well wooded countryside equipped, managed and promoted to cater for a wide range of appropriate sport, recreation and leisure activities. However urban fringe pressures do exist, such as vandalism, theft and trespass, resulting from the close juxtaposition of urban areas and farmland. Implementation of the Forest

strategies will provide opportunities to minimise such pressures through, for example, the provision of woodland buffer zones designed to absorb public pressure and the promotion of managed access to working farms to increase public awareness and respect for the countryside and its ongoing activities.

- 1.76 It is envisaged that the aims and objectives of the Forest Plan will be achieved through agreement and negotiation with land owners, either on a voluntary basis or through planning obligations, as and when acceptable development opportunities come forward. Land acquisition is also a major mechanism for achieving the aims and objectives of the Great North Forest. Grant schemes and access agreements will further assist in delivering these objectives. Countryside Stewardship, Woodland Grant Schemes and the Landfill Tax are current examples of grant schemes available.
- 1.77 By its very nature, the creation of the Great North Forest will be a long term project. Once established, the Forest is not intended to stifle development in appropriate locations. Some trees may eventually be cleared to provide attractive parkland locations for suitable development schemes. It will of necessity include extensive areas of open space and clearings.
- 1.78 Development that seeks to contribute to the establishment of the Great North Forest must comply with other policies within the Local Plan including those concerning the Green Belt. Planning permission for inappropriate developments will not be granted simply because applicants are prepared to plant trees or otherwise assist in the implementation of the Forest Plan.

NE21 – IMPORTANT OPEN AREAS

In the important open areas separating Chester-le-Street town/Pelton Fell and Sacriston/Witton Gilbert, as shown on the Proposals Map, development will only be permitted provided that it does not detract from the objective of maintaining their open characters.

The open land separating those settlements identified in the Policy are separated by thin areas of open countryside which are predominantly in agricultural use. These narrow areas are important in terms of:

- i) preventing the coalescence of the settlements;
- ii) maintaining the distinction between the open countryside and built environment;
- iii) maintaining the distinct character and identity of each settlement; and
- iv) providing a rural setting for the respective settlements.

The need to maintain a physical and visual separation between settlements in the Chester-le-Street District has been explicitly recognised in the County Durham Structure Plan Review. It is the intention of Chester-le-Street District Council to protect these areas from development which would reduce their effectiveness as important open breaks between the settlements concerned. This policy is additional to the strict controls which apply to all proposals for development in the open countryside as set in Policy NE2. However, the types of uses which the Council will encourage in these important open areas include agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor leisure uses, wildlife reserves and other appropriate open space uses.

Chapter Two

Built Environment

CHAPTER TWO - BUILT ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The built environment of Chester-le-Street District provides an important focus on the past and a key to the future. The listed buildings and historically important settlements of the District combine to form a visually interesting and important landscape.
- 2.2 Archaeological remains are important within the District. The District's past association with the Romans and their culture provides many interesting sites, both in terms of settlement patterns and artefacts. The field patterns of the District reflect even older associations and they too need to be preserved and conserved.

Sites of Archaeological Interest

- 2.3 There are four scheduled ancient monuments within the District. They are Chester New Bridge in the Parish of Bournmoor, Concangium Roman Fort in Chester-le-Street, a settlement south west of Harbour House Farm and Harbour House Chapel in the Parish of Kimblesworth and Plawsworth. In addition there are 173 sites of known archaeological interest; there may be more sites which are yet undiscovered and there are also sites which have been lost to development in the past.
- 2.4 Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource, highly vulnerable to damage and destruction. They are part of our national heritage and are valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism. The fabric of the District's past does not take care of itself. We need to find ways of managing change in order to bring about sensitive solutions to the treatment of sites with archaeological remains and reduce the areas of potential conflict between development and preservation.
- 2.5 Some of Chester-le-Street District's archaeological heritage has already been destroyed. However, there is much that can be done in order to preserve existing remains together with any new archaeological finds during the Plan period.

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

- 2.6 There are 66 buildings in the District that are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Of these, 3 are Grade I listed – that is, buildings of exceptional interest. The Church of St May and St Cuthbert in Chester-le-Street, Biddick Hall and Lumley Castle fall into this category; 7 are

Grade II* listed – they are buildings of special interest and the remainder are Grade II listed. Listed buildings are historically important. They give a place a distinctive character and provide a sense of identity. Buildings are listed to give them statutory protection from unsympathetic alteration and demolition. The spirit of the legislation is to encourage and promote an appreciation of a building's heritage and to ensure that progress and change take place in sensitive ways which respect the historic environment.

2.7 Within the District, apart from Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, there are areas whose intrinsic qualities combine to create settlements worthy of additional protection or enhancement. These areas are known as Conservation Areas. At the time of the preparation of the Deposit Draft Plan there was one at Plawsworth.

2.8 The purpose of designating a Conservation Area is to preserve and enhance areas of distinctive quality, character and historic associations. A Conservation Area, refers not just to the character and coherence of the buildings, but also to the open spaces, green areas, trees, hedges, road signage and street furniture within the designated area.

Environmental Improvements

2.9 There are parts of the District that would benefit from environmental improvements and enhancement, which would add to the overall quality of the District and contribute to the general aim of the Plan in making Chester-le-Street a better place in which to live and work.

Village Design Statements

2.10 Village Design Statements prepared by local communities can provide significant opportunities for local residents to have an input into the future management of their settlement to ensure that new development is in keeping with its surroundings and local character. Such statements can further engender developers with greater certainty as to local views and perceptions at the outset of the development process, thereby offering the opportunity to propose schemes that are more likely to gain local support as opposed to generating uninformed opposition. Whilst not forming part of the development plan, Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage the preparation of such statements at the community level and seek to incorporate these into the Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.11 The District Wide Local Plan aims:-

- i) to conserve the historic heritage of the District through its promotion, enhancement and protection.
- ii) to promote the retention and conservation of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments in the District;

- iii) to develop the educational, recreational and tourist potential of archaeological sites and monuments;
- iv) to promote a change to management practices in the countryside to help ensure that the archaeological heritage of the District is preserved and to record and protect new archaeological finds;
- v) to improve the environmental quality of the main towns and settlements within the District;
- vi) to designate new Conservation Areas within the District as necessary and protect them from insensitive developments.

POLICIES

BE1 - HERITAGE OF THE DISTRICT

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to conserve the historic heritage of the District by the promotion, maintenance, enhancement and protection of sites and features with particular archaeological, architectural or historic importance.

2.12 It is important that the historic heritage of the District is not lost through neglect and destruction. The District contains a number of buildings and sites that have great historical, architectural and archaeological value and are important both locally and nationally. The District Council will endeavour to protect as much of the historic heritage as possible.

BE2 - PUBLIC ART

Where development costs total £500,000 or more, Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage developers to devote at least 1% of those costs to the provision of works of art in new building and landscaping projects accessible to the general or client public. In determining planning applications, due regard will be given to the contribution made by any such works to the appearance of the scheme and the amenities of the area.

2.13 Chester-le-Street District Council seeks to ensure that the design of new development is of a consistently high quality in order to support not only the environmental and economic regeneration of the District, but also to maintain and enhance the sense of community identity, spirit and sense of place. The incorporation of artistic elements in the design of buildings, spaces and landscapes can contribute greatly to local identity and can facilitate public involvement whilst enhancing the quality of the environment.

2.14 The Council therefore operates a scheme whereby developers devote a percentage of development costs to the installation of works of art. Wherever possible, the provision of artistic elements in developments of a significant scale, nature and location, accessible to the general public, will be encouraged. These may include industrial developments, public buildings, retail developments, leisure facilities, housing developments and environmental improvements.

2.15 The form of the artwork will be a matter for discussion and agreement in each case with the Council's Arts Officer. It could be a sculpture, natural art, painting, mosaic, tapestry or similar, rather than an element essential to the development such as street furniture, unless such elements are individually designed.

BE3 - DESIGNATION AND REVIEW OF CONSERVATION AREAS

New Conservation Areas will be identified to cover areas of special architectural or historic interest by reference to some or all of the following elements:-

- i) architectural and historic quality, character and coherence;**
- ii) historic elements of topography, property boundaries and thoroughfares;**
- iii) use and characteristic of traditional materials and detailing;**
- iv) character and quality of open spaces, trees, vegetation, hedgerows and their relationship with each other and with buildings;**
- v) archaeological interest and potential;**
- vi) significant historic associations with people or events;**
- vii) architectural style, details of layout or other features reflecting aspects of the historic evolution of the area; and**
- viii) landmarks, vistas and panoramas.**

The existing Conservation Area at Plawsworth will be kept under review and where necessary the boundaries will be amended.

2.16 A Conservation Area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Increased development pressures throughout the District are affecting the character and appearance of some of its settlements. Of those settlements, some are considered worthy of additional protection and they will therefore be considered for designation as Conservation Areas.

2.17 Local Authorities are required to keep under review the need for additional Conservation Areas under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Chester-le-Street District Council is proposing four new areas at:-

- 1) Beamish
- 2) North and south of Chester Road, Bournmoor
- 3) Chester-le-Street Town Centre
- 4) High Urpeth

The designation of conservation areas is carried out separately from the preparation of the Local Plan and will include further public consultation.

- 2.18 It is recognised that it is the overall character of these areas that is important. The contribution of characteristics like the form and layout of the buildings, the spaces between them, the influence of historic patterns, the mix of historic and contemporary uses and relationships to open spaces and important trees, are as important as the historic buildings present. The criteria above are broad and only intended to act as guidance – not all of the elements will necessarily be appropriate in every Conservation Area and there may be other aspects of an area not listed which make the area worthy of designation.
- 2.19 Designation imposes certain duties on prospective developers to produce a very high standard of design that pays special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of each of the Conservation Area designations.
- 2.20 As part of the review process of the Conservation Areas, Chester-le-Street District Council will consult the general public and external agencies and will bring forward and prepare assessments of the proposed and existing Conservation Areas in order to identify objectives for their future preservation and enhancement.

BE4 - DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Chester-le-Street District Council will allow new development and alterations within and/or adjoining Conservation Areas providing that:-

- i) the proposed design, layout, massing, materials and scale respects the character of the Area;**
- ii) materials, features and relief for building and hard landscaping must be appropriate to and sympathetic with the characteristic of the Area;**
- iii) the proposal does not generate excessive traffic, parking, noise or other environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;**
- iv) the proposals meet the requirements of other relevant policies of the Local Plan; and**
- v) hard and soft landscaping and street furniture are appropriate to, and sympathetic with, the characteristics of the Area.**

Proposals which adversely affect the setting of a Conservation Area or the views into or out of the Area will not be permitted.

- 2.21 Proposals for new development within Conservation Areas will be carefully considered against the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area. This will allow necessary change whilst ensuring that future development fits in with the special character of the area.

2.22 Since development must respect the objectives of conservation, in which design details are important, applications will need to be submitted with full details. Outline planning consent will not be granted in a Conservation Area.

BE5 - DEMOLITION IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of buildings in a Conservation Area will only be granted where detailed plans can demonstrate:-

- i) the demolition or replacement of the structure will not be detrimental to, and will positively enhance, the character or appearance of the area;**
- ii) any proposals for replacement buildings accord with the special visual and architectural qualities of the area;**
- iii) the letting of a contract for an approved redevelopment of the site has been secured.**

2.23 Conservation Area designation introduces control over demolition of most buildings and structures within the Conservation Area. Account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building or structure for which demolition is proposed and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the Conservation Area as a whole. The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Approval for demolition will not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any new development and that the contract for the approved redevelopment of the site has been let. This is to ensure that Conservation Areas are not marred by vacant sites awaiting redevelopment.

2.24 In circumstances where consent for the demolition or alteration of a building in a Conservation Area is considered, Chester-le-Street District Council will examine the use of planning conditions requiring the applicant to arrange suitable programmes for the recording of features that would be destroyed in the course of any works.

BE6 - ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS (RESTRICTION OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS)

Where Chester-le-Street District Council considers there to be a real and specific planning threat to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and that further protection is required, the permitted development rights will be withdrawn under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

2.25 Article 4 Directions withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of minor developments that can cumulatively lead to the erosion of the character and appearance of a sensitive area. Subject to the ratification by the Secretary of State, an Article 4 Direction requires an individual to seek

planning permission for minor alterations such as the painting of windows and doors.

BE7- PLANTING IN CONSERVATION AREAS

The planting of native species of trees within Conservation Areas will be encouraged where consistent with the character and appearance of the Area, providing that they:-

- i) do not adversely affect the quality of the area;**
- ii) do not interfere with vehicular or pedestrian safety; or**
- iii) do not adversely affect the sites of known or potential archaeological interest**

(NE11, BE10, BE12)

2.26 Trees make an important contribution to the character of the local environment. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes special provision for trees in Conservation Areas which are not the subject of Tree Preservation Orders. Under Section 211, anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a Conservation Area is required to give six weeks written notice to the local planning authority. Chester-le-Street District Council will ask applicants who fell trees within the Conservation Area to replant in an appropriate location. Tree planting must be consistent with the character and appearance of the area.

BE8 - ADVERTISEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Within the Conservation Area, advertisements and signs will be approved where:-

- i) they are related in size, scale, materials and character to the building on which they are mounted, or if free standing, to that of adjacent buildings;**
- ii) the cumulative amount and scale of advertising will not detract from the appearance of buildings;**
- iii) they will not create a hazard or endanger pedestrian and highway traffic in the vicinity.**

Full internal illumination of signs will be resisted. External illuminated signs will be encouraged.

(R12)

2.27 All outdoor advertisements affect the appearance of the building or neighbourhood where they are displayed. Chester-le-Street District Council accepts the need for advertising to continue within Conservation Areas, however they must not be allowed to detract from the character and appearance of the individual buildings within the area or from the character

and appearance of the area as a whole. Within the proposed town centre Conservation Area all advertisements will be expected to be in line with the guidance contained in Appendix II and that contained in Shopfronts: Design Guidance in Co Durham – a booklet produced by Durham County Council.

BE9 - HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

Development within the designated Historic Parks and Gardens of Lumley Castle and Lambton Castle, as defined on the Proposals Map, or with future designations will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would conserve or enhance the special historic and landscape qualities of the designated area.

- 2.28 Under Section 8C of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953, supplemented by Paragraph 10 of Schedule 4 to the National Heritage Act 1983, English Heritage can designate Historic Parks and Gardens. Historic Parks and Gardens constitute an important part of England's cultural heritage. They comprise a variety of features; the open space itself, water, trees and their groupings, built features, archaeological remains and the views to and from the Historic Parks and Gardens. They also have great historical importance as well as landscape, archaeological, architectural, nature conservation and amenity value. Development proposals considered acceptable in principle, on either land adjoining or clearly visible from a proposed Historic Park or Garden, will be required to mitigate the visual intrusion of the development through appropriate landscaping, design, scale, siting and materials.
- 2.29 Chester-le-Street District Council will protect Historic Parks and Gardens and their settings from new development which would destroy or harm their features and, wherever possible, their sympathetic management will be encouraged.
- 2.30 The Durham volume of the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens is reviewed periodically by English Heritage and has recently been updated. Whilst further sites may be identified during the Plan period, those areas of land within the Estates of both Lambton Park and Lumley Park and identified on the Proposals Map have now been included on the Register by English Heritage. These are referred to as the Historic Parks and Gardens of Lambton Castle and Lumley Castle respectively. This combined area contains agricultural land, woodland and working farms. It is recognised that there will be a need for farmers to erect new buildings or other structures within the area, and there may be proposals for farm diversification enterprises. Great care will be required in the siting and design of any developments to ensure that they do not adversely affect the landscape quality.

BE10 - SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS

As shown on the Proposals Map, there will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of scheduled ancient monuments and other nationally important monuments and their settings. Planning permission for development which would have an adverse affect on their site or setting will not be permitted.

- 2.31 Chester-le-Street District has a valuable archaeological heritage reflecting life in the District from prehistoric times onwards. The records for the District are held by the County Sites and Monuments Records in the Arts, Libraries and Museums Department, County Hall, County Durham. When considering applications in respect of any finds of known archaeological importance, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek expert advice. If there is a discovery of any site of archaeological importance during developments, the developer must immediately notify Chester-le-Street District Council, in order to update the County Sites and Monuments Records accordingly.
- 2.32 In Chester-le-Street District there are four Scheduled Ancient Monuments, all of which require Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport where development is to be carried out within the scheduled area. In these instances, planning permission will not be granted unless Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent has also been given. Whilst Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent is not required for development which might affect the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Chester-le-Street District Council may seek the views of English Heritage prior to determining any such planning application.

BE11 - SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Where important sites of archaeological interest are likely to be affected by development, their preservation in situ will be required. On those sites where preservation in situ is not feasible Chester-le-Street District Council will require the developer to make suitable arrangements to a brief prepared by the County Archaeological Officer, for the excavation and recording and publishing of the remains.

BE12 - ASSESSMENT OF SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Where development proposals affect sites of known or potential archaeological interest, Chester-le-Street District Council will require an archaeological assessment/evaluation to be submitted as part of the planning application. Planning permission will not be granted without adequate assessment of the nature, extent and significance of the remains present and the degree to which the proposed development is likely to affect them.

- 2.33 In addition to the Scheduled Ancient Monuments there are 173 sites of known archaeological importance in the District for which details are also held by the County Sites and Monuments Record Office.
- 2.34 In all cases there will be a presumption in favour of the in-situ preservation of the remains. If this is not possible, an archaeological condition may be imposed which will require a detailed recording and excavation of the site. Financial assistance towards these works may be available from English Heritage where the applicant is a non-profit making community body or if the individual cannot afford the works.

BE13 - ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOURISM

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to develop the educational and tourist potential of archaeological sites through their promotion, management and interpretation, providing that this does not adversely affect the archaeological features of the site in question.

- 2.35 The heritage around us is becoming more important in terms of attracting visitors and as an educational tool. Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage the promotion of archaeological sites for such purposes providing that they do not adversely affect the archaeological features of the site.

BE14 - ARCHAEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Chester-le-Street District Council will evaluate, and where necessary, make changes to its landscape management practices, and encourage others to do the same, to help ensure that the archaeological heritage of the District is preserved.

- 2.36 Agricultural practices can cause damage to the archaeological heritage of the District. These include the demolition, reconstruction or conversion of buildings, the construction of new farm roads and changes to boundaries, in addition to the erosive effects of many cultivation processes themselves. Tree planting and harvesting can cause damage or conceal areas or features of archaeological interest. Chester-le-Street District Council will endeavour to integrate archaeological concerns with other conservation interests, to identify areas of potential conflict and improve liaison.

BE15 - DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDINGS

The total or substantial demolition of a Listed Building will only be considered for approval where Chester-le-Street District Council is satisfied that all other avenues for retention have been explored and found not to be feasible, and where there are also acceptable and detailed plans for redevelopment.

- 2.37 Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition, alteration or extension of a Listed Building. Applications in respect of Grade I or Grade II* Listed Buildings are referred to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for determination with an appropriate Council recommendation.
- 2.38 The demolition of historic buildings is seldom necessary for reasons of good planning, more often it is as a result of neglect, or the failure to make imaginative efforts to find new uses for them or to incorporate them into new development. Chester-le-Street District Council will resist all efforts to demolish Listed Buildings since Government guidance (in PPG15) recognises that there is a presumption in favour of preserving Listed Buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural and historic interest which they possess. The total or substantial demolition of any Grade I or II* Listed Building will not be permitted unless the applicant can demonstrate with convincing evidence, that real efforts have been made to sustain existing uses; or attempts to find viable and compatible new uses have failed; or that redevelopment would produce substantial planning benefits for the community

which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition. Consent for demolition will not be given simply because redevelopment is economically more attractive to the developer than repair and re-use of a historic building. As an example preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership may be possible.

- 2.39 In the exceptional circumstances that consent for demolition is required, Chester-le-Street District Council will impose planning conditions requiring the applicant to arrange a suitable programme to record features that would be destroyed in the course of the works.

BE16 - DEMOLITIONS WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF A LISTED BUILDING

Proposals for the demolition of structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building will only be permitted where: -

- i) the structure to be demolished does not make a significant contribution to the character of the Listed Building;**
- ii) any redevelopment proposals meet the requirements of Policy BE17; and**
- iii) the structure is not Listed in its own right or mentioned in the Listed description.**

- 2.40 In special circumstances, Chester-le-Street District Council may consider the demolition of structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building. Such instances may include situations where a minor structure is not important historically or architecturally and where it does not make a positive contribution to the character of the Listed Building.

- 2.41 Where proposals for the demolition in the curtilage of a Listed Building are to facilitate the redevelopment of the site, it will be essential that the detailed redevelopment scheme approved, and the structure proposed for demolition, is fully recorded prior to the start of any work. This is to ensure that the character of the remaining Listed Building is not adversely affected.

BE17 - THE SETTINGS OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Chester-le-Street District Council will not permit development which adversely affects the setting of a Listed Building. Proposals for development which affects the setting or is within the curtilage of a Listed Building will only be appropriate where the following criteria are met:-

- i) the detailed design is in keeping with the Listed Building in terms of scale, height, massing, roofscape and alignment;**
- ii) the works proposed make use of traditional or sympathetic building materials, features and techniques which are in keeping with those found on the Listed Building; and**
- iii) the proposal meets the requirements of other relevant policies in the Local Plan.**

- 2.42 The setting of a Listed Building is often an essential part of the building's character. Historic buildings can be robbed of much of their interest and value if they become isolated from their surroundings. Development away from the site can sometimes have an adverse effect on the settings of a Listed Building, for example where it would affect views of an historic skyline.
- 2.43 The design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings is particularly critical. Such buildings must be carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment and use appropriate materials.

BE18 - ALTERATIONS, EXTENSION AND CONVERSIONS OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Proposals for the alteration, extension or change of use of listed buildings will be required to preserve their special architectural or historic interest and will not be permitted unless:-

- i) the architectural or historic elements which are important to the character of the building, including those in the interior, are retained and unaltered;**
- ii) any new works respect the character and scale of the building and make use of traditional and/or sympathetic building materials which match or are in keeping with those found on the listed buildings;**
- iii) the architectural details are in keeping with the listed building; and**
- iv) all applications are accompanied by detailed drawings clearly showing all proposed works.**

In the case of redundant listed buildings Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to promote their sensitive conversion to appropriate uses which do not detract from the architectural character or appearance of the building or its setting and providing that they comply with the above criteria.

- 2.44 Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension. Where new uses are proposed for listed buildings, it is important to balance the effects of any changes on the special interest of the listed building against the viability of any proposed use. In judging the effects of any alteration or extension it is essential to have assessed the elements that make up the special interest of the building in question. It is often possible, with careful negotiation, to carry out works without detracting from the character of the building, i.e. by ensuring that the work is carried out to the highest standard and in ways which are sympathetic to traditional materials and techniques. Therefore an 'outline' application which in principle is not accompanied by details is not acceptable. Any proposals that will affect a Grade I or II* Listed Building will require additional approval from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.
- 2.45 There are some external fixtures that may affect the character of the listed building and will therefore require Listed Building Consent. These include

satellite dishes, burglar alarms, security lighting, central heating and other flues and meter boxes.

- 2.46 In the event that a proposal for the alteration or extension of a Listed Building is considered acceptable, attention will be given to the need to use a planning condition requiring the applicant to record details of existing features that would be destroyed and/or of any potential features that could be revealed in the course of the works being carried out.

BE19 - REVIEW OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Chester-le-Street District Council will continually monitor buildings within the District and will suggest buildings for listing if they are considered suitable.

- 2.47 The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sports is responsible for the statutory listing of buildings in consultation with English Heritage, the Local Planning Authority and the views of others. Buildings may be listed in two ways: via the systematic review or re-surveying of particular areas or building types; or via 'spot listing' following proposals from local authorities, amenity bodies or individuals.

BE20 - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

In partnership with public and private organisations Chester-le-Street District Council will endeavour to improve the environmental quality of the main towns and settlements within the District, through the implementation of Local Plan policies.

- 2.48 The environmental quality of the District is very important in promoting the area, not only to tourists, but also to inward investors and local residents. Chester-le-Street District Council is committed to continuing environmental improvements already started within the District and is currently in the process of identifying new projects in association with public and private organisations.

BE21 - DESIGNING OUT CRIME

In determining planning applications, Chester-le-Street District Council will have regard to the need for the design, layout and landscaping of the proposal to incorporate measures to reduce the opportunities for crime and to reduce the fear of potential crime. Where necessary, conditions will be imposed to ensure the implementation of such measures.

Chester-le-Street District Council will liaise with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer on proposals which could provide opportunities for crime and will have regard to the advice in the document "Secured by Design".

- 2.49 The layout of developments can play a part in reducing the risk of criminal activity both to individuals and to property. Developers will be encouraged to adopt an approach to design which gives crime prevention the same degree of importance as function and appearance. The views of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer will be sought on planning applications for those developments where there is potential to eliminate or reduce crime through

the adoption of suitable measures at the design stage. To help create a safer environment attention should be given to aspects such as lighting, design, layout and landscaping.

BE22 - PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

Wherever necessary, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to enter into planning obligations from developers to either enhance the quality of a proposal that is acceptable in principle, or to enable a proposal to go ahead which might otherwise be refused.

- 2.50 Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the 1991 Act, Chester-le-Street District Council may seek, in granting permission or in negotiating with applicants, modifications or improvements to proposals submitted through appropriate planning obligations.
- 2.51 Planning obligations have a positive role to play and can remedy genuine planning problems and enhance the quality of developments. They can be provided as a means to reconcile the aims and interest of developers with the need to safeguard the local environment and amenity of adjacent land uses, or meet the costs imposed as a result of the development. Obligations may be required as a direct result of a development such as the full cost of essential community facilities required to service the residents of the development, or where the development will create a need for extra facilities such as new access roads, bus shelters, open spaces or measures to safeguard the local environment.
- 2.52 Planning obligations will only be sought where they are:-
- i) necessary;
 - ii) relevant to planning;
 - iii) directly related to the proposed development;
 - iv) fairly and reasonable related in scale and kind to the proposed developments;
 - v) reasonable in all other aspects.
- 2.53 Unacceptable development will not be permitted by Chester-le-Street District Council where unrelated or unnecessary benefits are offered by the applicant.

Chapter Three

Housing and Population

CHAPTER THREE - HOUSING AND POPULATION

INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Regional Planning Guidance for the Northern Region (RPG7), published by the Department of the Environment in September 1993, provided a framework for the updating of the structure plans for the counties of Northumberland, Durham and Cleveland.
- 3.2 RPG7 addressed a wide range of planning issues including population and housing. Following widespread consultation and consideration of demographic forecasts, environmental constraints, as well as the implications for urban regeneration in Tyne and Wear, RPG7 suggested that structure plans should provide for a basic requirement of 50,500 new dwellings between 1991 and 2006, of which 21,000 would be in County Durham.
- 3.3 The County Durham Structure Plan Review sets a strategic framework for the provision of at least sufficient land in the right places to meet the housing needs of the County's population up to 2006.
- 3.4 The County Durham Structure Plan Review not only aims to stabilise the County's population, but suggests that there will be a rise in population from the 1991 census figure of 593,400 to 600,000 in 2006. This would primarily be achieved through the curbing of outward migrate on by enhancing employment opportunities, housing and social facilities, and sustaining and improving the quality of the environment.
- 3.5 The population of Chester-le-Street District has increased steadily since 1971; the Structure Plan review suggests that trend projections would show an increase in population from the 1991 census figure of 52,600 to 57,000 in 2006. This growth would be made up of both a natural increase and net inward migration.
- 3.6 However, because of environmental constraints within the District, unchecked housing development could seriously damage the environment, lead to the loss of agricultural land and to the coalescence of settlements, contrary to both the aims of RPG7 and the County Durham Structure Plan Review. The Local Plan therefore suggests that the population should rise to 54,000 by 2006, rather than 57,000.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.7 The aims and objectives of the Local Plan therefore are to:-
 - i) accommodate a total population of 54,000 by 2006;
 - ii) identify sufficient housing to meet identified needs up to 2006;
 - iii) ensure that development takes place where people want to live, where services and infrastructure are located or can efficiently be made

available, and which is well related in scale and location to existing settlements;

- iv) phase new development over the Local Plan period;
- v) establish how special housing needs might be accommodated in accordance with the Chester-le-Street District Council's Housing Strategy;
- vi) seek to protect the countryside from unnecessary residential development;
- vii) establish broad limits to development, and where necessary, alter settlement boundaries to both reflect such constraints and accommodate needs established in pursuit of these aims and objectives;
- viii) ensure that wherever possible, land is developed within urban areas, particularly on previously developed sites, provided this creates a good living environment, before considering the development of greenfield sites;
- ix) ensure that residential development is carried out in accordance with well proven basic principles;
- x) provide guidance in the design and layout of new residential development.

POLICIES

HP1 - NEW DWELLING REQUIREMENTS 1991 TO 2006

In Chester-le-Street District about 2500 new dwellings will be provided between 1st April 1991 and 31st March 2006.

3.8 Translating the population estimate into actual housing requirements suggests that a total of about 2,500 new dwellings would be required between 1991 and 2006 as the table below demonstrates:-

3.9 Estimated Housing Needs in the Chester-le-Street District:-

	1991	2006
Total Population	52,600	54,000
Private Household Population	52,161	53,600
Average Household Size	2.49	2.30
Vacancy Rate	4%	4%
Total Number of Dwellings	21,800	24,300
Additional Dwellings Required	-	2,500

3.10 However, this figure is not prescriptive and some flexibility will be needed to allow for a range and choice of sites and dwellings.

HP2 - NEW DWELLING REQUIREMENTS 1997 TO 2006

In order to meet the requirements of Policy HP1, new sites for approximately 422 new dwellings need to be provided between January 1998 and April 2006, in accordance with other relevant plan policies.

3.11 It is necessary to address the shortfall between the already identified provision and the County Durham Structure Plan Review estimate and put forward proposals for the accommodation of the extra 422 new dwellings required over the Plan Period. In doing so, the Local Plan addresses specific housing needs, in conjunction with Chester-le-Street District Council's Housing Strategy, in order to identify how and where these needs might be met, and how their development might be phased over the Plan period.

3.12 The scale of provision is set out below:-

Dwellings completed between 1.4.91 and 31.12.98	1,882
Dwellings under construction	32
Dwellings with planning permission	443
Allowance for Planning Permissions Unlikely to be delivered	-17
Allowance for Windfall Sites (under 0.4 Hectares)	140
Losses in Housing Stock between 1991 and 1996	-52
Losses in Housing Stock between 1996 and 2006	-48

SUB-TOTAL	2,380

Local Plan Allocations	422

TOTAL DWELLINGS TO BE PROVIDED TO 2006	2,802

3.13 The provision of new dwellings required over the Plan period has been calculated on the following basis: -

i) Dwellings completed since 1991:

This includes sites where housing development has been completed since 1991 on both large and small sites. As at 31st December 1998, some 1882 dwellings were completed in the District.

ii) Dwellings under construction:

This figure includes all sites at 1st January 1999 which were currently under construction, including those dwellings on each site which are yet to be started i.e. 32.

iii) Sites with Outstanding Planning Permission:

This figure includes both large and small sites where planning permission has been granted, but development has either yet to be started or completed. It

seems likely that some 17 dwelling plots of these sites will remain undeveloped over the Plan period and allowance is made for this.

iv) Previously Unidentified Small Sites under 0.4 Hectares:

In the past, these sites, which include conversions, redevelopment opportunities and other windfalls, have made a significant contribution to meeting the District's total housing requirement. Between 1991 and 1996, small sites accommodated some 171 dwellings. Future contributions will be treated with caution to avoid environmental and service implications of redevelopment at higher densities ("town cramming") within existing built up areas. Further Policy guidance is provided with Policies HP6, HP7, HP8 and HP9. To this end, it is estimated that some 140 dwellings could be built on such sites by 2006.

v) Losses in Housing Stock :

The impact of conversions, changes of use and demolitions in dwelling stock since 1991 have been minimal, with the exception of two clearance schemes of public sector housing units at Sacriston totalling 48 dwellings. In addition only 4 dwellings have been lost through conversions to non-residential uses. To 2006 it is estimated that there will be a further net loss in housing stock of some 48 dwellings.

3.14 For reference, the major development sites with existing planning permission (i.e. of ten units or more) falling within categories (ii) and (iii) are shown on the Proposals Map.

3.15 The calculations have not included estimates for large windfall sites (over 0.4 hectares), as it is difficult to assess when such development opportunities will arise over the plan period.

3.16 The total figure allows for 302 more new dwellings than has been estimated to meet the 2,500 housing requirement prescribed in Policy HP1. Chester-le-Street District Council considers that this is necessary in order to provide sufficient choice and flexibility, since some of the allocated sites and those with outstanding planning permission may prove difficult to develop and in order to accord with national guidance and strategic policy.

HP3 - LAPSED RESIDENTIAL COMMITMENTS

Chester-le-Street District Council will be prepared to grant a renewal of those planning permissions, for the construction of new dwellings on sites, existing at 31 March 1997, provided the proposal is in conformity with Policies HP6, HP7 and HP8 and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

3.17 Paragraph 3.12 indicates a total of 443 dwelling plots with the benefit of planning permission at 31 December 1998. In the case of some sites with only outline planning approval, an estimate of their capacity has been necessary where such detail has not been indicated on the application. These sites contribute towards the total housing requirement in the Local Plan.

3.18 Despite being a commitment at 31 December 1998 and therefore not open to challenge, planning permission for some sites may expire prior to 2006 without work ever having commenced. Developers will need to apply for new planning permissions. Government planning guidance in PPG3 and the policies expressed in the Local Plan promote a new approach to housing development. Some outstanding planning permissions may not be consistent with this approach. The fact that a site has previously been granted permission does not necessarily mean that this will be renewed. In considering the renewal of a permission, particular attention will be paid to whether or not the proposed new development would now meet the criterion of, *inter alia*, Policies HP6, HP7 and HP8.

3.19 In some cases, this may mean that an existing permission is not renewed, or that an application must be revised to take account of new policy requirements.

HP4 - LAND ALLOCATED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

As the Proposals Map indicates, to meet the requirements of Policies HP1 and HP2, the following sites are allocated for residential development at Chester-le-Street, Sacriston, Fencehouses and Beamish:-

		AREA (ha)	NO OF DWELLINGS
<u>Chester-le-Street</u>			
1	Land at Hermitage Comprehensive School	2.4	80
2	Picktrees Lane	0.4	13
<u>Sacriston</u>			
3	Land at Mount Pleasant	1.0	32
4	Back of Lingey House Farm	1.0	30
5	Holly Crescent	2.1	47
<u>Ouston/Urpeth Grange</u>			
6	Land adjacent to the Brooms Public House*	1.9	42
<u>Pelton/Newfield</u>			
7	Land at Pelton/Newfield**	8.5	178

* Within the site boundary of the allocation adjacent to the Brooms Public House, explicit provision should be made for public open space to include an equipped children's playground and a playing pitch or kickabout area in accordance with Policies RL4 and RL5 of the Local Plan.

**** Within the site boundary of the allocation at Pelton/Newfield, appropriate landscaping should be provided on the north-eastern and south-eastern boundaries, in addition to the provision of single storey buildings in the south-eastern area of the site.**

3.20 In order to meet the housing requirement under Policies HP1 and HP2, and provide certainty to the interests of the general public, house builders and other agencies, sufficient sites over 0.4 hectares have been identified and allocated.

3.21 The Local Plan interprets national and regional planning policy in a local context, and insofar as population and housing are concerned, it addresses the extent and location of population growth and new housing, new demand requirements and where such development might take place.

3.22 In allocating new land for housing development, consideration has been given to a number of issues including:-

- i) the need to utilise vacant or underused land within the settlement boundaries;
- ii) the scale and location of new sites in relation to existing development;
- iii) the impact of new development on the pattern and character of existing development;
- iv) the availability and capacity of existing infrastructure, including shops, schools, employment facilities, public transport and water supplies and sewers;
- v) the impact on landscape, and interests of nature conservation, agriculture and archaeology;
- vi) the need to minimise travel for residents of the District.

3.23 Government guidance requires that preference is given to development within urban locations, particularly on brownfield sites before considering the release of greenfield land. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that new residential development is concentrated in settlements which possess a good range of facilities and services, and which can support such development on a scale in keeping with the character of the existing settlements.

3.24 In Chester-le-Street District, few brownfield sites are available to fulfil the housing requirement for the Plan period. Greenfield sites have been identified only where no other reasonable options are available. Those sites which are wholly or predominantly greenfield sites are:-

- i) HP4.1 Land to rear of Hermitage Comprehensive School
- ii) HP4.3 Land at Mount Pleasant
- iii) HP4.4 Back of Lingey House Farm
- iv) HP4.6 Land adjacent to the Brooms Public House
- v) HP4.7 Land at Pelton/Newfield

3.25 Chester-le-Street District Council will annually monitor the uptake of previously developed land and greenfield sites and will be prepared to alter, or

revise, the Local Plan's Housing and Population policies, in the light of that monitoring. This is in line with guidance included in PPG3: 'Housing' which instructs local planning authorities to seek only to identify sufficient land to meet the housing requirement set as a result of the strategic planning process and the requirement that the level of housing provision should be kept under regular review.

- 3.26 Further opportunities for housing development over and above the existing permissions and allocated sites will also be available within the settlement limits through redevelopment, conversions, flats over shops, etc.

HP5 - PHASING OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Chester-le-Street District Council will phase the release of the following residential sites allocated in Policy HP4, after 1st January 2003 in order to ensure that market demand would not exhaust the total provision for housing in the early years of the Local Plan:-

Site	Total No of Units	No of dwellings to be phased
HP4.6 Land adjacent to the Brooms Public House	42	42
HP4.7 Land at Pelton/Newfield	178	90
TOTAL	220	105

- 3.27 Phasing is necessary to ensure that a steady supply of land is provided throughout the Plan period to meet the requirements of Policies HP1 and HP2. There is considerable pressure for housing development in the District. Between April 1991 and December 1998, the average annual completion rate was 243. At a District level, the Local Plan and Structure Plan Review both seek to restrain this level of new house building. Chester-le-Street District Council is concerned that if the sites with planning permission were completed, housing demand would exhaust the planned provision before 2006 and lead to pressures to release more land for house building.
- 3.28 At a more localised level, phasing is considered necessary to ensure that priority is given to the release of previously developed land before the release of greenfield allocations. In addition, those greenfield sites in and around those settlements found in the northern half of the District tend to experience greater development pressures than those settlements found in the south western sector of the District. It is therefore important that the dwellings of the two allocated sites listed under HP5 are not released for development until after 1st January 2003. The selection of these sites reflects their greenfield status and their location within the area where house building pressures have traditionally been more intense. In delaying the release of these dwellings, market attention would therefore be diverted to the less favoured allocations and those which have been previously developed.
- 3.29 The rate of development will be monitored against the housing provision in the Local Plan, and if necessary the phasing of sites will be adjusted. Should monitoring demonstrate that because of the contribution made by windfall

sites, the land supply falls short of the Local Plan's requirements, Chester-le-Street District Council may bring forward the release of sites identified under Policy HP5.

- 3.30 Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to avoid a significant over provision of housing land as this could undermine the aim of providing development opportunities to meet the needs of a slowly growing population. Should monitoring reveal that because of the contribution of windfall sites and/or the increase in development densities that there would be a serious over provision of housing land, the release of sites may be pushed back until the review of the Local Plan.

HP6 - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

Proposals for residential development not allocated in the Local Plan will only be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries of the following settlements as shown on the proposals Map:

Chester-le-Street;

Great Lumley;

Sacrison;

Pelton/Newfield/Pelton Lane Ends;

Bournmoor;

Fencehouses;

Ouston/Urpeth Grange;

Nettlesworth and Kimblesworth;

Provided that:

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

HP7 - BOUNDARY CHANGES AND LIMITED INFILL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

As shown on the Proposals Map, the boundaries of the following settlements will be amended to reflect administrative boundary changes and / or historic alterations to the settlement fabric:-

High Handenhold and Plawsworth

As shown on the Proposals Map, residential development will be permitted within the respective settlement boundaries of these settlements provided :

- i) The site is classed as previously developed land;
- ii) The site is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling or the proposal can enhance such provision;
- iii) The site is readily accessible to employment, educational retail community and other facilities by modes of travel other than the car;
- iv) The site can be sustained by the capacity of existing or potential infrastructure, including public transport, physical infrastructure and social infrastructure (such as schools) or can facilitate their continued level of provision;
- v) The proposal is appropriate in scale, character and location and fulfils Policies HP9, HP10, Appendix I and other relevant policies of the Local Plan
- vi) New residential development within Plawsworth, must also comply with Policies BE4 to BE8 reflecting the settlement's Conservation Area status.

HP8 - LIMITED INFILL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

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

- Beamish
- Grange Villa
- Pelton Fell North
- Picktree
- West Pelton
- Chester Moor
- Pelton Fell
- Perkinsville
- Waldrige
- Edmondsley

Provided that :

- i) The site is classed as previously developed land;
- ii) The site is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling or the proposal can enhance such provision;
- iii) The site is readily accessible to employment, educational retail community and other facilities by modes of travel other than the car;
- iv) The site can be sustained by the capacity of existing or potential infrastructure, including public transport, physical infrastructure and social infrastructure (such as schools) or can facilitate their continued level of provision;

v) The proposal is appropriate in scale, character and location and fulfils Policies HP9, HP10, Appendix I and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

- 3.31 As defined on the Proposals Map, settlement boundaries have been designated to provide strong, defensible limits to the built-up areas of the District. They will be used in conjunction with Policies HP6, HP7 and HP8 to determine planning applications for residential development. Residential development requiring a location beyond the defined settlement boundaries is dealt with under Policies AG9 and AG10.
- 3.32 Land has been identified for residential development in those settlements listed in Policy HP4, which essentially possess a wide range of services and are well served by public transport. Chester-le-Street District Council recognises, however, that development opportunities will continue to come forward on unidentified sites or 'windfall sites' on previously developed land, as a result of, *inter alia*, redevelopment proposals, the availability of vacant or under used land and the conversions of existing buildings.
- 3.33 The built up area of the defined settlements represents their physical limits. Policies HP6, HP7 and HP8 do not imply that all sites within these boundaries will be automatically suitable for residential development. Development sites should meet the Government and Local Plan objectives in relation to sustainability by resisting windfall developments on greenfield sites and maximising the reuse of previously developed land. A key requirement of sustainable development is to reduce the need to travel particularly by car and it is important that all new proposals offer good access to a range of basic services. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposals meet the criterion set out in these policies.
- 3.34 Whilst the District Council will seek to maximise the re-use of previously developed land within the defined boundaries, careful consideration will be given to any wildlife conservation value that has become established on the site. In such instances, agencies such as Durham Wildlife Trust and English Nature will be consulted. Many previously developed sites, especially industrial one, are possessed of important heritage assets. Where this is the case, the County Archaeologist and, if appropriate, English Heritage will also be consulted.
- 3.35 In accordance with Policy HP9, limited infilling of previously developed gaps within the existing built up frontages of settlements listed in Policies HP6, 7 and 8 is considered to be acceptable. It should not be assumed that permission will be given for the development of small gaps within groups of buildings. For example, it will be important to retain certain gaps which are integral to the built form and character of the settlement, that make a positive contribution to the street scene, or provide views through to the open countryside.
- 3.36 The cumulative effect of incremental piecemeal development can be a serious threat to the established character of settlements and can lead to problems of "town cramming". The character and environmental quality of settlements may be determined by distinctive physical and visual qualities such as the

density of existing development, size of individual plots, rear garden lengths, the space between buildings, established building lines and the amount and quality of existing landscaping. Piecemeal development which is out of scale and character with surrounding dwellings and detracts from the quality of the environment will not be permitted.

HP9 - RESIDENTIAL DESIGN CRITERIA – GENERAL

Within the boundaries of those settlements listed in Policies HP6, HP7 and HP8, as defined on the Proposals Map, residential development will only be acceptable where the proposal fulfils the following criteria:-

- i) Relates well to the surrounding area, respects its predominant character, street pattern, setting and density, and avoids damage to the amenities of adjoining properties;**
- ii) Provides an attractive, efficient and safe residential environment;**
- iii) Provides adequate privacy in the rooms, gardens and other outdoor areas of the proposed dwellings and adjacent properties;**
- iv) Provides adequate daylight entering the principal rooms of the proposed dwellings and existing adjacent properties;**
- v) Provides adequate garaging or car parking in accordance with Appendix X;**
- vi) Provides adequate open space for children's play areas and landscaping;**
- vii) Provides adequate open private amenity space within individual dwelling plots;**
- viii) Provides convenient and safe pedestrian and cycle access to recreational facilities, e.g. children's play areas and playing fields, and other local services, e.g. shops and public transport;**
- ix) Discourages unauthorised public access to adjoining agricultural land;**
- x) Provides convenient and safe road access for residents, visitors and service vehicles. Where appropriate, new housing development will be required to provide traffic calming measures, or Chester-le-Street District Council may ask the developer to provide a traffic impact study to assess the need for traffic calming measures;**
- xi) Roads are made suitable for adoption by the County Highways Authority where new development exceeds 3 dwellings;**
- xii) Incorporates, as far as possible, existing landscape features and provisions are made for new landscaping.**

xiii) **Regard is given to the indicative standards for residential estate design and/or household extensions in Appendix I.**

xiv) **Achieves a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare. Higher net densities will be sought on sites within walking distance of public transport and Chester-le-Street Town Centre.**

3.37 Housing development proposals will be assessed having regard to the Plan's policies applicable to new development generally. External materials used for buildings, roads and footpaths should respect and enhance their surroundings. In keeping with the Government's commitment to sustainable development, PPG3 seeks to ensure that more efficient use of land is made through increasing the densities of housing developments. It offers clear guidance that developments of less than 30 dwellings per hectare (net) constitute an inefficient use of land and seeks to encourage net densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare (net), with a greater intensity of development at places with good access to public transport. Whilst Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to maximise densities, new development proposals should also respect the existing site characteristics and its surroundings including, for example, the effect on the adjacent land uses, such as open countryside, the need for landscaping and the retention of trees and hedges.

3.38 The provision of adequate space around dwellings is an important element in achieving this aim. It can provide for adequate daylight, privacy, children's play, gardening and future extensions to dwellings and assist in achieving a high standard of design and layout.

3.39 The impact of residential developments on adjoining properties and land uses will be carefully appraised when proposals are considered by Chester-le-Street District Council. Appendices I and X provide indicative guidance relating to the design and layout of new residential developments and the parking requirements respectively, which would be used to assess future development proposals.

HP 10 - BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

Within the settlement boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, backland development will only be permitted where:-

- i) a separate and satisfactory vehicular access can be provided;**
- ii) the amenity of both new and existing properties can be safeguarded;**
- iii) the proposal is in keeping with the scale and character of existing development in the locality; and**
- iv) the proposal conforms to the General Criteria of Policy HP9 and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

Tandem development will not be permitted.

- 3.40 Backland development refers to development to the rear of existing properties usually in large back gardens. Backland development in appropriate locations can be acceptable providing that it does not lead to a loss of amenity to existing residents, it is well designed, has a suitable access and drainage, it fits satisfactorily into the layout of the area as a whole, has adequate space between buildings to avoid overlooking and does not jeopardise the development could lead to the over development of a larger area in a more comprehensive manner. However, many open spaces also contribute towards the general amenity of an area and their development of the locality. Also on the edge of settlements, where large rear gardens extend to the open countryside, backland development could adversely affect the settlement edge and settlement setting.
- 3.41 Tandem development, consisting of one house immediately behind another and sharing the same access, is generally unacceptable in any location.

HP11 - RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS

Within the settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, extensions to existing residential properties will not be acceptable where:-

- i) they would have an adverse effect on the scale, form and character of the existing building, any neighbouring property, or the locality in general;**
- ii) they would cause an unacceptable loss of light or privacy to adjacent properties, or significantly affect their amenities;**
- iii) they would impair highway safety, or lead to inadequate car parking provision within the curtilage of the property;**
- iv) in the case of side extensions, they would alter the character of the street by linking adjacent properties; or**
- v) the extension is so large, it will seriously diminish the private space around the original dwelling.**

(NE13)

- 3.42 In certain instances, dwellings may be extended under “permitted development rights”, but where planning permission is required, Chester-le-Street Council will assess the impact of the proposal with respect to the character of the original building and the surrounding area. The District is characterised by a variety of residential designs. However, individual estates also have unique design characteristics which provide unity and identity and the design of the immediate locality should be reflected in individual extension designs. Thus extensions should respect the design of individual properties and their setting in the street and/or locality in terms of *inter alia* architectural styles, roof forms, windows and materials or locality and provide adequate and convenient car parking provision in line with Chester-le-Street District Council’s adopted standards.

3.43 The impact of extensions on adjoining properties will be carefully appraised when proposals are considered by Chester-le-Street District Council. Appendices I and X provide more detailed guidance relating to extension design and car parking respectively, and proposals will be assessed against these adopted standards.

HP12 - RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS TO FLATS OR BEDSITS

Proposals for the subdivision and conversion of existing large dwellings or other large buildings or self contained flats will only be acceptable where:-

- i) the development is well served by public transport, shopping and community facilities;**
- ii) the property is suitable for conversion to the number and type of units proposed, without significant detrimental impact on the character of the area and the amenities of adjoining properties i.e. noise and privacy;**
- iii) there would be no intensification of activity or an increase in traffic generation either vehicular or pedestrian, which would detract from either the character or amenity of the area;**
- iv) the District Council's standards regarding satisfactory access and car/cycle parking are met in accordance with Appendix X.**

3.44 The conversion of property, particularly the sub-division of large houses, which are no longer considered viable as single-family residences, can provide a new life for an otherwise redundant building and is of particular value in providing accommodation for small households. When considering such development, Chester-le-Street District Council will need to be assured that such proposals are acceptable in terms of the amount of traffic generated, and their effect upon adjoining properties. Adequate amenity space for residents will be required as well as car parking for residents and/or staff and visitors.

3.45 The conversion of smaller family houses to create a greater number of units is often problematic due principally to the additional demand for car parking, the loss of garden area and the general intensification of activity within the locality.

HP13 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to negotiate with applicants for the provision of an element of affordable housing suitable for those who are unable to buy or to rent in the open market:-

- (i) on allocated housing sites;**
- (ii) on windfall housing sites;**

(ii) on residential redevelopment schemes;

where the development site has a capacity of 15 or more dwellings (or the site exceeds 0.5 hectares regardless of the number of dwellings). Provision of affordable housing will be sought on the basis of the initial indicative target figure of 30%.

Only in exceptional circumstances may affordable housing be provided through a financial or other contribution towards the provision of affordable housing on another site in the Local Planning Authority's area.

To ensure that the housing provided under this Policy remains available to provide affordable housing for local people, the Council will impose appropriate conditions or seek planning obligations in respect of the affordable housing element of any scheme for which planning permission is to be granted. Permitted development rights will be withdrawn from such housing to prevent its enlargement or alteration in any way which would reduce its affordability.

In addition, the Council will encourage the provision of low-cost market housing through residential subdivisions subject to Policy HP12; through schemes for living over the shop under Policy HP14; and by bringing vacant housing back into use.

3.46 PPG3 indicates that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration. Where there is a demonstrable lack of housing to meet local needs, as assessed by up-to-date surveys, local planning authorities should include a policy seeking an element of affordable housing on suitable sites.

3.47 Affordable housing is defined as being housing that is provided with subsidy and made available in perpetuity for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements, in the general housing market because of the relationship between local housing markets and local incomes. In practice, the types of affordable housing which fall within this definition include units for rents, shared ownership with grant or shared equity where land value is retained to provide housing for sale at below market levels and where control of the 'equity discount' can be retained in perpetuity.

3.48 PPG3 requires authorities to assess the range of needs for different types of housing across all tenures in their areas, including affordable housing and the housing needs of specific groups. In 2001 the Council commissioned a District Housing Needs Assessment. The Assessment found that the housing market in the District excludes around half of all 'concealed' households, those on lower incomes, and forces them to leave the District or live within other households, often in inadequate accommodation. Concealed households effectively comprise a latent or unmet demand for housing. The Assessment indicated the following annual components of need: -

(eliminated over 5 years)		
Net new formation	+	85
Net increase in registered need	+	625
In-migrant need	+	69
Total annual need	=	832
Total Supply from re-lets / new delivery	-	508
Net annual outstanding need	=	324

3.49 Therefore over the remaining 5 year period of the Local Plan, some 1,620 new affordable houses would need to be provided. However, this demand cannot be realistically achieved. Set against the District housing requirement, there is neither sufficient housing land to meet this need nor the necessary public resources available to invest in new affordable housing. Therefore, the Local Plan proposes an indicative target of 160 affordable dwellings to be provided in the District during the remainder of the Plan period.

3.50 Circular 6/98 "Planning and Affordable Housing" indicates that in settlements with a population of more than 3,000, developments of fewer than 25 dwellings or less than one hectare should not normally be required to include affordable housing unless there are exceptional local constraints. Even then, the threshold should be no smaller than development for 15 or more dwellings, or for sites of 0.5 hectares.

3.51 The upper thresholds indicated in Circular 6/98 would create few new opportunities to negotiate for elements of affordable housing during the remaining Plan period thereby restricting the ability to meet the District's need for affordable housing. Traditionally, the majority of housing sites within the District are small. Since 1991/92, of the 193 approved residential developments, only 29 schemes were for 25 dwellings or more and only 17 schemes involved between 15 and 24 dwellings. However, the supply of larger schemes coming forward within settlements is falling where only 5 developments offering over 25 units were approved after 1997/98. Similarly, the availability of sites over 1 hectare in area is also dwindling. Since 1997/98, only one such scheme has been approved compared to the 28 sites approved prior to this date. These factors combined with the District's extremely high level of identified housing need provide sufficient justification to seek to negotiate affordable housing on all residential proposals of 15 units or more, or where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more.

3.52 For those available sites allocated under Policy HP4, indicative target figures for individual allocated sites are as follows : -

Allocation	Total No. of Units	Indicative Affordable Housing Requirement
Land to the rear of the Hermitage Comprehensive School	80	24
Back of Lingey House Farm	30	9
Holly Crescent	47	14

Land adjacent to the Brooms Public House	42	12
Land at Pelton / Newfield	178	53

- 3.53 For appropriate ‘windfall’ sites falling within the defined thresholds, the District Council will similarly seek to negotiate 30% of units to be affordable housing. It is considered that the 30% proportion represents a fair balance between the need for more affordable homes and the requirements of the development industry.
- 3.54 The precise nature and scale of provision of affordable housing built on individual sites will be a matter for negotiation between the Council and applicants. The Council recognise that some sites will not achieve the ‘30% target’ due to for example specific site conditions, the economics of provision and the proximity to local services/facilities and access to public transport. The Council also accepts there may be instances where other planning objectives for a site should prevail over provisions of affordable housing. In such circumstances, applicants will be required to demonstrate to the Council’s satisfaction why the affordable housing provision should be reduced.
- 3.55 Applicants will be required to ensure that the affordable housing will be reserved for those in need (this will include people on housing waiting lists and those who cannot afford to purchase a property on the open market) and that it will remain affordable for initial and successive occupants. Provision of affordable housing will therefore usually require the direct involvement of a registered social landlord (RSL) nominated or agreed by the District Council. While the precise nature of this involvement will be the subject of negotiation with the applicant, the District Council will normally expect ownership of the affordable housing to be transferred to the RSL to ensure the future management of the property.
- 3.56 In considering planning applications for residential development, the Council will expect affordable housing provision to be made on site. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council, on the basis of a full and reasoned justification, accept a commuted payment or other provision in lieu of on-site provision.
- 3.57 Chester-le-Street District Council will attach a condition removing permitted development rights to any planning permission for affordable dwellings. This will protect the privacy standards and overall character of the original design and help to ensure that they are not enlarged in any way which would increase their specification and hence decrease the affordability for future occupiers. Further advice on the detailed implementation of Policy HP13 will be provided as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

HP14 - LIVING OVER THE SHOP

Chester-le-Street District Council will promote ‘Living over the Shop’ schemes in its town and village centres, and in Chester-le-Street town centre.

- 3.58 Many shops have first and second floors that are used for surplus storage or are vacant. The Living Over The Shop campaign, started in 1989, seeks to bring these areas back into residential use in order to add new life and activity to areas presently dominated by retail and commercial activities. The Living Over The Shop (LOTS) initiative is often achieved in partnership with landlords, housing associations and the District Council. The initiative involved a two-stage leasing arrangement, in which the unit owner grants a commercial lease to an intermediary, such as a Housing Association, and the intermediary then grants an Assured Shorthold Tenancy to the occupier. The intermediary protects the interests of both parties, thus enabling surplus accommodation to be released.
- 3.59 The effort to seek out opportunities to create homes either in partnership or privately from surplus space is extremely worthwhile, given the benefits to the community, the property owner and/or the shopkeeper. It can have particular benefits for the preservation of historic buildings by preventing the deterioration of the fabric, which can occur when areas/staircases serving vacant upper floors, are sealed off.

HP15 - COMMUNITY PROVISION

On sites of 10 or more dwellings, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to negotiate with developers a contribution, where appropriate, to the provision and subsequent maintenance of related social, community, infrastructure and/or recreational and leisure facilities in the locality where such provisions are necessary and directly related to the development being proposed, in accordance with Policies BE2, BE22, R17, RL5 and RL6.

- 3.60 The opportunities afforded by new housing development may allow for children's play provision and other open spaces to serve the needs of the people to be housed and, in some locations, those who live nearby. Developments will be expected to make provision based on the requirements for new development set out elsewhere in the Local Plan. Some developments will also require:-
- i) the retention and incorporation of areas of open land and landscaping (Policies RL5 and RL6);
 - ii) the provision of a shop (Policy R17);
 - iii) highway and other infrastructure improvements (Policy T17).
- 3.61 Requirements will, where necessary, be covered by a planning obligation and/or their application to individual sites will be set out in supplementary guidance such as site development briefs that are prepared in advance of development by consultation with landowners and other interested parties. Where necessary, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek planning obligations from developers to secure their implementation.

HP16 - THE ENCLOSURE OF OPEN LAND IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Proposals for the change of use or enclosure of public open spaces, landscaping and amenity strips of land for private residential purposes, will be expected to have regard to:-

- i) the effect upon the residential amenity and character of the area, and**
- ii) the use and location of the land in question;**
- iii) the effect upon highway safety; and**
- iv) the design and style of the means of enclosure.**

3.62 Many of the District's residential areas are open plan in character. They contain smaller areas of incidental open space, landscaping strips and verges, many of which contribute to the character and visual amenity of the area. There is often pressure to enclose these areas where they are located adjacent to residential properties, to enlarge gardens or provide opportunities for future construction. The enclosure of these areas often requires planning permission because they become part of the residential curtilage.

3.63 The means of enclosure is important. Hard structural elements projecting into an area of open space or an area generally characterised by soft landscaping features, may not be appropriate, since they erode visual amenity and could possibly interfere with highway or pedestrian sight lines. Where there is a particular problem, for example, with indiscriminate car parking, this could be supplemented with 1 metre wire mesh fencing or decorative stone bollards. Loss of existing trees and landscaping should be avoided.

HP17 - RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS AND HOTELS

Within the settlement limits as defined on the Proposal Map, hostels and homes providing group accommodation for people in need of care will only be permitted if the development:-

- i) is well served by public transport, shopping and community facilities;**
- ii) does not result in changes to the character and appearance of an existing building or its curtilage which would be significantly detrimental to visual amenity (e.g. fire escape);**
- iii) provides amenity open space within the site to meet the needs of residents commensurate with the site and capacity of the building;**
- iv) is compatible with other relevant policies in the Local Plan;**
- v) where, in the case of new build, it is appropriate in scale, character and appearance to the surrounding area; or**
- vi) where in the case of conversion, the property is suitable for conversion to the number and type of units proposed, without significant detrimental impact on the character of the area and the amenities of adjoining properties.**

- 3.64 Accommodation with facilities for the provision of care and is designed and located to meet the special needs of the elderly, blind, homeless, mentally ill or handicapped and people who depend on refuge, should be located in close proximity to services. This is particularly desirable to help people affected by problems of ageing, mental illness, mental handicap or physical and sensory disability to live as independently as possible within the community.
- 3.65 Provision of purpose built accommodation or the conversion/change of use of existing buildings shall also have due regard to policies HP9 and HP12.

HP18 - GYPSY SITES

- i) Proposals for gypsy caravan sites will be permitted which meet the following criteria:-**
- ii) the site is satisfactorily assimilated into its surroundings by existing or proposed landscaping;**
- iii) the site would not conflict with policies to protect the Green Belt, open countryside, buildings of historic or archaeological importance, any sites of wildlife or nature conservation interest or protected landscape areas;**
- iv) the site would not give rise to unacceptable highway access or service provision problems; and**
- v) the amenity of existing residents in the locality are not adversely affected by noise, disturbance or other consequences of the proposal.**
- 3.66 Unauthorised gypsy encampments can often lead to unacceptable living conditions for gypsies, cause nuisance, offence and worry to the settled population and can detract from the visual amenity of the area where they are situated.
- 3.67 Circular No 1/94 "Gypsy Sites and Planning" requires district councils to either make provision for encampments by identifying sites or by establishing criteria for evaluating proposals through the local plan process, which secures provision appropriate to gypsies' accommodation needs whilst protecting amenity.
- 3.68 In the District, there is one purpose built site provided by Durham County Council and managed by the District Council at Drum Lane with 14 caravans and provision for 15 pitches. In consultation with the County Council, the need for new sites will be kept under review.
- 3.69 Chester-le-Street District Council recognises that in many circumstances, the most appropriate location for new gypsy sites will be beyond defined settlement boundaries, although this may conflict with other policies of control. Where there is an additional need for additional gypsy accommodation, development should have a minimal impact upon the character and appearance of the open countryside. New pitches should be sited to minimise

their impact and be well related to existing landscaping. In most circumstances, any consent granted will be conditional upon supplementary planting and screening being implemented.

Chapter Four

Retailing

CHAPTER FOUR - RETAILING

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 A hierarchical system of retail centres exist within Chester-le-Street District, with Chester-le-Street Town Centre being the principle shopping area in the District. Smaller more local retailing centres that provide for local needs lie in the settlements of Sacriston and Pelton, and also within the wider built up area of Chester-le-Street town. Below the level of established retail centres are local shops, that are often the only outlets in the smaller settlements. They provide an important choice to customers and an invaluable service to those without convenient access to the larger centres.
- 4.2 Retailing patterns in the District are strongly influenced by the major regional centres of Newcastle, the Metro Centre and Sunderland. The vast choice of goods available in these centres inevitable impacts on the role of Chester-le-Street, and as such, those people who visit the town centre tend to come from a very localised area.
- 4.3 Shopping in the Town Centre supports and is supported by a full range of ancillary activities. Some, such as cafes, banks and building societies are more appropriately found inter-mixed with shops than others, such as offices. Most depend on the continuing success of shopping to attract people to the town.
- 4.4 Guidance set out in PPG6 (Revised) 'Town Centre and Retail Developments' and PPG13 'Transport' stress the importance of retaining the role of town centres for retailing if they are to safeguard their vitality and central service function for the surrounding area. Therefore, it is important that shopping provision in the Chester-le-Street Town Centre seeks to complement, rather than compete with these larger retailing centres.
- 4.5 In May 1996, the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit in association with Hillier Parker consultants published a document entitled 'Chester-le-Street Town Centre: Making the Connections' identifying a comprehensive regeneration strategy to reinforce the Town Centre as a strong and attractive destination for shopping, business, leisure and tourism for the next Century. More detailed policies for Town Centre appear in a separate chapter.
- 4.6 The Town's principle shopping area follows the linear line of Front Street. The privately owned, enclosed St Cuthbert's Walk shopping centre, which opened in 1990, injected a substantial element of modern retailing floor space into the town centre, but because of strong links into its surrounding area did so without detracting from the character of the town.

- 4.7 As the Local Planning Authority, Chester-le-Street District Council has little influence over the commercial decisions of retailers. Indeed, government advice on retail developments PPG6 (Revised) 'Town Centres and Retail Developments', indicates that existing commercial interests are neither a land use planning consideration, nor should competition and innovation be inhibited. It does, however, emphasise the need to maintain the diversity and activity of town centres if they are to retain their vitality and central service function for the surrounding area. Chester-le-Street District Council will therefore consider all applications for retail development and other town centre functions with this very much in mind.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.8 The Local Plan aims are therefore:-

- i) to maintain the vitality and viability of the shopping centres in the District, with particular emphasis on the town of Chester-le-Street in order to maintain its status as a district centre;
- ii) to protect and enhance the shopping hierarchy within the District through the use of policies aimed at controlling land use within the difference centres;
- iii) to maintain a level of shop provision within the more remote villages (and those badly served by public transport) by allowing Class A1 (retail) uses in the defined shopping areas, particularly Sacriston, Pelton.
- iv) to use funding, grants and other monies to facilitate town centre improvements, both physical and economic, within the defined shopping centres and environs to attract shoppers, retail businesses and tourists.
- v) to ensure that retailing (Class A1, A2 and A3) does not take place from industrial premises.

POLICIES

R1 - MAJOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER KEY TOWN CENTRE FUNCTIONS

Where a clearly-defined need for major retail development and/or other key town centre functions has been identified, the first preference for such uses will be given to sites within the defined Town Centre of Chester-le-Street.

Where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use cannot be accommodated in the Town Centre, preference will be given to sites in the following sequence of locations:

- i) next to or within 200-300 metres of the edge of Chester-le-Street Town Centre as defined in the Proposals Map;**
- ii) within local retailing centres of Chester-le-Street town as defined on the Proposals Map;**

iii) elsewhere within the defined settlement boundary of Chester-le-Street

In all cases it will be necessary, in addition, to satisfy the requirements of Policies R2 and R10.

- 4.9 Chester-le-Street town, like many of the main towns in County Durham, serves a predominantly local catchment and is constrained by a number of easily accessible higher order centres. PPG6 (Revised), PPG13 and RPG7, emphasise the need to protect and enhance the diversity and activity of town centres for retailing (of both comparison and convenience goods) and other key town centre functions (which include employment, leisure, hotel, entertainment, hospitals and higher education facilities). Concentrating development within the town centres further encourages greater use of public transport and enables one journey to serve a number of functions.
- 4.10 To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Chester-le-Street Town Centre as the principle retailing and service centre, priority will be given to locating major shopping developments and other key town centre functions within the Town Centre boundary. Only if the Town Centre cannot accommodate a retail or other town centre function, would it be appropriate to seek an edge of centre location. Only exceptionally, where it can be demonstrated that a function cannot be accommodated within or at the edge of the Town Centre, should locations be sought within identified local retailing centres of Chester-le-Street town and only then elsewhere within the settlement limits of Chester-le-Street. This sequential approach is consistent with the Government Guidance referred to in PPG6 (Revised).
- 4.11 Chester-le-Street District Council considers there to be no overriding need sufficient to justify the provision of major shopping and other town centre developments beyond the existing settlement boundaries. Apart from the harm to rural amenities, landscape and the North Durham Green Belt, major developments in the countryside are normally poorly placed in relation to public transport provision, so generating considerable additional traffic and requiring extensive highway improvements.
- 4.12 In accordance with the characteristics of the Town and guidance contained in PPG6 (Revised) regarding small and historic towns, retailing or other town centre development over 1,000 square metres gross floor space will be characterised as 'major'. However, this 1,000 square metre threshold will not be applied rigidly. Strong consideration will also be given to the effect the proposal would have on the existing location and/or Town Centre, in terms of its: trading characteristics; physical form; and environmental impacts including the changes in the modes of transport used and the distances travelled.

R2 - MAJOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT AND KEY TOWN CENTRE FUNCTIONS BEYOND THE TOWN CENTRE

Where a sequential approach has been undertaken, and planning permission is sought on a site that lies beyond the defined Town Centre boundary, prior to granting planning approval, Chester-le-Street District Council will want to be satisfied that:

- i) the scale of the development, either on its own or cumulatively with other such provision for key town centre development, would neither significantly harm, nor prejudice future investment necessary to sustain the vitality and viability of existing town centres or local centres: including Chester-le-Street Town Centre and local centres within this District, and also nearby town centres and local centres outside the District;**
- ii) the site can be safely accessed by a choice of modes of transport including cyclists, pedestrians and those with special needs; and**
- iii) the development will not have an inflationary effect on car travel and that the site can be serviced by Public Transport;**

Developers submitting planning applications for major retail developments will be required to submit a Retail Impact Assessment to demonstrate that the above criteria will be met.

(R1, R3, R10)

- 4.13 Major developments for retail and other town centre uses beyond the Town Centre must be accessible to all sections of the community including those without private transport. Applicants should also ensure safe and easy access for pedestrians and disabled people. The development should be in 'easy' walking distance of the Primary Shopping Frontage (as defined on the Proposals Map). This will be determined by local topography, including barriers to pedestrians, such as major roads and car parks, the strength of attraction of the Town Centre, and the attractiveness of the route to or from the Town Centre. However, most shoppers are unlikely to wish to walk more than 200 to 300 metres especially when carrying shopping. Where appropriate, Chester-le-Street District Council will require planning obligations to secure developer contributions to new or improved public transport and/or improved pedestrian access.

R3 - RETAIL WAREHOUSES AND BULKY GOODS RETAILING

Where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there are no suitable alternative sites within or on the edge of the defined Chester-le-Street Town Centre boundary in accordance with the ‘Sequential Approach’ defined in Policies R1 and R2, proposals for retail warehouses and factory outlet centres selling primarily furniture, DIY products, bulky household goods and motor accessories will only be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries of Chester-le-Street subject to the fulfilment of the criteria (i) to (iii) of Policy R2.

(R1, R2, R10)

- 4.14 In line with Policies R1 and R2, major retailing activities should concentrate within the Town Centre to secure its vitality and viability. However, it is accepted that it may not be possible to replicate all types of retailing formats within or on the edge of the Town Centre. Some types of retailing, such as large stores selling bulky durable goods or requiring large showrooms may not be able to find sites within or on the edge of the Town Centre.
- 4.15 Where a need or capacity for further retail development can be demonstrated, and a thorough assessment of all potential options within Chester-le-Street Town Centre shows that no sites or buildings are available, then sites on the edge of the Town Centre or, in exceptional cases, other sites within the Chester-le-Street settlement boundary, may in certain circumstances be acceptable. The onus will be on the developer to demonstrate that a thorough assessment has been made of all potential options within the Town Centre and, if appropriate, on its edge.
- 4.16 The sale of other products that can be sold readily from shops in the Town Centre will not be considered acceptable where the vitality and viability of the Town Centre is threatened. Where the possible effect is uncertain, Chester-le-Street District Council will require an independent shopping impact study funded by the applicant and jointly commissioned by Chester-le-Street District Council to demonstrate the impact of the development on the Town Centre. Conditions will be attached to any planning permission regarding the main type of retailing to be undertaken.

R4 - NEW RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES

As shown on the Proposal Map, redevelopment of land at the Burns in Chester-le-Street Town Centre, will be permitted for a retail food store (Class A1 use) provided the proposal complies with Policies BE17, R10 and other relevant Policies of the Local Plan.

(TC2)

- 4.17 The joint Civic Trust Regeneration Unit (CTRU) and Hillier Parker assessment of the Town Centre entitled ‘Chester-le-Street Town Centre: Making the Connections’ identified a qualitative deficiency in the main food store provision in the Town Centre. Chester-le-Street has a higher than the national average number of convenience goods retailers. However, the majority of main food stores are discounters, which do not cater for bulk-food shopping.

- 4.18 In accordance with Policies R1 and R2 and PPG6 (Revised), a sequential assessment of potential food store sites was completed by Hillier Parker in May 1997. The study examined all potential Town Centre and 'edge-of-centre' sites. It concluded, by supporting the initial 1996 CTRU and Hillier Parker report, by identifying the 2.4 hectare area of The Burns as the most appropriate for a quality food store.
- 4.19 The former Council Depot at South Burns has been utilised as a temporary car park serving the town centre. However, car parking was always intended as a temporary use only, pending its redevelopment. The development of a new quality food store on the site is seen by Chester-le-Street District Council as a vital component in the economic and physical revitalisation of The Burns Area, and offers a significant opportunity to consolidate and improve the core shopping area of the Town Centre.
- 4.20 Proposals for a food store development on the South Burns area will be of a scale appropriate to the Town Centre, the site's prominent location and its setting within the immediate vicinity of the Grade II Listed Railway viaduct. Furthermore, proposals should be in accordance with the guidelines of the Development Brief published by Chester-le-Street District Council in association with Hillier Parker in June 1997.

R5 - CHESTER-LE-STREET MARKET

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the Chester-le-Street open market.

(TC1)

- 4.21 The Market is the largest council-run open-air market in north-east England, with 232 stalls available to traders and forms an important element of retail provision, contributing greatly to the character and vitality of the Town Centre. The strength of the Market is inextricably linked to the vitality of the rest of the Town Centre. Market days are already the busiest shopping days in the Town Centre.
- 4.22 In line with national trends, the market has been in steady decline since 1992. 'Chester-le-Street Town Centre: Making the Connections' (May 1996) identified the potential for improvement. Chester-le-Street District Council will resist development, which would adversely affect the Market and will pursue support initiatives to improve the vitality of the Market, in line with wider initiatives in the Town Centre, including environmental improvements, town centre management and promotion outlined in the Town Centre Chapter.

R6 - NON-RETAIL USES IN PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGES

Within the primary shopping frontages of the Town Centre, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the change of use from retail (Class A1) at ground floor level to non-retail uses will not be permitted.

(R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14)

R7 - NON-RETAIL USES IN SECONDARY SHOPPING FRONTAGES

Within the following Secondary Shopping Frontages defined on the Proposals Map:-

- a) **Chester-le-Street Front Street**
- b) **North Burns**
- c) **South Burns**
- d) **Bridge End**

Proposals for the change of use from Retail (Class A1), at ground floor level, to uses within Class A2 (banks, building societies, estate agents and betting offices) or A3 (restaurants, cafes, hot-food take-aways and public houses), laundrettes, community, leisure and recreational uses will be acceptable in principle, where:-

- i) **the proportion of non-retail uses either individually or cumulatively does not exceed 40% of the respective street-level frontage;**
- ii) **the proposal fulfils Policies R9, R10, R11, R12, R13 and R14 of this Chapter and other relevant policies of this Local Plan.**

4.23 Government guidance contained in PPG6 (Revised) states that Local Planning Authorities should encourage diversification of uses in the town centre as a whole. However, it also recognises that the shopping function of the primary shopping areas should be supportive. Local Plans may distinguish between primary shopping frontages in town centres and consider their relative importance to the character of the centre. The Proposals Map identifies the primary shopping frontages of the Town Centre, where the loss of any ground floor shop units to non-retail use (uses falling outwith Use Class A1 of the Use Classes Order 1987) will not be permitted. The primary shopping frontage (as shown in the Proposals Map) extends along the west side of Front Street, from Number 1 Front Street up to but not including Hermon House, and from the Red Lion Public House along the east side of Front Street up to and including 136, Front Street, currently occupied by Caesar's Kitchen Café

4.24 The primary shopping frontage of Chester-le-Street comprises the prime retail area of the town and a number of national multiple stores are represented, together with other retail units and a number of banks, building societies and cafes which contribute to the vitality and attraction of that part of the Town Centre. It also remains one of the few centres in County Durham which retains its attractiveness purely for shopping, and one which is very dependant upon public transport.

4.25 Chester-le-Street District Council is fully committed to both maintaining and improving the role of the primary shopping frontage as the heart of the retailing activity within the Town Centre.

- 4.26 Although offices (falling within Use Classes A2 and B1), food and drink outlets (use Class A3) and other non-retailing units contribute to the range of facilities available in the primary shopping frontage, their draw of shoppers to the area is not as strong as that of a multiple retail outlet.
- 4.27 Shopping floorspace is at a premium within the primary shopping frontage and most national banks, offices and food and drink outlets are already well represented in this frontage. As at May 1998, non-retailing uses accounted for some 27% of the units within this frontage. Therefore, it is essential that the primary shopping frontage retains a high proportion of retailing uses without the further dilution of units to non-retailing functions as Policy R6 proposes. This would ensure the continued provision of a convenient and accessible shopping centre, which in turn would strengthen the vitality and viability of the Town Centre as a whole. If unregulated, there is a great risk that the further displacement of retail outlets by other uses at ground floor level, such as those within Class A2 (banks, building societies and estate agents) and Use Class A3 (cafes, restaurants and takeaways), will reduce the potential opportunities for continued retailing uses and therefore weaken the attraction of the Town Centre as a retail centre.
- 4.28 Also identified on the Proposals Map are the secondary shopping frontages, where ancillary Use Class A2 and A3 retail uses such as building societies and restaurants/cafes will normally be acceptable intermixed with shops other than those already established. Non-retail activities will not be acceptable in the primary shopping frontages. However where suitable opportunities arise, non-retail uses providing for Class A2 and A3, leisure and community facilities that are accessible to a large number of people, will be considered in the secondary shopping frontages at ground floor level. Such activities can complement the functions of the retail sector and can make the town centre more attractive to residents, shoppers and tourists.
- 4.29 Chester-le-Street District Council is concerned that the potential proliferation of such uses, within the established Town Centre, could undermine its main retail function. In order to prevent a proliferation or over-concentration of such uses, a figure of 40% (based upon a percentage of the street frontage) has been adopted in order to help assess the cumulative impact of such uses on the vitality and viability of the Town Centre as a whole. This figure is regarded as a guide for the consideration of future proposals for non-retailing uses, rather than a rigid division between acceptable and unacceptable uses. Where the proportion of non-retail uses has already reached 40%, Chester-le-Street District Council will resist any further changes from retailing uses and will encourage their change of use to Use Class A1 retailing. The guidelines used in calculating the frontages and percentages for the purposes of Policy R7 are set out in Appendix II.
- 4.30 There are sufficient opportunities for uses such as offices to locate elsewhere in the Town Centre, such as upper floors of buildings in the shopping streets. Policy R8 below gives specific guidance on the location of amusement arcades.

R8 - AMUSEMENT CENTRES/ARCADES

Amusement centres/arcades will only be permitted in the secondary shopping frontage of the Town Centre and within the Local Centres, as defined on the Proposals Map provided that:-

- i) there will be no adverse effect on the neighbourhood in terms of noise and visual disturbance; and**
- ii) a shop type display with window displays is provided.**

Planning permission will be subject to conditions restricting noise and hours of operation.

(R9, R15)

- 4.31 Certain kinds of amusement centres, in particular those providing amusement-with-prizes machines, are now accepted as being appropriate ancillary uses in some shopping areas. Chester-le-Street District Council will resist such uses in the primary frontages of the town centre, where it considers the retention of a concentration of retail shops to be essential to the well being of the Town Centre. Amusement centres are more appropriate in secondary frontages or in lower order shopping areas where a mix of retail and service uses are found, provided that there is no detrimental impact on the area. They will not be permitted where they will detract from the amenity of nearby dwellings, schools, churches, hospitals or hotels.

R9 - PROVISION OF WINDOW DISPLAYS

Development in the primary or secondary shopping frontages of the town centre, including alterations and changes of use will be required to provide and maintain window displays.

- 4.32 Although shops, in their own interest, normally maintain window displays to encourage business, not all uses found in a shopping street do so. The loss of window displays can often disrupt a continuous shopping frontage and potentially lead to a decline in the attractiveness and interest of a street. Such losses will be resisted.
- 4.33 Uses establishing themselves within the primary and secondary shopping areas of the town centre will be expected to retain existing window displays or provide and maintain an adequate window display. Listed buildings and Public Houses may be inappropriate for this expectation and therefore greater emphasis will be placed on any appropriate architectural interest the building may have.

R10 - DESIGN FOR RETAILING AND TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS: GENERAL

Where proposals for either new, or the extension of existing retail or town centre uses are acceptable in principle under the relevant policies

of this Chapter, Chester-le-Street District Council will need to be satisfied that:-

- i) the development can be adequately and safely serviced, with provision for car and cycle parking to serve customers and employees in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendices X;**
- ii) the scale and character of the proposed development is in keeping with the size and role of the location and where necessary enhances local character;**
- iii) a safe and secure pedestrian environment is created, protected from the elements where possible, designed to ensure ease of use throughout by people with disabilities and those with pushchairs;**
- iv) provision is made for separately accessed accommodation above ground floor units where the scheme is also to meet a housing need;**
- v) the proposal makes adequate provision for the disposal of litter;**
- vi) there will be no adverse effect on the amenity of nearby dwellings; and**
- vii) the proposal complies with Policies BE20, R11, R13 and R14 and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

In addition, where a new major retail development is proposed, consideration will be given to the desirability of providing:

- i) public waste recycling facilities; and**
- ii) public seating and public conveniences including facilities for people with disabilities and baby changing and feeding facilities.**

(R1, R2, R3, R6, R7, R8, R15, R16, R17, R19)

4.34 New development for retailing and other key town centre functions should make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment. Chester-le-Street District Council will expect applicants to show that account has been taken of people at all levels of mobility, as well as the capacity of the existing road network. Any problems created by the expected volume of traffic should be rectified at the developers expense, which could include off site works to highways.

4.35 Major retail developments are suitable locations for the stationing of recycling receptacles for glass, cans, plastic and newspapers. They are accessible, regularly visited, have extensive surface car parking and are responsible for generating much of the initial material. Food stores in particular will normally be expected to incorporate provision for such facilities into their design. The recycling schemes will be managed by Chester-le-Street District Council.

- 4.36 Residential accommodation above ground floor units can make efficient use of what might otherwise be lost opportunities to not only provide low cost housing, but to foster and encourage the creation of a lively and attractive environment, day and night.

R11 - SHOP FRONT DESIGN: GENERAL

Planning permission for new shop fronts will be granted provided that they meet the following criteria:-

- i) the shop front shall be considered as an intrinsic part of the building. The shop front should be in keeping with the character of the building and surrounding area. It should be designed and sited to be in proportion with, and sympathetic to, its setting and should not detract from the building's appearance or from the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood (see Appendix II); and**
- ii) the removal of historic shop fronts should be avoided: repair and maintenance are preferable. Existing architectural or historic features worthy of preservation are to be retained and incorporated into the new shop front design.**

(BE1, BE4, BE8)

- 4.37 Shop fronts play an important part in forming the character of a particular commercial area. Inappropriate designs can seriously damage the historic and architectural character of towns and villages. It is important therefore, to protect traditional shop fronts and ensure their retention or require that any replacement is in keeping with the building or its surroundings. Garish colour combinations should be avoided. Proposals should seek to take full advantage of any existing features, taking care not to obscure or destroy them. Further guidance is provided in '*Shopfronts – Design Guidelines for County Durham*' published by Durham County Council.
- 4.38 Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage the replacement of architectural features which have been lost and the development of traditional signs and shop fronts. Great care must also be taken over advertisements on shops (see Policy R12).

R12 - SHOP FRONT DESIGN: ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisement consent for signs on shops or businesses will only be permitted if:-

- i) there is no adverse affect on amenity and highway safety;**
- ii) the signs are of a compatible size and height to the unit; and**
- iii) the signs are of a design which is sympathetic to both the existing unit and the surrounding area. (BE8)**

- 4.39 The display of a sign giving details of ownership/services on a shop or business unit is commonplace. In cases where Chester-le-Street District Council exercise control over such signs/advertisements, it will consider any proposal with due regard to amenity and safety. Furthermore, Chester-le-Street District Council will ensure that signs/advertisements preserve and enhance the character of the unit and its surrounding area.

R13 - SHOP FRONT DESIGN: DISABLED ACCESS

Planning permission for the construction or conversion to new retail outlets, and the extension to existing retail outlets will only be approved where provision is made for disabled persons access, except where the applicant can demonstrate that the physical constraints of the provision prejudice the viability of the development.

- 4.40 Buildings must be designed to meet the needs and requirements of all visitors including those suffering from reduced mobility. In order to facilitate this, outlets used by the public must provide suitable access arrangements within any submitted application.

R14 - SHOP FRONT DESIGN: SECURITY SHUTTERS

Protective roller shutters will be approved provided that they meet the following criteria:-

- i) the box is incorporated within the fascia;**
- ii) the roller shutters are coloured to match the shop front or fascia and the colour is in keeping with the surroundings; and**
- iii) shutters of perforated design are used**

(BE21)

- 4.41 Roller shutters are often visually hostile features within the retailing centres of today, primarily because of the need to provide adequate security. Although Chester-le-Street District Council understands the growing problems caused by theft and damage, roller shutters can severely damage the character of a building or area by introducing materials and colours incongruous to a building, obscuring the shop front features and affecting its symmetry. It is therefore important that applicants bear in mind that shutters are only one of a number of possible measures that can be used to improve the security of business premises. Applicants are encouraged to consult the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, prior to the submission of an application, to consider alternative security measures.
- 4.42 There are three main elements to the installation of roller shutters: the box, the actual shutter and the guide rails.
- 4.43 Each is dealt with as follows:-

- i) The box – in all new shopping developments and replacement shop fronts provision should be made to allow for the incorporation of a roller shutter box. In other cases all reasonable steps should be taken to accommodate roller shutter boxes within the fascia;
- ii) The shutter – because of its actual function it is the shutter itself which is the most hostile part of the development. Therefore, only open grill, punched lath or perforated shutters, all suitably colour coordinated will be acceptable. If the applicant can satisfactorily demonstrate that this type of shutter would not provide sufficient security, then suitably coloured solid shutters may be acceptable. Untreated or galvanised roller shutters will not be permitted.
- iii) Guide Rails – any roller shutter should ideally extend across the entire property frontage. However, where necessary guide rails must be incorporated within the vertical framework of the shop front and also be colour coordinated.

R15 - RETAILING IN LOCAL CENTRES

As defined on the Proposals Map, within the Local Centres of:-

- 1) Sacriston;**
- 2) Pelton;**
- 3) Fencehouses;**
- 4) Great Lumley;**
- 5) Gibside, Chester-le-Street;**
- 6) Garden Farm, Chester-le-Street,**

new development and limited extensions for non-retail uses and other community and employment uses will be permitted provided that:-

- i) the proposal does not undermine the vitality and viability of Chester-le-Street Town Centre;**
- ii) the proportion of non-retail uses either individually or cumulatively does not exceed 60% of the respective street-level frontage;**
- iii) the proposal will have no adverse affect on the amenity of nearby dwellings;**
- iv) the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Policies R9, R10, R11, R12, R13 and R14; and**
- v) the proposal meets the requirements of other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

(R19)

- 4.44 Chester-le-Street District Council is concerned that the potential proliferation of non-retail uses within established local centres, could undermine their main retail function. In order to prevent a proliferation or over concentration of such uses, a figure of 60% (based upon a percentage of street frontage) has been adopted in order to help assess the cumulative impact of such uses on the vitality and viability of the Local Retailing Centre. This figure is considered to

represent the point at which the introduction of non-retailing uses would begin to cause retail decline, adversely affecting the commercial viability of the local centre as a whole. This figure is regarded as a guide for consideration of future proposals for non-retailing uses, rather than a rigid division between acceptable and unacceptable uses. Where the proportion of non-retail uses has already reached 60%, Chester-le-Street District Council will resist any further changes from retailing uses and will encourage their change of use to Use Class A1 retailing. The guideline used in calculating the frontages and percentages for the purposes of Policy R7 are set out in Appendix II.

- 4.45 The identified local centres have a small but equally important centre where retailing activities will be concentrated. These local shopping centres provide for the day-to-day needs of the local community, and in rural areas they often include a wide range of services for the rural community lying beyond easy travelling distance of Chester-le-Street Town Centre.
- 4.46 Given the small size of these retailing areas and their vulnerability to outside retail competition, proposals for retail developments outside their boundaries other than for small scale retail uses which satisfy Policies R16 and R17 will not be permitted.

R16 - RETAILING BEYOND LOCAL CENTRES

As defined on the Proposals Map, within the Settlement Boundaries of both the smaller settlements of the District, and of those settlements identified in Policy R10, new development and limited extensions for small-scale retail use will be permitted beyond the defined Local Centres, provided that the proposals:-

- i) are within reasonable walking distance of residential areas; and**
- ii) will have no adverse affect on the amenity of nearby dwellings;**
- iii) comply with the criteria of Policies R10, R11, R12, R13, R14; and**
- iv) meet the requirements of other relevant policies of the Local Plan; and**
- v) are not more than 100 square metres in floor area.**
- vi) will not adversely undermine the vitality and viability of existing Retailing Areas defined in Policies R1 and R15.**

R17 - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL RETAIL NEEDS

Major new residential developments which are not within reasonable walking distance of existing shops will be required to make provision for small local shops to serve the everyday needs of their residents, which are not more than 100 square metres in floor area. Chester-le-Street District Council will need to be satisfied that proposals meet the criteria of Policy R16.

- 4.47 It is the aim of Chester-le-Street District Council to concentrate shopping facilities within the existing core of Local Centres identified in Policies R1 and R15. However, it is recognised that there is often a need for individual local shops or 'corner shops' that are within a reasonable walking distance i.e. 400 metres from residential areas.
- 4.48 There are many settlements throughout the District, which can, and do, provide a valuable service to local communities without convenient access to existing Local Centres. In these areas, small-scale provision of local shops may be required to serve local demand, which will help to sustain the rural communities and their economies.
- 4.49 Local shopping facilities will contribute, albeit in a small way, to achieving the objective of sustainable development. PPG6 (Revised) emphasises the importance of the role of local shops in both urban and rural locations in reducing the need to travel.
- 4.50 Chester-le-Street District Council will ensure that as part of all future major residential developments (over 100 units), provision is made for individual local shops (such as local food stores, post offices and pharmacies). Chester-le-Street District Council will require an independent survey of local retailing need to be undertaken at the expense of the applicant, to identify the provision that would be required in order to serve their resident's everyday needs.
- 4.51 However, developments, which would be large enough to threaten the viability of the retailing areas identified in Policies R1 and R15 will not be permitted. Where this impact is unclear, a retail impact study may be required. In addition, the need for new local shops should be clearly demonstrated. Where new shops of this nature are to be established, the scale and size of provision should be in sympathy with the area which it is to serve – and so the maximum size of the local shop should be in the order of 100 square metres in floor space.

R18 - RETENTION OF EXISTING LOCAL SHOPS

Chester-le-Street District Council will not permit in the following locations:-

- 1) Local Retailing Centres**
- 2) Village Shops**

the change of use away from Retail (Class A1) uses which would result in the loss of an existing shop, which provides for the day-to-day shopping needs of the immediate vicinity, unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant that:-

- i) the proposals either individually or cumulatively with other uses outside Class A1, would not affect the predominant retail function of the shopping area; or**

- ii) **alternative facilities are available within reasonable walking distance for residents who live within the pedestrian catchments area of the existing shop; or**
- iii) **a retail use is no longer economically viable or required by the local community**

(R19)

4.52 Smaller local shops providing for everyday needs are particularly important in local centres. PPG6 (Revised) emphasises the crucial role these shops play in maintaining the smaller villages as viable communities. In many cases a social as well as a service function is provided, but their position is often under threat not only from changes in shopping patterns, but also from higher returns that may be obtainable from changes to residential use.

4.53 In view of the importance of these shops, Chester-le-Street District Council will only allow the change of use of small retail units where there is strong evidence, – provided by the applicant/developer in an independent report to Chester-le-Street District Council, – that the shop is no longer viable. The commercial viability of a shop may be indicated, for example, by the fact that it has closed down and has not been trading for the last twelve months. Chester-le-Street District Council must also be satisfied that there is no other interested party prepared to re-open the shop, particularly from the local community. The applicant/developer will be expected to advertise the shop on the open market at least four times at roughly equal periods for a minimum period of twelve months at a value reflecting its retail use and providing that no reasonable offer has been refused. The views of the Parish Council will also be important in helping to gauge the community value of the existing facility and its future potential.

R19 - FOOD AND DRINK

Food and Drink (Class A3) uses will be considered appropriate in principle within the following locations:-

- 1) **the secondary shopping frontage of Chester-le-Street Town Centre subject to Policy R7 and within the wider Town Centre boundary as defined on the Proposals Map;**
- 2) **within the boundaries of Local Retailing Centres subject to Policy R15;**
- 3) **as part of local shopping provision in new housing or mixed-use development subject to Policy R17; or**
- 4) **as ancillary provision at tourist, leisure and recreation facilities.**

When determining applications for A3 uses, Chester-le-Street District Council will only permit proposals where all the following criteria are met:-

- i) **there is no detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupants of residential property from noise, fumes, smell, lighting, activity levels, or hours of operation at the site;**
- ii) **there are no overriding highway objections;**
- iii) **adequate provision is made for disposal of litter and waste materials;**
- iv) **there is no adverse impact on the open/rural character of the countryside and the ecology of the site and its surroundings; and**
- v) **the proposal satisfies the criteria of Policies R10, R11, R12, R13 and R14 and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

(R18)

4.54 Hot food and drink uses (Class A3), which include restaurants, pubs, cafes, snack bars and take-aways, contribute towards the range of facilities offered to residents of the District and particularly contribute towards the tourism facilities of Chester-le-Street District.

4.55 However, such uses require a prominent location and by their very nature they can create problems; many open late in the evenings, cause on street parking problems and can cause nuisance through cooking smells, litter and noise, particularly in residential areas. Therefore, when planning permission is granted conditions will be imposed, relating to, *inter alia*, hours of operation, parking facilities, servicing, the satisfactory installation of fume extraction equipment where residential amenity requires safeguarding etc.

4.56 Also identified on the Proposals Map are the secondary shopping frontages and local centres, where ancillary Class A2 and A3 retail uses such as building societies and restaurants/cafes, intermixed with shops, will normally be acceptable. This is providing that they do not over concentrate to the detriment of the actual shopping function.

4.57 Therefore within residential locations, including single free standing shops, hot food take-aways and other Class A3 uses will be considered unacceptable because of the likely detrimental effect of smell and general disturbance to residents.

R20 - MOTOR VEHICLE SALES AND PETROL FILLING STATIONS

Development of new petrol filling stations or the sale or display of motor vehicles will only be permitted where:-

- i) **They are located within the defined settlement boundaries shown on the Proposal Map;**
- ii) **There will be no adverse impact on the amenity of nearby dwellings or highway safety; and**

- iii) **Where the Class A1 retail element of the petrol filling station remains ancillary to the main function of the development and that the enterprise does not undermine the vitality and viability of the retailing centres identified in Policies R1 and R15 or put at risk a nearby village shop.**

For the sale or display of motor vehicles, planning permission will be subject to a condition restricting the retail use of vehicle sales, parts and motoring accessories.

(IN8)

- 4.58 Petrol filling stations and car showrooms require relatively large areas of land to assist vehicle movement and parking. Such developments are inappropriate in the open countryside or within the Green Belt, and when established can lead to pressure for further related development on site in the form of restaurants, cafes and hotels. Planning permission will only be granted where development is located within an existing settlement. Policies, IN3, IN4, IN5 and IN8 set out the criteria against which associated proposals for vehicle repairs will be assessed.
- 4.59 Car sales are not usually possible from within shopping areas. They are, at present, found on a variety of sites within Chester-le-Street and other villages. In some cases, the marketing and display of cars can be detrimental to the character and appearance of an area, especially near residential areas, and can create problems for other road users in the vicinity. Chester-le-Street District Council will carefully consider these points in deciding future proposals.
- 4.60 Within settlements such uses can sometimes fill a useful subsidiary role as 'local shops' for nearby residents. However, in some locations this can have a detrimental impact upon existing shops which would not be able to obtain such a prominent location for retailing. Chester-le-Street District Council will therefore seek to ensure that the retail function of those proposals remain ancillary to the main function of the development.

R21 - RETAILING FROM INDUSTRIAL PREMISES

Retailing from industrial premises will only be permitted where:-

- i) the goods sold are manufactured on the premises and the retailing is ancillary to the main employment use of the site;**
- ii) the proposal would not be detrimental to road safety or existing servicing and car park arrangements; and**
- iii) there is unlikely to be significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by virtue of noise and general disturbance.**

(IN3, IN4, IN5, IN8, IN9, IN11, IN12)

- 4.61 In order to enhance the vitality and viability of Chester-le-Street Town Centre and the Local Centres by concentrating retail facilities within these traditional shopping areas, retail units will not be permitted on land allocated for industrial uses.
- 4.62 A small amount of retailing is permitted, without the need to seek planning permission, from units where the goods are produced on those premises. The retailing function must, however, be ancillary to the main employment use of the site. In such circumstances these permitted development rights will not be removed.

R22 - GARDEN CENTRES AND NURSERIES

Development involving new garden centres and the extension of existing centres will only be permitted where:

- i) the site is within or adjoining existing settlement boundaries and outwith the Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map;**
- ii) the proposal would not be detrimental to road safety and satisfies the car parking standards of Appendix X;**
- iii) the proposal through its associated infrastructure, size, layout, design, materials and positioning and the cumulative effects of all new development reflects the character and/or appearance of the area;**
- iv) there are no unacceptable impacts on the character and/or appearance of the settlement, its setting or the surrounding countryside;**
- v) there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenities of nearby residents or other land uses by virtue of noise, smell, dust, fumes and traffic generation; and**
- vi) the proposal complies with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

Chester-le-Street District Council will require that the enterprise does not undermine the vitality and viability of the commercial area identified in Policies R1 and R15 or put at risk a nearby village shop.

- 4.63 Garden Centres are best sited close to the population that they serve, in order to minimise the need to travel and to make them accessible to non-car users as well as car users. The establishment of new garden centres in the countryside, other than on the very edge of existing settlements will be resisted. However, it is not considered that this locational requirement should not compromise the Green Belt purposes. Within Green Belts, development relating to garden centres is not considered appropriate due to the intrusiveness of development on the Green Belt's openness.

Policy AG5 provides guidance on development proposals for new, or extensions to existing nurseries and farm shops.

Chapter Five
Chester-Le-Street Town
Centre

CHAPTER FIVE - CHESTER-LE-STREET TOWN CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 PPG6 (Revised) 'Town Centres and Retail Developments' emphasises the role of Town Centres to promote, *inter alia*, local identity and sustainable development. As such special importance is given to sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres, by providing a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities to which people have easy access by a choice and means of transport.
- 5.2 Chester-le-Street Town Centre originally developed on the site of a Roman Fort (which is currently one of the four Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the District) as a stopping point midway along the main coaching route between Durham and Newcastle. There is still the potential for archaeological deposits dating back to this period being found in the southern and eastern parts of the Town Centre which reinforces the District's importance in historical terms. The town became a major ecclesiastical and administrative centre holding the seat of the Bishop of Durham and Northumberland with the interment of St Cuthbert at the site of the church of St Mary and St Cuthbert built in 883 A.D. With the relocation of the body to Durham in 995 A.D., the Town functioned more as a shopping and service centre for the immediate locality. As a consequence of its linkage between Durham and Newcastle, the town developed in a linear form along the major north-south axis with its heart at the crossing point over the Cong Burn, a tributary of the nearby River Wear. The town's market and breweries were located along the line of the Burn, creating a minor east-west axis at the centre of the Town.
- 5.3 Chester-le-Street Town Centre is treated exceptionally in the Local Plan, which is otherwise organised on a topic by topic basis. Great importance is attached to supporting the role, and ensuring the proper development of Chester-le-Street Town Centre. This Chapter therefore concentrates on the Town Centre and draws together and cross references topic policies against their town centre context and sets out additional separate policies which are specific to the Town Centre area.
- 5.4 As indicated in the Retail Chapter, a report commissioned by the Council entitled "Chester-le-Street Town Centre: Making the Connections" was published by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit in May 1996. The document, having undertaken a detailed assessment of the Town Centre and being compiled in association with the local business community and subject to public scrutiny in the summer of 1997, set out a comprehensive strategy for the regeneration of the Town Centre. As a result of this report, Chester-le-Street District Council, in partnership with Durham County Council, is in the process of preparing a detailed Master Plan based upon the findings of the Civic Trust Report. The policies and proposals contained in this Chapter reflect this Civic Trust Study and its findings. Key elements of Town Centre Master Plan will be incorporated into the Local Plan at the earliest opportunity.

The Built Environment

- 5.5 The Town's historic structure is still to be seen in the layout of the main streets and several of the original buildings which framed these streets remain, most notably the Church of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert, the United Reform Church, Queens Head public house and the conserved Roman barrack block on the corner of Church Chare. The streetscape features a number of notable Victorian and 1930's structures and building groups, but more modern infill buildings, with the exception of St. Cuthbert's Walk, are nondescript and contribute little to the streetscene.
- 5.6 Public spaces within the Town Centre tend to be split into two landscape types – spaces with hard paving surfaces and feature trees, or spaces with soft grass surfaces and parkland tree planting. Hard landscaped spaces include the Market Place and the minor 'squares' along Front Street (outside the Queens Head and Lambton Arms public houses). Soft landscaped spaces include St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church graveyard, the Town Park, Riverside and the recently reclaimed Chester Burn.
- 5.7 Both the hard and soft spaces carry their own problems. Whilst functional, the Market Place is relentlessly uniform in terms of surface treatment. The Town Park by contrast, a former graveyard to St. Mary and St. Cuthberts Church faces north-east towards the A167 bypass and A1(M) with traffic that is both visible and highly audible. In neither case do the existing environments do much to create a sense of place.
- 5.8 Policies in the Natural Environment and Built Environment Chapters seek to address these issues.

Shopping

- 5.9 Chester-le-Street has been an important market town for many centuries and retailing remains the main economic activity in the town centre today. Within the defined Town Centre, an independent survey completed in July 1995 identified a total of 190 ground floor retail units, including multiple retailers such as Boots, Woolworths, Argos and Burtons.
- 5.10 An important focal point of the town centre is the market, which is located in the Burns. It supplements traditional retailing and operates three days a week. The long established market has traditionally drawn shoppers from a relatively wide area, from the south of County Durham to Newcastle and Gateshead.
- 5.11 However, the Town does have a relatively modest provision of national durable goods retailers, compared with nearby higher order centres, and there are a number of discount retailers which are increasingly providing direct competition to the market.

- 5.12 Consumer surveys undertaken have identified that relatively few shoppers visiting the Town Centre undertake a bulk 'once a week' shop. It appears that a significant proportion of people who live and work in the District and Town do their main food shopping elsewhere, e.g. the Arnison Centre in Durham or the Galleries in Washington. This is not consistent with the aims of sustainable development in terms of the unnecessary traffic generated and length of trips made, particularly by the private car.

Offices

- 5.13 Offices are dispersed widely throughout the Town Centre, and tend to be located in converted buildings, utilising upper floors above retail units. Whilst there is not a specific business district, purpose built units on the Turnpark provide a limited amount of small office accommodation.

Housing

- 5.14 Residential use in the Town Centre is recognised to be of great value in meeting social needs and building the community, as well as contributing to retaining and enhancing the vitality of the Town Centre. Whilst there is limited opportunity for further housing development in the Town Centre, the Local Plan focuses on protecting the existing residential areas and encouraging the re-use of floorspace above shops.

Tourism, Leisure and Recreation

- 5.15 There is no shortage of potential visitors who partake in leisure activities visiting the Town Centre – The Riverside complex is a major flagship initiative creating the first Test Match Standard cricket ground in Britain for over a century, in total upwards of 500,000 visits per annum have been forecast for the Riverside after its final completion. Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum, attracts in excess of 300,000 visits per annum. The Coast to Coast Cycle Route from Whitehaven to Sunderland passes through the District immediately to the north of the Town and the Great North Forest effectively encircles Chester-le-Street Town. These facilities alone can potentially provide close to one million visits within minutes of the Town Centre.
- 5.16 There is a range of outdoor recreational and sporting activities, together with the Riverside Gardens Children's Park and its waterfront footpaths at the Riverside, which act as a gateway to the Great North Forest and the wider open countryside. Chester-le-Street Leisure Centre offers swimming, fitness and squash facilities.

Traffic and Parking

- 5.17 In spite of the existence of Traffic Orders prohibiting through traffic and the construction of the A167 bypass between Chester-le-Street and the A1(M), through traffic is the single most serious problem affecting the Town Centre. Unrestrained vehicular access has a substantial detrimental effect on the built environment and public transport provision. The main north-south street, Front Street is very narrow in places with inadequate pedestrian crossing points.

High traffic volumes, together with illegal drop-off parking, which causes buses to make abrupt overtaking manoeuvres, has resulted in both a pedestrian and cycle unfriendly environment.

- 5.18 However, without reasonable access and parking, the area could not survive economically. A balance must therefore be sought which can resolve these issues. The Transport Chapter includes policies which seek to achieve this with, *inter alia*, the implementation of an experimental traffic management scheme.

LOCAL PLANS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 5.19 The Civic Trust Report published in May 1996, concluded with the comment that Chester-le-Street Town Centre has the potential to become an exemplar of market town centre revitalisation. The Report expressed a vision for the future of the town which forms the basis for the aims of the Local Plan:-

- i) ensuring that the town is a part of a North East 'renaissance', with a renewed image, linked to success in maximising nearby flagship initiatives such as the Riverside and Beamish Open Air Museum;
- ii) using the foundation of a traditional market town to emphasise quality, good value for money, shopping and a clean and safe environment in the future;
- iii) providing a stronger and more diverse economy that continues predominantly to serve a local catchment, but holds its own against competition and is bolstered by a significant visitor market;
- iv) creating an attractive, well-managed town which aspires to the highest standards of management, design quality, accessibility and customer care.

- 5.20 Whilst the document acts as a guide to future decision-making for new development in the town centre, it is the role of the Local Plan and the Town Centre Master Plan to identify detailed measures for delivering this vision.

POLICIES

- 5.21 Unless specifically referred to, the policies of the Local Plan apply to the whole District. There are instances within each Chapter of the Local Plan which pay explicit attention to concerns of the Town Centre concerns. These Policies are shown in Appendix III. The policies contained within this Chapter focus upon the elements of the Town Centre relating to vitality, viability and development opportunities.

TC1 - TOWN CENTRE VIABILITY AND VITALITY

Proposals for development within the defined Town Centre should make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. In particular, proposals should ensure that, where relevant, they:-

- i) **maintain, or where possible enhance, a mixture of appropriate Town Centre uses;**
- ii) **maintain or enhance the vitality and viability of the open air market;**
- iii) **conform to the relative proportions of retail and non-retail uses set for Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages by policies R6 and R7;**
- iv) **are consistent with the environmental improvements, including new tree planting and landscaping and improved street furniture, which are made to Front Street, Cone Terrace and the Market Place, and to the proposed Civic Square, as part of the Council's comprehensive programme of Town Centre Management; and**
- v) **are consistent with the Council's proposals to enhance access to, and movement within, the Town Centre by introducing cycle links, improved signage, and new bus shelters.**

5.22 Notwithstanding the limited development opportunities, Policies TC1, HP14 and IN8 seek to encourage the re-use of vacant or under-utilised buildings for uses acceptable to the Town Centre. Both PPG6 (Revised) and PPG15 recognise that older buildings and the upper floors of shops may prove suitable for conversion to residential use. This not only helps the maintenance of the building, but also brings residents back to live in the Town Centre – factors which assist vitality and viability.

5.23 A key aim of the Local Plan is the importance of maintaining and enhancing the environmental quality of the Town Centre. In this context, environmental quality relates not only to buildings and spaces but also to issues such as pollution, public safety and the creation of a pleasant ambience which can be enjoyed and appreciated by residents and visitors. Through its enabling role, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to establish a programme of Town Centre Management, the importance of which is identified in PPG6 (Revised). Environmental enhancement will be a major element of this Management and the following areas have been identified as those which should be afforded priority during the Plan period:-

- i) Chester-le-Street Market

5.24 The existing market provides space for some 232 stalls in regimental rows, under plastic awnings, with no clear pattern of allocation. Despite recent investment in walls, railings and the entrance gateway the market appears to be declining in size, whilst the Saturday market is insufficiently appealing to strengthen Town Centre trade on potentially the busiest day of the week. Chester-le-Street District Council, as land owner, will seek to implement a two stage programme towards the market's revitalisation which will be the subject of the Town Centre Master Plan. The first, will include design improvements to both the layout and grouping of stalls; the second, will be promotional packages to improve the quality and appeal of the market, by attracting the best possible variety and standard of stallholders.

ii) St. Cuthbert's Park

- 5.25 The Town Park is a major soft space within the town centre and serves as an important gateway link with Riverside and the wider countryside. However, it is inconspicuous and little used. In order to bring life back into this space, it will be necessary to ameliorate the worst of the environmental problems facing the Park. These are its north-east aspect, which affords views of both the A167 bypass and the A1(M), traffic noise from these roads and the fact that the Park is hidden behind Front Street and Cone Terrace and not visible from the Town Centre. Chester-le-Street District Council, in association with its partner organisations will seek to address these problems through appropriate tree screening of both the motorway and bypass from the Park's north-easterly view. Further landscaping measures will be introduced such as public art, tree planting, play facilities for children, signage and gateways in order to raise its profile and to improve its connections with the Town Centre and Riverside.
- 5.26 Gateways and arrival points into the Town Centre are vital, since they often convey to the visitor the first impressions of the Town Centre and its quality. The profile of the Town Centre is assisted by the Town's proximity to the rail and motorway networks. Both the spire of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church and the Council Offices are highly visible from east to west. The roundabouts and junctions along the A167 and other key approaches into Chester-le-Street are key gateway sites linking into Chester-le-Street, Riverside and Beamish Museum, yet they fail to attract the casual visitor. Gateways into the Town Centre tend to be closer in – the Ropery Lane roundabout, the Railway Viaduct over the Burns, the Methodist Church/Mechanics Institute Gateway on Newcastle Road and in the vicinity of the T.A. Centre on Picktree Lane. At present, standard highway signage provides a muted statement to the visitor that they have arrived in either Chester-le-Street or the Town Centre. Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to introduce appropriate gateway features such as public art and effective signage at these key gateway arrival points.
- 5.27 Equally important to the approaches by private car are the car parks. These are essentially located along the east and west of Front Street and make provision for some 770 cars. Many could benefit from improved hard and soft landscaping and better security which Policy T9 of the Local Plan seeks to address. In addition, improvements will be sought to enhance the linkages between the car parks and the main shopping thoroughfare of Front Street.
- 5.28 Whilst many visitors arrive in the Town Centre by car, a large number use public transport and the bus in particular. Existing bus stop furniture is modest and the main interchange at the Market Place, although functional, is not distinguishable. The redesign of bus shelters and setting down areas will form a key part of the Master Plan for Front Street and the Chester Burn Cross Town Corridor.
- 5.29 The least satisfactory gateway into the town centre is the Railway Station. Vacant and boarded up, the site does little to encourage visitors to return. In line with Policy T4, Chester-le-Street District Council, in conjunction with Durham County Council, will seek to enhance the current service provision to the Station. In addition, refurbishment of the existing Station will be sought to

include appropriate hard and soft landscaping to strengthen the pedestrian links, particularly along Station Road and to include a bus link between the Station, Town Centre and Riverside.

- 5.30 Those approaching the Town Centre on foot or bicycle from the north, south or east can mainly use the gateways discussed in paragraph 5.29. Residents from the housing estates to the west must pass under the railway line or viaduct and since they are poorly lit, they present safety concerns. Efforts will be made to make them more user friendly. Arrival into the Town Centre by bicycle is particularly unsatisfactory. Direct north/south cycle links are identified for improvements and are shown on the Proposals Map – these include a combination of dedicated on and off road cycle paths such as the C2C/Town Centre link (referred to at Policy T2) and the Traffic Management Scheme in Front Street (policy T7). These schemes should assist in providing a more cycle friendly environment.

iv) Front Street General

- 5.31 Access to the Town Centre is a key issue since so many of the central functions of the town centre occur there. However, there is direct conflict between unrestricted traffic growth and the need to preserve and enhance the quality of the town centre. In tandem with the experimental traffic management scheme (Policy T7) opportunities will be created for appropriate hard and soft landscaping within Front Street such as increasing pavement widths to create more valuable opportunities for a more pedestrian friendly environment.

v) A New Civic Square

- 5.32 The confluence of North Burns, South Burns, Picktree Lane, Front Street and Newcastle Road has traditionally been a focal point with the bridge spanning Chester Burn. Despite the area's key gateway function, the complex turning movements of buses, cars and taxis provides a very hostile environment to both pedestrians and cyclists. In conjunction with the experimental traffic management scheme in Front Street, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to redress the balance of space in favour of pedestrians and cyclists together with improved street furniture such as that incorporating public art features, reinforcing the green landscaped escarpments and improving the linkages and green networks through the Town Centre.

TC2 - DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Burns Area, as identified on the Proposals Map, has been allocated for a retail foodstore development in association with Policy R4.

TC3 - THE FORMER GAS BOARD DEPOT

As identified on the Proposals Map, planning permission for the Former Gas Board Depot, Pelton Fell Road will be granted for the following single and/or mixed-use developments:-

- i) Residential, provided that Policy HP9 is satisfied;

- ii) **Business (Class B1), provided that Policy IN8 is satisfied; or**
- iii) **Leisure and Community, provided that Policies R1**
- iv) **and R2 are satisfied**

5.33 PPG6 (Revised) emphasises the positive impact a mixture of uses can have on a town centre. Local Authorities are encouraged to promote schemes that will add to the vitality and viability by promoting a range of uses.

- i) The Burns Area

5.34 One key measure emphasised by PPG6 (Revised) to sustain the vitality and viability of town centres is to adopt a “sequential test approach” as regards the location of new development (discussed in detail under Policies R1, R2 and R3 of the Retail Chapter), to all town centre uses (not just to retail developments) which attract a lot of people (such as commercial and public offices, entertainment and leisure developments).

5.35 Development opportunities in the Town Centre are relatively limited, although the area of the former Council Depot along South Burns, which Chester-le-Street District Council identified as a key development site in its Town Centre Local Plan (published in 1982), could potentially accommodate a new quality foodstore. Policies R4 and TC2 of the Local Plan seeks to promote development of the site for the wider benefit of the people of Chester-le-Street.

- ii) The Former Gas Board Depot Site, Pelton Fell Road

5.36 The Former Gas Board Depot Site, now known as the St. Cuthbert’s Resource Centre, is located to the west of the proposed retail foodstore (see Policies R4 and TC2). Whilst the site contains several built structures and is currently occupied by a number of small scale business uses, it is considered that this brownfield site as a whole is under used. Whilst no indications have been given as to the site’s future status, it is considered that with the proposed construction of a new major foodstore on the adjacent Burns, the site would provide a significant opportunity to transform this visually important gateway to the Town Centre as proposed by Policy TC3.

Chapter Six

Industry

CHAPTER SIX – INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 The District of Chester-le-Street, because of its excellent location, environment and communication links, has proven capable of attracting a wide range of both large and small modern industries. In order for the District's success to be built upon, good quality well located land and buildings must be available to meet the requirements of modern industry.
- 6.2 The Local Plan therefore, adopts the same approach as the County Durham Structure Plan Review in attempting to ensure a continuous supply of employment land and premises for the expansion of existing firms, the establishment of new firms and the attraction of inward investment on a scale compatible with local needs and with the attractive environment.
- 6.3 In order to provide for the developer's requirements and meet the aims of the Local Plan Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to channel particular development to particular locations. It has therefore identified three classes of industrial estate:-
- i) prestige;
 - ii) general industrial;
 - iii) local industrial.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 6.4 Chester-le-Street District Council's objectives for industry, to be pursued through the policies of the Local Plan are:-
- i) to encourage a partnership approach to develop the Drum Industrial Estate and alleviate the infrastructure problems in order for it to remain as a prestige industrial site in County Durham;
 - ii) to improve and broaden the local economy through discussions with local businesses, marketing and an economic plan in order to generate growth;
 - iii) to ensure that any economic growth takes account of the environmental strategy of the Local Plan, which can be implemented through the development control process;
 - iv) to provide enough good quality, well located industrial land in order to ensure economic development;
 - v) to provide extra land in order to further develop Stella Gill as a general industrial estate;
 - vi) to develop the potential of the Daisy Hill Reclamation Site, in partnership with Durham County Council, in order to provide light industrial units;
 - vii) to develop schemes to facilitate environmental improvements, in order to encourage inward investment;

- vii) to promote appropriate and sensitive economic activity in the open countryside, in order to facilitate the prosperity of the District.

POLICIES

IN1 - NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In partnership with public and private agencies, Chester-le-Street District Council will bring forward some 35 hectares of new industrial land, as shown on the Proposals Map, to help facilitate economic growth and employment generation in the District throughout the plan period. New industrial land is allocated for the following uses at:-

Prestige Industrial Estate

- 1. Drum Industrial Estate (31.5 Hectares)**

General Industrial Estates

- 2. Daisy Hill, Sacriston (0.9 Hectares)**
- 3. Stella Gill Industrial Estate (1.7 Hectares)**
- 4. Lumley Brickworks (in association with Policy HP4) (0.8 Hectares)**

- 6.5 The provision of an adequate supply of industrial land throughout the District is essential to meet the needs of industry, providing a choice of location and type of site to attract new investment and meet the demands of indigenous firms.
- 6.6 Whilst committed to the utilisation of land within urban areas and ensuring that vacant and/or derelict sites are re-used before consideration is given to the release of greenfield sites, it is recognised that new industrial development opportunities are limited given the environmental, transportation, infrastructural and planning constraints within the District which place severe restrictions on the potential for industrial development either within the vicinity of Chester-le-Street or in broader locations throughout the District.
- 6.7 Wherever possible, Chester-le-Street District Council has sought to meet this strategy where all land allocations for extensions to General Industrial Estates can be classified as brownfield and are allocated to allow industry to develop where housing is available, to promote rural development and to reduce journeys to work and consequently promoting energy conservation.
- 6.8 The constraints within the District are particularly relevant for new prestige employment development opportunities and it is considered that no other brownfield opportunities exist within the District which offer the scale of infrastructure, accessibility and facilities already available at Drum Industrial Estate. Therefore, extensions at Drum Industrial Estate are proposed which are well related to the existing Estate, to the motorway and trunk road network and which are in close proximity to the main centre of Chester-le-Street.

These extensions would enable the District to compete for 'prestige' investment against other attractive sites elsewhere in the County. Of the total extensions, some 18 hectares to the east of the existing estate are brownfield.

IN2 - LONG TERM EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

As defined on the Proposals Map, land to the east of Stella Gill Industrial Estate will be safeguarded to provide scope for future industrial development involving business (Class B1), general industrial (Class B2) and storage and distribution uses (Class B8) beyond 2006. No permanent development will be allowed on this land during the current Plan period and development which would prejudice the potential development of this land for employment uses in accordance with Policy IN5 will not be permitted.

- 6.9 Whilst not falling within the boundaries of the North Durham Green Belt, it is considered that the 13 hectare site should be set aside to provide opportunities for meeting longer term employment needs beyond the Plan period. There is a clear emerging shift towards the provision for small and medium sized enterprises, which to date, has made the existing Stella Gill Industrial Estate a very marketable location in employment terms.
- 6.10 The land, whose main land use constitutes grazing land, woodland belts and the existing units of the former fertiliser works, is not allocated for development at the present time, and will be kept free to fulfil its purpose of meeting possible longer term development needs. No development which would prejudice the later comprehensive development of the site will be permitted. Planning permission for the permanent development of the land will only be considered following a review of this Local Plan.
- 6.11 The Local Plan at present seeks to make 1.7 hectares of brownfield land available for development to the west of the existing Industrial Estate (See Policy IN1). Deferring the release of the 13 hectare site would reflect both the national and District strategy of ensuring that development is carried out in a sustainable manner i.e. by securing:-
- i) the recycling of derelict or redundant land before consideration is given to the release of what is largely a greenfield site;
 - ii) that the rate of development does not put undue pressure on the requirements for local infrastructure and service facilities;
 - iii) that development does not take place on an ad hoc and piece-meal basis through the 'cherry picking' of the more developable plots.
- 6.12 Before any of the safeguarded land is released for development, Chester-le-Street District Council will carry out further work to determine the area's full development in terms of accessibility, design, infrastructure provision and landscaping (which reflect the sites largely rural status). This work will be undertaken in partnership with the major interested parties e.g. landowners, utilities providers, the development industry and local residents. These matters could be best dealt with through the preparation of a development

brief. The results of the development brief would therefore provide a solid platform for the area's inclusion in the Local Plan Review.

IN3 - PRESTIGE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

As defined on the Proposals Map, proposals which involve the conversion or extension of existing units, or the development of new premises on the Drum Industrial Estate, will only be approved for business (Class B1), general industrial (Class B2) or storage and distribution (Class B8) uses.

In accordance with Appendix IV, planning permission will only be granted if:-

- i) units are of good specification and appearance;**
- ii) development along the primary site frontages formed by the site boundary of the A693 are designed to especially high standards;**
- iii) a clean attractive environment is created;**
- iv) high quality landscaping and aesthetic features are incorporated together with a high quality and unobtrusive means of enclosure where it is deemed necessary, and are especially provided along the outer boundaries of the eastern and western extension sites in accordance with Policy NE6 of the Local Plan;**
- v) external storage is to the rear of the buildings and is well screened;**
- vi) parking provision is in accordance with adopted standards and designed to minimise its impact; and**
- vii) suitable and safe highway access is provided to the site.**

Planning conditions will be attached to new development to ensure that any unused area or area for expansion on the site is appropriately landscaped.

(NE6, R21)

6.13 Prestige industrial sites are high quality, strategically located major industrial sites capable of competing against the very attractive sites now available in many parts of the UK. A high quality environment with good communication links to motorways and close to centres of population for labour force and markets are essential for the needs of modern industries, primarily in Use Classes B1 and B2. Sites should be designed to a high standard with good landscaping and building quality.

6.14 Because of the relative scarcity of such good quality land, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to provide and maintain a high standard of site layout, design and landscaping, whilst excluding activities that would detract from the estate's appearance and function, especially on prime plots, e.g. those at important road junctions etc.

- 6.15 Retailing will be resisted on these sites (See R21) in order to maintain the Local Plan's retail aim of supporting the vitality and viability of the District's town and local centres.
- 6.16 Whilst generally tidy, the Drum Industrial Estate forms a visually intrusive feature on both the landscape and North Durham Green Belt and is highly visible from residential areas. With the development of the two proposed extension sites to the east and west (see Policy IN1), these factors would be even more pronounced. Where development proposals are considered acceptable within the Estate, Chester-le-Street District Council will consider the use of planning conditions and/or seek a Section 106 Planning obligation, requiring the developer to provide appropriate landscaping/screening to mitigate the intrusiveness of the further development, and ultimately the Estate as a whole, on neighbouring land uses. This would further provide opportunities for nature conservation, protect and enhance the integrity of the Green belt (in accordance with Policy NE6) and maintain a high quality appearance appropriate to a Prestige Industrial Estate.
- 6.17 Drum Industrial Estate lies within the Great North Forest area, therefore both advice from the Great North Forest and potential partnerships with them are available to secure landscaping which is appropriate to the locality and accords with the Forest Plan strategy referred to in the Great North Forest Policy within the Natural Environment Chapter.

IN4 - GENERAL INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Proposals which involve the conversion or extension of existing units or the development of new premises on the following general industrial estates, as shown on the Proposals Map, will only be approved for business (Class B1), general industrial (Class B2) and storage and distribution uses (Class B8):-

- 1) Stella Gill;**
- 2) Sacriston Industrial Estate;**
- 3) Sacriston Co-operative Units;**
- 4) Daisy Hill Industrial Estate;**
- 5) The Turnpark;**
- 6) Lumley Brickworks**

Only business uses (Class B1) will be permitted on the Lumley Brickworks site in association with policy HP4

Planning permission will only be granted if:-

- i) units are of good specification and appearance;**
- ii) prominent and frontage plots are of a higher standard of design;**

- iii) a clean, attractive environment is created;
- iv) good landscaping and screening is incorporated;
- v) external storage is satisfactorily screened and does not impede on surrounding land uses;
- vi) parking provision is in accordance with adopted standards and designed to minimise its impact; and
- vii) suitable and safe highway access is provided to the site.
(NE6, R21)

6.18 Many smaller manufacturing and service industries are located within general industrial estates, and as such serve a vital role in assisting the continuing employment regeneration of the District.

6.19 Such industrial areas provide important sources of accommodation for small forms of new businesses whilst allowing expansion land for those that already exist. These sites, at present, provide the bulk of the District's industrial land resources. As such, they are widely differing in characters, quality and the type and number of businesses they contain. Whilst all are, in principle, acceptable sites for light industrial/office (B1), general industrial (B2) and storage and distribution (B8) uses, the quality and environment of these estates which lend themselves towards prestige standards will be protected by Chester-le-Street District Council when determining planning applications.

IN5 - LOCAL INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Proposals which involve the conversion or extension of existing units or the development of new premises for less attractive or unneighbourly industrial uses will be permitted on the following local industrial estates as shown on the proposals map:-

- 1) Westline;
- 2) Sacriston Colliery;
- 3) Pelton Fell North;
- 4) Lumley Sixth Pit;
- 5) Kimblesworth Industrial Estate;
- 6) Lumley Brickworks.

Planning permission will only be granted if:

- i) the site is, or can be, well screened;
- ii) prominent and frontage plots are avoided;

- iii) **the proposal will not result in a serious shortage of readily available land;**
- iv) **substantial landscaping is incorporated; and**
- iv) **the use does not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and highway users or the character and appearance of the area by virtue of dust, noise, smell, vibration, mud or other emissions.**

(NE6, R21)

6.20 Some industrial uses, which by their very nature are polluting or unneighbourly through excessive outside storage, noise, smell and other disturbance, need to be catered for within the District in a way which does not create problems for other land users. Such uses which generally fall within Use Class B2 or have no class at all (sui generis) include the activities of scrapyards and other vehicle breaking, coal merchants and other types of reclamation, storage and distribution. Therefore, such users are only likely to be acceptable on local industrial estates where they are well screened (both locally and in wider the landscape), have good access and are not too close to housing so as to result in a loss of amenity to their occupiers. It is important that these uses do not impede on the preferred use of land or other development. In partnership with other public and private agencies, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to create opportunities to implement wider landscape enhancement schemes to ameliorate the unneighbourly effects of local industrial estates.

IN6 - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Chester-le-Street District Council will, in conjunction with other public and private agencies, seek to improve the environmental quality of industrial estate within the District. This will be achieved through landscape improvement and enhancement schemes.

IN7 - INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND NEW TREE PLANTING

Development affecting landscape or tree planted areas within or around the perimeter of an industrial estate will not be granted unless:-

- i) **the site can be developed without any significant adverse effect on the surrounding area;**
- ii) **replacement landscaping of the same or better quality is provided; and**
- iii) **adjoining businesses or industrial uses are not adversely affected.**

6.21 In many cases Chester-le-Street District Council and other bodies have already planted landscape edges around industrial estates and also open spaces within them. Wider landscape enhancements will be secured where opportunities arise.

6.22 Where development proposals would result in the loss of planted or landscaped area approval will be granted only if the estate does not suffer a loss of amenity and satisfactory replacement planting is provided.

IN8 - INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BEYOND DEFINED INDUSTRIAL ESTATES.

Outside the established and proposed industrial estates as defined in the Local Plan, development within the defined built up areas, which involves new or the limited extension of existing businesses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987, will only be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries where:-

- i) there is unlikely to be a significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by virtue of noise, dust, smell and general disturbance;**
- ii) the design, scale and visual impact is compatible with the character and appearance of the site and surrounding areas;**
- iii) adequate landscaping is included;**
- iv) space is available for screened external storage, if required;**
- v) it does not involve the loss of sound housing in primarily residential areas; and**
- vi) parking to meet the adopted standards (Policy T8) can be provided within the curtilage of the property, without detriment to the area or its amenities.**

6.23 The development of business uses in built up areas provides a useful source of employment and as long as the identified criteria are followed, it should be encouraged.

6.24 Chester-le-Street Town Centre has a lack of office space, existing provision tends to be converted buildings that are not ideal for the needs of a modern business. Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage purpose built office accommodation in the Town Centre, that is compatible with the relevant Retail and Town Centre policies of the Local Plan to help meet an anticipated demand for new development and enhance the diversity of the local economy.

6.25 Proposals for such developments, including the extension of existing premises, should not have an adverse impact on the environment or amenity of local residents, or be of a scale and character of development which is incompatible with its surroundings. Particular attention will be given to the activities proposed in relation to noise, smell or other disturbance, traffic generation and scale and design of developments.

IN9 - NEW INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Beyond the boundaries of settlements, industrial estates and the Green Belt, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for new industrial and employment uses will be permitted only where they involve the following:-

1. the re-use of the existing rural buildings in accordance with Policies AG6 and AG8;
2. the change of use of agricultural land as diversification of an agricultural enterprise in accordance with Policy AG4;
3. it is directly related to the winning, working, processing or the treatment of minerals, or the processing of agricultural or forestry products, where it is essential for such processing or treatment to take place close to the source of raw materials;

and provided that:-

- i) the development does not materially harm the character, appearance or amenity of the countryside or of any neighbouring settlement through its size, position, layout, design or materials;
- ii) there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenities of nearby residents or other land users through noise, smell, dust, fumes or traffic congestion;
- iii) the site can be served by roads capable of accommodating an increase in traffic generated by the proposal;

and in the case of development in category (3) listed above:

- iv) an acceptable programmed scheme is submitted with the application to show the reclamation and end-use of the site and the time-scale to be related to the expected life of the material source.

IN10 - EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Beyond the boundaries of settlements, industrial estates and the Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals for the extension of existing industrial and/or employment uses will only be permitted where:-

1. taking into account the cumulative size of any previous extensions, the proposal would be small in scale in relation to the existing enterprise;
2. the proposal would not add unacceptably to the need to travel, particularly by car;

3. it can be demonstrated that the employment use cannot viably be located on a site allocated under Policies IN3; IN4; IN5; IN8 or IN11;

and provided that:-

- i) the development does not materially harm the character, appearance or amenity of the countryside or of any neighbouring settlement through its size, position, layout, design or materials;**
- ii) there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenities of nearby residents or other land users through noise, smell, dust, fumes and traffic generation;**
- iii) the site can be served by roads capable of accommodating any increase in traffic generated by the proposal;**
- iv) the development complies with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

6.26 The District contains 9 (11 including the yet to be developed Daisy Hill and Lumley Brickworks sites – see Policy IN1) industrial estates which are considered to adequately provide for all industrial requirements.

6.27 As a general principal, new industrial development and employment generating uses should be directed to those designated industrial estates. Development within the countryside is likely to detract from those designated industrial estates. Development within the countryside is also likely to detract from the appearance of the District, to be remote from centres of population and not be served by public transport resulting in long car journeys and may involve the development of high quality agricultural land. There are situations however, where small-scale development of this nature may prove appropriate to a rural location, for example, when the processing of minerals or agricultural produce needs to be located close to the source of raw material. Such development may help to maintain and promote rural development.

6.28 Chester-le-Street District Council recognises the benefits of promoting economic activity in the open countryside as a means to providing jobs, preventing the loss of services and maintaining balanced and viable communities.

6.29 The countryside can accommodate many forms of development without detriment if the location and design of the development is handled with sensitivity. Many agricultural and forestry buildings do not require specific planning permission because of permitted development rights, however, such developments are subject to a process of prior approval. This enables Chester-le-Street District Council to consider the potential impact of the proposed development on the landscape and appearance of the local area and its relationship to any areas of designated importance such as conservation areas, areas of nature conservation importance, etc.

6.30 The increasing efficiency of agriculture procedures and changes in agricultural policy means that retaining as much land as possible in agricultural use no longer has the same priority. It is now more important to promote diversification of the rural economy so as to provide wide and varied

employment opportunities for rural people, including those formerly employed in agriculture and related sectors.

- 6.31 Development of land for agriculture, forestry and informal recreation and small-scale tourism or craft related schemes connected with the diversification of farm enterprises may, therefore, be acceptable provided it remains an ancillary function relative to the main agricultural operation, if it sustains the rural economy and helps to preserve the character of the countryside without detracting from its appearance.
- 6.32 Proposals for industrial or commercial use in the countryside, if uncontrolled, may intensify to become unacceptably intrusive. Unless this intensification amounts to a material change in the character of use, it cannot be controlled, if unconditional planning permission has been granted. Consideration will therefore be given to the use of planning conditions and/or Section 106 Planning Obligations to safeguard the environment and local amenity where considered appropriate for preventing foreseeable problems.

IN11 - EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES / BUILDINGS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Beyond the settlement boundaries and industrial estates, as shown on the Proposals Map, a change of use, or redevelopment of existing premises or sites with an employment use to non-employment uses will not be permitted unless:-

- i) such development would not cause or accentuate a significant storage of land for employment use in the area concerned, both at the present time or in the foreseeable future; or**
- ii) the site is no longer appropriate for employment use because:-**
 - a) it impinges upon residential amenity;**
 - b) it causes highway or traffic problems;**
 - c) it creates other significant environmental effects; or**
 - d) there is no longer a viable demand for an employment use.**

6.33 The countryside has always been a place of work and it is important that it should remain so. Rural businesses contribute to the prosperity of the District as a whole and also create jobs which sustain individual communities.

6.34 Within the District there are however pressures to convert existing buildings and sites with an employment use into dwellings. Such development makes a minimal contribution to the local community and can undermine efforts to encourage rural diversification and, maintain local services. Chester-le-Street District Council will therefore examine with care any proposals for the conversion of premises or sites with an existing or former employment use to non-employment uses.

6.35 The suitability of sites or premises for employment use will be an important consideration of any such proposals. Where a site is badly located, in that it adversely affects residential amenity or other land uses, causes highway or

traffic problems or creates significant environmental effects, new uses may be appropriate.

- 6.36 Chester-le-Street District Council will have particular regard to the role which a specific site plays in the local economy. The views of the Rural Development Commission and Parish Council will be of particular importance in helping to gauge the importance of any existing facility and its future potential. Due to the importance of retaining rural employment opportunities, Chester-le-Street District Council will require the applicant to demonstrate that the property is no longer required for employment use. The most effective way for the applicant to demonstrate lack of viable demand would be to provide proof that the land or property had been widely advertised on the open market, on at least four separate occasions, at roughly equal periods, at a value reflecting its current use, for a period of at least twelve months and that no reasonable offer had been refused. Clearly such evidence will be strengthened where it is substantiated by an independent professional body such as an independent firm of Chartered Surveyors.

IN12 - WORKING FROM HOME

The change of use of part of a dwelling for business purposes will be permitted where this is for the occupants of the dwelling, provided the development:-

- i) does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling; and**
- ii) does not adversely affect the amenity of nearby residents or the character of the area by virtue of excessive noise, traffic, smell, fumes, access or parking problems.**

- 6.37 An increasing number of people work from home, using kitchen tables or a spare room, working on their own behalf or for an employer. The incidence of 'teleworking' via computer terminals, and similar "office type" activities, is likely to increase. Planning consent is not required if the following requirements are met:

- i) the use must be incidental to the main use of the dwelling;
- ii) the incidental use will be by the residential occupiers only, and not by visiting employees;
- iii) the level of activity in terms of noise, visitors and cars must be indistinguishable from that of normal residential use.

- 6.38 However, there is potential for the intensification of such activity to a point where the amenity of the residential area can be adversely affected. This policy aims to identify that point. The object is to define acceptable usage, not to discourage working from home as the practice has a value of fostering entrepreneurial activity, enhancing employment opportunities especially in rural areas, reducing journeys to work and labour costs.

Chapter Seven

Recreation and Leisure

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECREATION AND LEISURE

INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 As participation rates in recreation and leisure continue to rise the pressure on facilities for formal and informal sport and recreation is increasing. The Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM) Strategic Leisure Plan for Chester-le-Street shows that over 77% of respondents took part either frequently or occasionally in a leisure activity, with the highest number of regular and occasional participants in the 25-34 year old group. Local planning authorities have a responsibility to take account of the community's need for recreation and leisure space in determining planning applications, to assess current provision and requirements, and to resist the development of open space if it would conflict with the wider public interest. This responsibility should not be exercised only in relation to laid out areas of public open space but to all types of open space.
- 7.2 Sports centres, swimming pools and playing pitches are the main facilities for those wishing to take part in formal organised sporting activities. Parks, allotments, playgrounds, public rights of way and the open countryside are the main facilities for informal recreation. Their importance lies in their availability, regardless of income, and their accessibility through their normal proximity to residential areas.
- 7.3 The biggest opportunity for increased public recreational space within the District is with the opening of the Riverside complex. When completed, this will provide approximately 20 hectares of formal recreational space as well as 25 hectares of informal recreational space. This provision will encourage a greater usage by residents from across the District and will provide areas in which sport can be played to high competitive levels. The new outdoor sports complex will allow enhanced provision for outdoor sports to benefit the local area, while the cricket ground currently provides opportunities for 10,000 people to enjoy first class cricket, and in future, if it becomes a Test Match ground, up to 20,000.
- 7.4 There are approximately 86 hectares of recreational open space available for public use in the District. Measured against the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) "6 Acre" (2.4 hectares) per 1000 population standard, a total of 127 hectares should be provided. The District therefore has a shortfall of 41 hectares of recreational open space available for public use. About 4 hectares or 5% is available through the dual use of educational facilities.
- 7.5 However, these NPFA standards fail to take account of any vagaries in the demand and type of usage of facilities required in the District, nor do they account for any locational factors in their distribution. Therefore, the Local Plan, whilst striving to increase both the amount and type of facilities in order to achieve national standards, will also advance proposals and policies based on a more detailed demand led assessment of facilities.

- 7.6 An important resource within the District, in terms of public open space will be the Great North Forest. With regard to recreation and leisure the aim is to create a robust and attractive well wooded and easily accessed countryside, equipped, managed and promoted to cater for a wide range of appropriate sport, recreation and leisure activities. The Great North Forest will clearly be a major resource for both informal low key activities such as jogging and walking, as well as more active sport and recreation.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

7.7 Therefore the Local Plan aims to:-

- i) ensure that there is sufficient opportunity for all members of the community to participate in some form of leisure activity;
- ii) encourage greater public use of all facilities in the District and to promote opportunities to explore the countryside of the District, in ways which do not impair its value;
- iii) protect and improve existing recreational space and facilities;
- iv) identify and respond to shortfalls in provision in relation to identifiable local needs;
- v) ensure that any environmental impact of recreation and leisure provision is sustainable;
- vi) continue support for the Riverside development, the Great North Forest and Sustrans;
- vii) encourage the retention of existing community facilities and make provision for new facilities to meet shortfalls in community services.

POLICIES

RL1 - SPORT AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES: GENERAL

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that the highest possible standards in the range, amount, distribution and quality of sport and leisure opportunities is achieved in order that all members of the community, including the disabled may enjoy access to these opportunities. This will be achieved through:-

- i) protection of existing leisure facilities, open spaces and rights of way;**
- ii) improvements of existing facilities, open spaces and rights of way;**
- iii) securing the creation of new recreation and leisure facilities; and**
- iv) provision of new facilities where appropriate opportunities arise or through planning obligations, as appropriate.**

New facilities, either individually or cumulatively, should not damage the character and appearance of the locality or the amenity of neighbouring land uses and must be consistent with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

RL2 - INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Proposals for indoor sporting and recreational facilities, through either the new development or the dual use of public buildings, will be permitted provided the following criteria are met:-

- i) the proposed development is not detrimental to the amenities enjoyed by occupiers of nearby properties;**
- ii) the proposed development is of a scale, character and appearance appropriate to its surroundings;**
- iii) the proposed development is accessible by public transport, cyclists and pedestrians;**
- iv) satisfactory parking provision can be provided in accordance with Appendix X; and**
- v) other relevant policies of the Local Plan are met.**

7.8 Increasing the range of sport and leisure facilities and open space within the District is very important. All contribute to the needs of residents and visitors for organised and informal recreation and provide a contrast to built up areas. Therefore, proposals which seek to create additional and complementary recreational facilities are to be encouraged, provided that they are appropriately located, both in residential areas and in the countryside.

7.9 Chester-le-Street District Council will use its development control powers to protect existing open space from development, to encourage new facilities with new development and to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation throughout the whole District. All new facilities should allow equal access for all people.

RL3 - PROTECTION OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AND SPORTING FACILITIES

Development which would result in the loss of any playing pitches, courts, greens, parks, amenity open space, allotments and rights of way will not be allowed unless:-

- i) the development is for new or improved facilities related to the use of the recreational land and will safeguard its use for future generations;**
- ii) suitable alternative provision is provided for, and established to an equal or higher standard by the developer before existing facilities are lost in line with Policies RL4, RL5 and RL6; or**
- iii) there is an identified excess in provision of a particular facility.**

- 7.10 The demand for recreational facilities is increasing, as illustrated by the recent ILAM study of Chester-le-Street. Because current standards of open space are below the National Playing Field Association accepted standards, it is important to safeguard existing facilities from development. Open space meets many different needs, which can broadly be summarised as recreational, visual, ecological or a combination of all three. Open spaces may also be of purely local importance or they may be of importance to the whole District.
- 7.11 Loss of such facilities should therefore be resisted, unless it can be shown that there is a suitable alternative facility within walking distance of the original that will continue to meet the demands of the same population. Before any development commences the relevant agencies will be consulted.

RL4 - STANDARDS FOR OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to accord with an overall standard of 2.4 hectares of recreational open space per 1000 population during the Plan period, of which 1.6 to 1.8 hectares will be formal provision for sports, 0.2 to 0.3 hectares will be equipped for children's use and 0.4 to 0.5 hectares will be for casual or informal play space within housing areas.

- 7.12 As a target for increasing public open space within the District, Chester-le-Street District Council has adopted the National Playing Fields Association '6 Acre' standard. Within the District measured against the NPFA standards a total of 127 hectares should be provided, 41 hectares above existing provision. It is therefore the aim of the Chester-le-Street Local Plan to increase the provision of open space within the district to the National Playing Fields Association standards by the end of the Plan period. This will be undertaken in association with the Leisure Services Division of the District Council in order to ensure that account is taken of local demography and provision of existing facilities.
- 7.13 This will be achieved through:-
- i) the use of planning agreements/obligations to provide open space on new residential developments;
 - ii) encouraging greater use of educational and private recreational facilities by the public;
 - iii) creating new open spaces where opportunities arise particularly in land reclamation and environmental improvement schemes; and
 - iv) protecting existing sports and recreation facilities from loss through development.

RL5 - OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION PROVISION IN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Subject to dwelling sizes and types proposed, the level of local provision, and negotiation with Chester-le-Street District Council:-

- i) the requirements for every 1 hectare of land developed or redeveloped for residential purposes, will be that at least 125 square metres of equipped children's play space and 250 square metres for informal open space be provided within the site;
- ii) on sites of under 1 hectare a proportion of this standard will be expected within the site. The balance between different types of provision will reflect dwelling size and type. Smaller developments which cannot make effective provision for all types of open space should normally give priority to provision for children's play. All children's play areas must be provided in accordance with guidelines specified in Appendix V and in keeping with current national guidelines;
- iii) open space for sporting use, of at least 1000 square metres per hectare developed or redeveloped should be provided within or adjacent to the site.

As an alternative to on-site provision for childrens' play and open space for sporting use, where appropriate, a developer may make a commuted payment to Chester-le-Street District Council for off-site provision. A planning condition and/or planning obligation will be sought where necessary.

7.14 New residential development places additional demand on recreation facilities. This policy is designed to ensure that new facilities meet the particular needs of the development and the surrounding locality. Children's play areas are very important and will therefore be given priority. Such play areas should be sited within the development in order to maximise security and surveillance and to avoid any child having to cross a main road to reach them.

7.15 In more specialised forms of housing development such as single or elderly persons dwellings the emphasis will be more on the provision of amenity open space.

7.16 Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage all developers to enter into negotiation at the earliest possible stage in order to discuss open space liability and the most effective way of securing provision. In terms of all off site open space provision the key test is whether the residents of the proposed development would be served satisfactorily by such a provision.

RL6 - MAINTENANCE OF NEW OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Where required to adopt recreational facilities provided in association with new residential development under Policy RL5, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek through an appropriate planning condition and/or planning obligation, to ensure that the land and facilities so provided will be maintained for a period of ten years.

7.17 It is generally accepted that it is reasonable when providing recreation facilities, exclusively or primarily for the benefits of residents that the

maintenance costs of those facilities should be met by the developers. If the developer chooses to make private arrangements for maintenance Chester-le-Street District Council will seek a formal planning agreement requiring maintenance to a reasonable and safe standard. However, if Chester-le-Street District Council is asked to adopt such facilities a commuted sum will be sought to cover the maintenance costs for ten years. Further guidance is provided in Appendix V.

RL7 - DEGRADED AREAS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to improve those areas of public open space that have fallen into disrepair in order to enhance their appearance and safety. In doing so, due regard will be paid to any nature conservation interest of the site which may have developed during the period of dereliction.

7.18 Within the District there are a few areas of public open space that have fallen into disrepair and have a general air of neglect. Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that all areas requiring improvement are identified, and carry out such work through different schemes and working with appropriate agencies.

RL8 - RIVERSIDE: CULTURAL AND LEISURE FACILITIES

Chester-le-Street District Council will allow new cultural and leisure facilities in the Riverside areas of Ropery Lane except that:-

- i) no buildings will be approved within 120 metres of the north and south side of Ropery Lane;**
- ii) no other permanent structures over 2.5 metres in height (other than street lighting and equipment for the safety and security of users) will be approved within 120 metres of the north and south side of Ropery Lane.**

7.19 It is important to limit built development either side of Ropery Lane to maintain views of, and the setting for, Lumley Castle. The nearest built development south of Ropery Lane – the Sea Cadets and Rowing Club building – is 120 metres from the carriageway and it is appropriate to limit development within a similar distance of the north side of Ropery Lane. Within this area no buildings should be allowed and fencing and other structures (eg children’s play equipment and other security features) should be limited to less than 2.5 metres high – although lighting in excess of that height may be required.

RL9 - RECREATION AND OUTDOOR SPORTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Development related to the quiet enjoyment of the open countryside for informal recreation, or for sports activities which require a countryside location will be permitted as long as they do not:-

- i) damage the character and appearance of the countryside or the amenity of neighbouring residential properties;**

- ii) **cause the damage or disturbance of public rights of way and other recreation facilities;**
- iii) **damage those flora, fauna, geological or geomorphological features and wildlife corridors protected under the Natural Environment policies of the Local Plan;**
- iv) **cause irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land; or**
- v) **result in the loss of the economic viability of farm business.**

Associated improvements to the wider infrastructure of the countryside, such as footpaths will be sought to accommodate any pressures generated from development.

7.20 Recreation in the countryside is an important pastime for many members of the community. It is used for a wide variety of leisure pursuits but most particularly, walking, cycling, golf and horse riding. For the most part activities are related to the simple quiet enjoyment of the countryside and therefore pose no threat to its character or amenity. However, some activities may be organised sports that require planning permission and may be potentially damaging.

7.21 Recreational development which requires a countryside location must therefore fulfil all the criteria above as well as being, in principle, acceptable under the terms of Policy NE2. This approach is important in protecting both landscape value and amenity, nature conservation interest, and ensuring that development that does not need to be outside the built up area is discouraged.

RL10 - RECREATION AND OUTDOOR SPORTS IN THE GREEN BELT

Within the Green Belt permission for outdoor participatory sports and recreation uses will be granted provided that:-

- i) **the uses are predominantly participatory and outdoor;**
- ii) **ancillary facilities (clubhouses, bars, car parking, etc) are small in scale, and essential in that they do not exceed what is necessary for users of the leisure facilities;**
- iii) **the proposed development would not harm the visual amenities of the Green Belt, or lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements; and**
- iv) **the proposals fulfil the criteria in Policies NE4 and RL10.**

7.22 PPG2 states that once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:-

- i) to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population; and
- ii) to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas.

7.23 Most outdoor sports facilities need to be located within easy reach of the people that use the facility and can therefore be located on the outskirts of towns as long as the location meets accessibility requirements. PPG17 states that 'outdoor sport' is one of the uses of land which will often be appropriate on Green Belt land. In very special circumstances such sport may require the construction of small ancillary buildings, unobtrusive spectator accommodation, or other essential facilities. On the outskirts of the built up area, within the Green Belt these sports fields and facilities will form a useful buffer between residential and agricultural use, serving to strengthen the settlement limit itself and perhaps offering a means of environmental improvements.

RL11 - EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

Proposals for development related to the keeping and riding of horses will, with the exception of residential use, be permitted in the countryside provided that:-

- i) new facilities are of an appropriate scale, are situated next to existing buildings, and do not detract from the landscape;**
- ii) the number of stables proposed and the number of horses to be grazed relate to the amount of grazing land available;**
- iii) new commercial establishments where trekking facilities are needed are in close proximity to existing bridleways. Other types of commercial establishments should either be close to bridleways or make provision within the scheme to adequately exercise horses;**
- iv) new commercial establishments are close to existing residential accommodation which will allow proper supervision at all times; and**
- v) the proposals fulfil the criteria of Policies NE4 and RL10.**

7.24 Horse riding is an increasingly popular recreational activity within the District, particularly on those stretches of the C2C cycle route that are available to horse riders. However, the keeping of horses either privately or commercially can have an impact on the countryside through sites that appear intrusive and unkempt. On the other hand some ventures may be beneficial in providing a new use for under used farmland or by providing employment opportunities in the countryside.

7.25 Therefore, proposals for commercial developments must have regard to the environment. They must not impact on the character and amenity of the local environment and applicants will be required to show they have sufficient land available to them to avoid overuse and possible damage to the land. Chester-

le-Street District Council will have regard to the recommended standards for the comfort and safety of horses in considering development proposals.

- 7.26 Chester-le-Street District Council does not consider that, unless in exceptional circumstances, there is any need for residential development associated with these developments.

RL12 - ALLOTMENT GARDENS

Chester-le-Street District Council will endeavour to carry out improvements to existing allotment areas and to implement rationalisation of those allotments for which there is no demand or that have remained unused for some time.

Existing sites that are in use will be protected from development and rationalisation in accordance with Policy RL3.

- 7.27 Within the urban part of the District, allotments perform an important recreational function. There are currently eight officially recognised areas of allotment gardens run by Chester-le-Street District Council, although all the Parish Councils operate their own allotments.

- 7.28 Of the District Council run allotment sites occupation rates are as follows:-

Park Road South	12 plots	92% occupied
Newcastle Bank	54 plots	100% occupied
Station View	12 plots	100% occupied
Stella Gill	28 plots	82% occupied
The Race, South Pelaw	16 plots	88% occupied
Crichton Avenue	9 plots	100% occupied
Red Rose	11 plots	91% occupied

- 7.29 Chester-le-Street District Council will undertake consultations with Parish Councils in order to identify any other allotment sites in which there may be scope for rationalisation.

- 7.30 Some of those allotments that remain occupied can sometimes appear unsightly and unkempt. Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to identify those areas that need to be improved and then ensure that stringent management is carried out to restrict unauthorised building and limit other building to give proper control to the appearance of the site in association with the Parish Councils.

RL13 - RECREATIONAL SPACE PROVISION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Where open space and landscaping is to be provided in association with new development, developers may, where appropriate, be asked to link these recreational spaces to existing open spaces and paths to create continuous recreational routes.

RL14 - THE WEARDALE WAY

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to maintain and enhance the Weardale Way as a recreational route between the Riverside and Durham City.

7.31 Durham County Council is the authority responsible for maintaining and protecting public rights of way. Chester-le-Street District Council will therefore work with Durham County Council and developers in order to put together schemes for continuous recreational routes within the District, in order to increase opportunities for all residents and visitors to enjoy the countryside. This will include, wherever possible access for cyclists and horse riders as well as pedestrians.

7.32 The existing network is also very important and Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that it is safeguarded against future development (see Policy TM10).

RL15 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Outside the defined settlement boundary of Chester-le-Street, proposals for the change of use of buildings which house a community facility (for these purposes 'community facilities' are defined as schools, village stores and post offices, public houses, doctors surgeries/clinics, places of worship and village halls) will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:-

- i) the facility is no longer viable;**
- ii) there is no demand for the facility within the locality; and**
- iii) equivalent alternative facilities will be provided nearby.**

7.33 Buildings in rural areas usually perform a dual role in terms of providing both social and community facilities, as well as being a source of rural employment.

7.34 The availability of facilities such as schools, village stores, public houses, doctors surgeries, places of worship and village halls in the rural areas of the District are vital for the well being of both communities and also the wider environment. Access to such facilities is particularly important for those people without private transport available to them. These services are also a key factor in the development and maintenance of village communities. Such facilities are essential to the quality of life for village residents.

7.35 Additionally, the availability of local services reduces the reliance on the private car to obtain such services and, reduces CO2 and other harmful emissions. PPG13 encourages the establishment of local centres to include

community and shopping facilities as a means of reducing the need to travel. However, there is often strong pressure to convert these buildings which house those facilities to other, predominantly residential uses.

- 7.36 The District Council will strongly resist all proposals for the change of use of buildings from community facilities unless it can be adequately demonstrated that the community facility is either no longer financially viable and/or there is no demand for the facility within the area, or that equivalent alternative facilities can be provided nearby.
- 7.37 The applicant/developer will be expected to advertise the site on the open market at least four times at roughly equal periods for a minimum of twelve months at a value reflecting its current use and providing that no reasonable offer has been refused before Chester-le-Street will consider a change of use.
- 7.38 Lack of financial viability and lack of demand for the community facility in the area and/or the subsequent marketing of the facility, is more likely to be sufficiently demonstrated where these factors can be substantiated by an independent professional body and/or an independent firm of Chartered Surveyors.

Chapter Eight

Tourism

CHAPTER EIGHT

TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 Tourism can contribute greatly to the economic growth of the District. It is labour intensive, and the income derived from it helps to support existing businesses and create new jobs in the service sector. Tourism already plays an important role in County Durham's economy. At present, County Durham attracts some 800,000 visitors per annum spending some £217 million in the area which supports approximately 7,000 jobs in the tourism industry.
- 8.2 Chester-le-Street District's location close to the A1(M), Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham make it a good location to attract both business and leisure visitors. Durham Cathedral and Hadrian's Wall (both World Heritage Sites) are within easy reach of the District, as is the Metro Centre. Within the District Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum is a popular visitor attraction, with 385,641 visitors in 1993. The District also boasts a proud Roman, Christian, Industrial and Social heritage and a variety of sporting activities including walking, cycling, orienteering, golf and fishing.
- 8.3 To make the District a more attractive place for visitors, major initiatives are underway to improve facilities in the Town Centre and the adjacent Riverside area. The aim is to make the most of the area's heritage and the attractive environment along the River Wear near Lumley Castle and to build on the recent Riverside initiative to develop the first Test Match quality Cricket Ground in Britain for over a century.
- 8.4 The Riverside area is a 'gateway' site within the Great North Forest area, which has an important role in developing access to the countryside and promoting sustainable development in the District. Chester-le-Street District Council recognises that the fortunes of tourism and the environment are closely linked. Without an attractive environment, tourism could not flourish and be sustained. Similarly, without tourism our ability to conserve our heritage and maintain the environment would be weakened.

TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

- 8.5 The District of Chester-le-Street has one hotel (Lumley Castle), and a further eleven tourist accommodation establishments comprising either guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, or self catering accommodation, including one caravan park and one camping and caravanning site.

PICNIC AREAS AND COUNTRY PARKS

8.6 There are five picnic areas with car parks in the District, at Eden Hill, Fulforth Dene, Riverside Park, the wildlife area of the new Riverside development and in part, the James Steel Park, Chartershough, Washington. There is one Country Park with car parking facilities at Waldridge Fell.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

8.7 A healthy tourism industry is vital for our well being.

8.8 Sustainable tourism involves:

- i) ensuring that all new tourism activities and developments respect the nature, scale and character of the place in which they are sited;
- ii) ensuring that tourism development in any location maintains harmony between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community; and
- iii) ensuring that the provision of tourist facilities within the District assist in the purpose of conservation and recreation.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

8.9 The District Wide Local Plan aims to:

- i) spread tourism throughout the year by diversifying opportunities for tourism in all sectors of the economy and promoting all the varied aspects of the District;
- ii) promote in all tourism developments, facilities and activities, the principle of sustainable or green tourism so that they maximise economic potential and minimise impact. This will also mean ensuring that all tourism development maintains harmony between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community and that the provision of all tourist facilities within the District, assists in the purpose of conservation and recreation for local residents and visitors;
- iii) encourage the provision of facilities for tourist use, including new forms of accommodation, as long as they do not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside, landscape, wildlife or the amenity of local residents.

POLICIES

TM1 - BEAMISH OPEN AIR MUSEUM

Chester-le-Street District Council will continue to support the aims of Beamish – the North of England Open Air Museum. Development within the Museum, as defined on the Proposals Map, in association with the provision of new tourist and recreational facilities will be permitted provided that:-

- i) the proposal does not have an unacceptable impact within or adjoining any site of nature conservation importance within Policies NE8 and NE10;**
- ii) the proposal does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of nearby residents or other adjoining land-uses;**
- iii) the proposed development, by reason of scale and design, layout and materials respects the character and appearance of the open countryside and integrity of the AHLV; and**
- iv) the proposed development does not conflict with policy NE6 and other relevant policies of the Local Planning Services Manager**

(TM8)

8.10 Beamish is a living museum whose prime task is to explain and educate. In 1993 385,641 people visited the Museum making it the most popular charging attraction in the Northumbria region. The subject of the Museum is the recent history of the north-east of England – what life was like in the years immediately before the First World War. The buildings in the Museum have been rescued from all over the region and rebuilt. They are filled out with appropriate objects and machinery.

8.11 But Beamish Museum is not complete. There are many more projects planned, new buildings, displays, extension of the farm track, and the development of Pockerley Farm. Even when all these projects are finished there will still be many schemes planned that will take Beamish well into the twenty first century. The setting of Beamish Museum is both special and unique – the site not only lies in the Causey Arch Area of High Landscape Value, but is also bounded by Forgebank Woods County Wildlife Site to the east, and the Tyne and Wear Green Belt and proposed North Durham Green Belt to the north and east. Any proposals for development must therefore accord with Policies NE6, NE8 and NE10.

8.12 Chester-le-Street District Council must be prepared to play an enabling role in the continuing development of the Museum, in order that the benefits Beamish Museum brings in can be passed on to the surrounding areas, in terms of employment, increased spending, environmental improvements and in order to enhance the profile of the District within a regional/national context.

TM2 - GREAT NORTH FOREST

Chester-le-Street District Council will support the long term strategy for the implementation of a Community Forest in the North East. Development that is permitted within the Great North Forest, as defined on the Proposals Map, would be required to support the long term Forest Plan strategy and objectives of, where appropriate:-

- i) providing for the retention and restoration of existing trees, hedges and woodland;**
- ii) providing for the integration of woodland planting into the development;**
- iii) protecting high quality landscape and improving the landscape of the area;**
- iv) protecting sites of ecological value and creating new opportunities for nature conservation;**
- v) providing opportunities for the diversification of farm business;**
- vi) increasing opportunities for employment, access, leisure, recreation, artistic, cultural and educational activities compatible with the Great North Forest objectives set out at Appendix VI and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

Where relevant, in its consideration of applications within the Great North Forest, Chester-le-Street District Council will require proposals to be accompanied by appropriate landscaping and planting details.

(NE2, NE4, HP4, HP6-HP8, IN1-IN10, AG4, AG11, T2)

8.13 The Great North forest is a Community Forest Project with the principle aim of creating a well-wooded landscape, to improve the appearance of many open areas around built up areas, providing opportunities for leisure activities, a natural history resource and a timber crop. Its main objectives are set out at Appendix VI.

8.14 Launched in 1989, it now covers an area of 96 square miles across Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside and the north of County Durham (including much of the Chester-le-Street District). The Forest Plan, published in January 1994, is prepared by the Great North Forest and is a guide for the long term development of the Forest area. It has subsequently been adopted by the District council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Although this is a non-statutory plan, it is a material consideration in determining proposals for development within the Forest area. The Forest Plan arranges the District into two broad Local Management Zones, within which, smaller more localised zones are identified which can overlap into other administrative areas. These are:-

- i) Western Hills – made up of the “Beamish Parkland”, the “West Pelton Hills”, “Congburn/Twizell Dene” and the “Ouston Hills” management zones
- ii) The Central Lowlands – made up of the “Team Valley”, Wear Valley”, Chester Riverside”, “Lumley Parkland”, the “Sedgeleth Fringe” and “Rainton Farmland” management zones.

Each local management zone contains a broad implementation strategy and is detailed in the Forest Plan.

- 8.15 The majority of the land within the Great North Forest is privately owned and is largely used for agricultural purposes. Efficient and productive farming will continue to play an essential role within the Forest area in relation to the landscape, wildlife and recreation zone. In terms of the leisure potential of the Forest, the aim is to create a robust and attractive well wooded countryside equipped, managed and promoted to cater for a wide range of appropriate sport, recreation and leisure activities. However, urban fringe pressures do exist such as vandalism, theft and trespass as a result of the close juxtaposition of urban areas and farmland. Implementation of the Forest strategies would provide opportunities to maximise such pressures through for example, the provision of woodland buffer zones designed to absorb public pressure and the promotion of managed access to working farms to increase public awareness and respect for the countryside and its ongoing activities.
- 8.16 It is envisaged that the aims and objectives of the Forest Plan will be achieved through agreement and negotiation with land owners either on a voluntary basis or through planning obligations as and when acceptable development opportunities come forward. Land acquisition is also a major mechanism for achieving the aims and objectives of the Great North Forest. Grant schemes and access agreements will further assist in delivering these objectives. Countryside Stewardship, Woodland Grant Schemes and the Landfill Tax are current examples of grant schemes available.
- 8.17 By its very nature, the creation of the Great North Forest will be a long term project. Once established, the Forest is not intended to stifle development in appropriate locations for suitable development schemes. It will of necessity include extensive areas of open space and clearings.
- 8.18 Development which seeks to contribute to the establishment of the Great North Forest must comply with other policies within the Local Plan including those concerning the Green Belt. Planning permission for inappropriate developments will not be granted simply because applicants are prepared to plant trees or otherwise assist the implementation of the Forest Plan.

TM3 - NEW TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

Chester-le-Street District Council will only grant planning permission for new purpose built tourist accommodation within settlement boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, if they are compatible with other policies in the Local Plan especially those concerned with conservation of landscape and other environmental considerations, and if they fulfil the design guidelines and access requirements laid out in Appendix X.

New visitor accommodation within the countryside will be limited to the conversion of existing buildings or extensions to existing accommodation providing that they:-

- i) are compatible with Policies AG6, AG8 and other relevant Policies in the Local Plan; and**
- ii) fulfil the design guidelines and access requirements laid out in Appendix X.**

(NE13, AG8)

8.19 New visitor accommodation is important in attracting tourists to the District. There must be a wide range of facilities available to cater for all tourists. However, new developments can be intrusive and can affect the intrinsic landscape quality surrounding them. Therefore, it is expected that new tourist accommodation facilities will be found within the development limits of towns and villages in order to draw upon the services offered and minimise the visual impact of new development. It is also likely that they will benefit from better access.

8.20 New visitor accommodation within the countryside will be limited to the change of use of existing buildings and the re-use of buildings, as well as the extension of existing tourist accommodation. This will provide both a wider range of facilities for tourists as well as an opportunity for rural diversification. It is important that such re-use should be in keeping with the architectural quality of the surrounding buildings and that any extension should be well related to the design and scale of the building.

TM4 - CAMPING, CARAVANNING AND HOLIDAY CHALETS

Proposals for new and extensions to existing sites for chalets, camping and caravanning (both static and touring) will not be permitted in the Green Belt. Elsewhere, proposals will be permitted providing that

- i) they are adequately screened all year round, preferably by existing vegetation and landform;**
- ii) they do not adversely affect the amenity of local residents;**
- iii) an adequate colouring and landscaped scheme for the site is submitted with the proposal;**

- iv) **they do not conflict with Policies NE13, AG8 and other relevant policies in the Local Plan;**
- v) **they are not located within or adjoining a SSSI or SNCI;**
- vi) **in the case of a caravan or chalet sites in an AHLV, they would not result in sites of more than five caravans/chalets; and**
- vi) **they fulfil the design guidelines and access/parking requirements laid out in Appendices VII and X respectively.**

8.21 Demand for country based recreational and tourism facilities is increasing. Proposals can exhibit a great range in both size, visitor numbers and impact upon their environment. Caravans, both static and touring, can meet a demand for less formal rural based accommodation. However, static caravan sites and chalets due to their permanent nature are often intrusive giving the impression of a permanently developed area. This conflicts with the fundamental aim of the Green Belt policy which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The most important attribute of the Green Belt is its openness and therefore proposals for new or extensions to existing static caravan or chalet sites will not be permitted within it.

8.22 Chalets and static/touring caravan sites will be resisted in sensitive and prominent locations of the Areas of Landscape Value. Therefore only small sites will be permitted with up to a maximum of five caravans/chalets. Elsewhere, where this development is acceptable, such accommodation needs to be well sited in the landscape and adequately screened by natural planting all year round to integrate the caravans with their environment.

TM5 - REPLACEMENT OF STATIC CARAVANS

Chester-le-Street District Council will permit the replacement of caravans with chalets within existing caravan parks providing that:-

- i) **they can be absorbed into the landscape by taking advantage of natural features such as existing tree cover and/or topography;**
- ii) **they fulfil the design guidelines and access requirements as laid out in Appendix VII and X respectively; and**
- ii) **are not contrary to other relevant policies in the Local Plan.**

8.23 Chalets are more easily integrated into the landscape because of their use of more traditional building materials and their high degree of permanence. Because they can be used all the year round they can promote a longer holiday season for the District. Therefore, proposals to replace caravans with chalets, will be encouraged. However, all proposals for the development of chalets will be subject to an occupancy condition.

TM6 - CARAVAN STORAGE

Except in the Green Belt Chester-le-Street District Council will approve sites for caravan storage providing that they:-

- i) are adequately screened all year round;**
- ii) have a satisfactory means of access;**
- iii) do not affect the amenity of local residents; and**
- iv) do not conflict with other relevant Local Plan policies and Appendix VII.**

8.24 Caravan storage sites are very useful because they remove caravans from residential areas where they can often be unsightly. They also provide caravan owners with a secure area in which to store their caravan. They therefore need to be secure, have good access and be well screened throughout the year.

TM7 - SHORT TERM OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

All proposals for static caravans, chalets, holiday cottages and the conversion of rural buildings to holiday accommodation will be subject to a planning condition or the applicant agreeing to enter into a planning obligation limiting occupation by any one person or group to not more than six months in any twelve month period. Planning applications for the removal of occupancy conditions which prevent permanent residential use will only be permitted in locations where permanent residential use is appropriate.

8.25 It is important to ensure that holiday accommodation is available solely, for the tourist industry. In order to safeguard the accommodation for tourist use only, a six month occupancy condition will be imposed on all proposed holiday accommodation in the District. This means that an individual can use the accommodation for a maximum of six months in a twelve month period. It will also ensure that the unit will not become a permanent home in the countryside which would have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area and set a dangerous precedent for allowing new building in the countryside.

TM8 - TOURISM AROUND THE DISTRICT

Chester-le-Street District Council will work towards the improvement and expansion of tourist facilities throughout the District where this is compatible with the other policies of the Local Plan, particularly those concerning environmental and landscape conservation objectives.

8.26 Chester-le-Street District Council recognises that tourism performs a major task in attracting inward investment and in providing local income and employment. At the same time, the environment of the District is the attraction, which stimulates tourism, and as such must be protected and conserved as an asset for its own innate quality, and means sought to enhance its value.

TM9 - RIVERSIDE

Chester-le-Street District Council will continue to promote the sustainable development of the Riverside area for cultural, sporting and leisure facilities, and as a gateway to the wider countryside of the Great North Forest.

(NE6-NE10, NE13, BE9, BE17, RL9, TM2, T2)

8.27 Planning approval has been granted, as part of the Cricket Ground development, for various visitor facilities including: -

- i) hospitality boxes;
- ii) bars, restaurants and a banqueting suite;
- iii) offices and limited ancillary shopping facilities;
- iv) a museum, or a theatre, or a conference hall or a sports hall.

8.28 Progress on the development of these facilities, which will encourage the lengthening of the tourist season and provide related attractions to cricket matches, is dependent on the success of the Cricket Ground in attracting private and public funding. The facilities approved within the cricket ground are complementary to the outdoor sports and leisure facilities created by Chester-le-Street District Council adjacent to the ground. These include:-

- i) 2 kilometres of Riverside multi-user routes;
- ii) a wildlife area covering 11 hectares;
- iii) facilities for river sports (fishing, canoeing etc); and
- iv) 10 hectares of facilities for outdoor sports: football, hockey, tennis, athletics, rugby and other similar activities.

8.29 Further developments for cultural and leisure facilities are proposed at the Riverside, north of Ropery Lane and east of the river. In accordance with Policy BE17, in all new development proposals, the setting of Lumley Castle (a Grade 1 listed building) will be safeguarded.

8.30 North of Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street Council has proposals to develop new gardens, an events arena, children's play and a visitor centre.

8.31 The future of the River Wear catchment will need a co-operative approach involving all interested parties. The Catchment Management Plan (CMP) which, through an integrated approach, seeks to protect and enhance the River Wear catchment, will allow the sustainable use of the water environment and ensure that future generations enjoy the River and its wildlife.

8.32 Lumley Castle and its grounds provide an impressive backdrop to the Riverside area. In promoting future associated developments, great importance will be given to safeguarding the settings of both the Grade 1

Listed Building and the Estate's proposed designation as an Historic Park and Garden.

TM10 - EXISTING RIGHTS OF WAY

Chester-le-Street District Council will, along with Parish Councils, Durham County Council and the Great North Forest, continue to maintain and upgrade the existing rights of way network within the District. In appropriate circumstances, extensions to the existing network and the creation of new routes will be promoted

8.33 The rights of way network represents an important resource in terms of accessing the countryside within the district. Whilst the network is, compared to some parts of the County, in a relatively good state of upkeep, there are parts of the network that need to be upgraded and improved in order to provide a comprehensive network of public footpaths, bridle ways and byways. Chester-le-Street District Council will work with landowners to encourage and promote maintenance of the existing rights of way network, that run through agricultural land. Where feasible, the network will be made accessible to as many people as possible, including the disabled and parents with young children.

TM11 - THE COAST TO COAST ROUTE

Chester-le-Street District Council will continue to support the Sustrans C2C Cycle Route to the north of the District and will aim to provide a link from the route into Chester-le-Street town centre in order to provide access for visiting cyclists and local residents.

(T2)

8.34 The Sustrans route has expanded considerably since its conception in 1985 as the Consett to Sunderland Cycle Route. In the summer of 1994 the route was incorporated into the Coast-to-Coast cycle route running from Whitehaven to Sunderland and hopefully to Copenhagen. This route has proved extremely popular with cyclists from all over the United Kingdom and Europe. A link from the Sustrans route to Chester-le-Street Town Centre that is both safe and accessible is therefore very important in attracting visitors into Chester-le-Street. It also provides an ideal opportunity to link together the present Sustrans route with the Riverside and Beamish in order to attract users of the Coast-to-Coast to stay longer in the District.

TM12 - RIGHTS OF WAY INFORMATION

Chester-le-Street District Council in collaboration with other groups and organisations, will actively encourage the improved waymarking of public rights of way and the installation of interpretative information for new and existing sites of tourist interest.

8.35 Chester-le-Street District Council recognises the importance of promoting and popularising sites of tourist interest within the District, in order that both tourists and local residents are aware of them and will use them. The way

markers and interpretive information will need to be unique to the District, to provide a sense of identity and a local context.

TM13 - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Chester-le-Street District Council will actively promote environmental improvements to the railway station and main routes through the District.

(NE18, T1, T4)

8.36 The first impression of the District can leave a lasting impact on any visitor. The A1(M), the A693, the A167 and the East Coast Main Line railway are primary traffic routes running through the District. It is improvement therefore that environmental improvements be continued along these traffic corridors. Similarly the railway station is, for many people their first contact with the District and it too must be improved in order to ensure a good first impression. Environmental improvements will also be undertaken in all those areas of the District that are clearly visible to tourists and visitors.

TM14 - NEW HERITAGE TRAILS

Chester-le-Street District Council will devise and market a 'heritage trail' around Chester-le-Street, which will take in the Roman, Christian, Industrial, Social and Cultural heritage of the District.

8.37 The heritage of the District is a valuable asset for both tourism and the local residents. Parts of its heritage are well know, for example, the District's industrial past. Other areas such as its Christian and Roman heritage are less well known, but represent a vital element in the formation of the District. A heritage trail will combine all these elements and encourage a different image of Chester-le-Street than currently prevails.

Chapter Nine

Agriculture

CHAPTER NINE **AGRICULTURE**

INTRODUCTION

- 9.1 The District of Chester-le-Street is approximately 6,900 hectares in area, of which 5,200 hectares (76%) is agriculture land. Urban development covers 1,400 hectares (20%), the remaining 300 hectares (4%) being in other uses such as woodland and quarries.
- 9.2 The District's lowland character places it in one of the most favoured parts of the County for agriculture. MAFF's Agriculture Land Classification identifies Grades 1, 2 and 3a as the best and most versatile land. Whilst the District has no Grade 1 land it has only 3.3% Grade 2 land compared to a countywide average of 3.1%.
- 9.3 The lighter textured alluvial soils close to the river Wear are better drained. They are more flexible allowing a greater range of crops to be successfully grown. Whilst this area represents only 3.3% of the District, it is located in a well-defined geographic area and may be vulnerable to development pressures from nearby Chester-le-Street.
- 9.4 Most of the farms in the District fall into the lowland grazing or the lowland arable categories. The term trends for the predominant farming types in the District indicate modest farm incomes with limited resources being generated by the farming businesses for reinvestment. The imposition of quotas on beef and sheep enterprises together with set-a-side restricts farmers potential for expansion. It therefore seems unlikely that returns from farming are likely to significantly exceed their present levels in the in the long term. Further rationalisation of farming businesses and increasing diversification into non-agriculture enterprises is likely to continue.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 9.5 The aims of the Local Plan are therefore to:-
- i) protect the best and most versatile agriculture land;
 - ii) give sympathetic consideration to proposals for farms diversification; and
 - iii) minimise the adverse effects of new development on agriculture land.

POLICIES

AG1 - PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Development that would result in the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted.

(NE2)

AG2 - USE OF ALLOCATED AGRICULTURAL LAND

Where agricultural land of whatever grade is allocated for development during the Plan period it should be kept in agricultural use, or in a temporary use acceptable under AG4 and other relevant policies of the Plan, until it is required for development purposes.

(HP5, IN1)

- 9.6 PPG7 (Revised) confirms that the best and most versatile agricultural land has a special importance as a long term national resource and considerable weight has to be given to its protection from development because of its special importance. The small proportion of Grade 2 land within the District is located close to existing urban development and may therefore be at risk. The true extent of grade 3a land is not known and detailed survey work must be undertaken in order that development proposals do not cause the loss of such land. Because of the national interest in protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land, the local planning authority is required to consult MAFF about any development that does not accord with the development plan and which involves or is likely to lead to, the loss of more than 20 hectares of agricultural land of Grades 1, 2 and 3a. However, Chester-le-Street District Council will continue to consult with MAFF on all applications, even if sites are less than 20 hectares, where it is considered to involve the loss of any grade 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land.
- 9.7 Where sites on agricultural land are designated for long term development a suitable phasing scheme will be required so that agricultural land can be kept in production for as long as possible. There may, however, be some instances where other sustainable uses of a temporary nature can be accommodated on agricultural land which can supply alternative sources of income, without sterilising the land for development proposals over the Plan period. Other instances where it may be appropriate are for schemes which encourage advance tree planting and similar work to ensure the establishment of a strong landscape framework prior to new construction.

AG3 - AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Chester-le-Street District Council will permit development for agricultural purposes, provided that the proposals fulfil the following criteria:-

- i) any nature conservation interest of the site is taken into account;**
- ii) the siting should seek to minimise the visual impact of the building;**
- iii) the new building should relate to the overall form of any adjacent existing steading;**
- iv) where the new building will be prominent the design and materials used in its construction shall reflect the character of the setting;**

- v) **the development would not significantly pollute the environment with dust or noise emissions, outflow or discharge of any kind; and**
- vi) **the development is in accordance with the siting and design guidelines outlined in Appendix VIII.**

(NE7, NE8, NE9, NE10, NE12)

9.8 Planning permission may be required for new agricultural buildings. New farm buildings must be sited on land, which is in use for agriculture for the purpose of trade or business, and must be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within an agricultural unit, which is at least 5 hectares in area. The local planning authority must be notified in advance of the intended exercise of permitted development rights to undertake new farm and forestry buildings and significant extensions and alterations. Some buildings can have considerable impact on the landscape and care is needed to ensure that this impact is minimised. In ensuring that any impact on the landscape is diminished, all elements of siting, design and materials used in the construction of modern agricultural buildings must be considered.

AG4 - FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Chester-le-Street District Council will permit development that involves proposals to diversify farm businesses provided that:-

- i) **they can be readily assimilated into the landscape;**
- ii) **they do not conflict with other land use policies or with the criteria of Policies AG3 and AG6;**
- iii) **the proposal would not lead to an increase in the level of traffic on roads, cause access, parking or highway problems or require road improvements which would be harmful to the rural location; and**
- iv) **they comply with the Durham County Council parking standards contained in Appendix X.**

9.9 Over the past thirty years there has been a period of considerable change in the rural areas of England and Wales. There has been a loss of younger population, and a change in the nature of employment with declining opportunities in agriculture and traditional employment such as mining and quarrying. For the first time this century, land is being taken out of production and landowners are having to look at a range of options for the economic use of their land. Agriculture will not be the main source of employment in the rural economy. The range of industries that can be successfully located in rural areas is expanding. There are often opportunities for re-using or adapting existing rural buildings for new uses.

9.10 Within the District there has been a large reduction in the full time agricultural workforce. This, combined with continuing adverse economic conditions on many farms, makes the search for alternative sources of income and new forms of employment in the countryside imperative.

9.11 The District is in a good position, in terms of a large customer base, to exploit this potential and promote farm diversification enterprises. Alternative enterprises can make a significant contribution to the overall income of a farm and help its survival as an economically sustainable business. They may also create new employment opportunities in rural areas and benefit other rural businesses. In addition members of the public are afforded opportunities to gain access to the countryside.

AG5 - FARM SHOPS AND HORTICULTURAL NURSERIES

Where planning permission is required for retail developments associated with horticultural nurseries and farm shops, Chester-le-Street District Council will permit proposals provided that:-

- i) the enterprise is predominantly concerned with the sale of fresh produce, speciality regional foods and local craft products, primarily produced in the locality;**
- ii) the proposal does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the landscape quality of the area;**
- iii) the proposal does not result in a significant adverse effect on nearby village shops;**
- iv) the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable increase in the level of traffic on local roads, cause access, parking or highway safety problems and require road improvements which would be harmful to the rural environment; and**
- v) the proposal fulfils the criteria in Policies AG3, AG4, AG6 and AG8.**

(R23)

9.12 By their very nature farm shops and horticultural nurseries require a countryside location. Development should be located so as to be readily assimilated into the landscape, not detract from the appearance of the area or have an adverse impact on the appearance of the area or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and not cause problems resulting from traffic generation.

9.13 It is necessary to prevent unrestricted retailing in the countryside. A farm shop or horticultural nursery used only for the sale of unprocessed goods produced on that farm does not require planning permission. However, use as a farm shop or horticultural nursery selling a significant amount of produce 'imported' from elsewhere is a separate use and would therefore require planning permission. Chester-le-Street District Council does recognise that in order to provide a service throughout the year, farmers may have to bring in non-local produce to overcome the problems of seasonality, provide continuity of employment and ensure that a sufficiently wide selection of produce can be offered. Hence, Chester-le-Street District Council will consider up to 25% of the value of goods sold to be an appropriate level of imported (that is, non-

local) produce. The range of goods should also reflect the location of the farm on which they are found.

- 9.14 In cases where planning permission is required for a farm shop and horticultural nursery, conditions restricting the amount of imported produce or the type of goods sold may be applied as a control to the over intensification of uses which could have the cumulative effect of harming the vitality and viability of nearby shops, or Chester-le-Street District Council may impose conditions limiting the broad types of produce sold in the farm shop or horticultural nursery.

AG6 - CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS TO EMPLOYMENT USES

Outwith the settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, Chester-le-Street District Council will permit the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings (provided that there has been no abuse of the permitted development rights) for the following uses:-

- i) small scale employment uses (B1, B2);**
- ii) holiday accommodation;**
- iii) recreational and community uses; or**
- iv) new rural enterprises (see Policy AG4)**

(RL10
9, AG4, AG5, AG7, AG8)

AG7 - CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS TO RESIDENTIAL USES

Outwith the settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, Chester-le-Street District Council will only permit the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings to residential use when it can be shown that:-

- i) every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business or employment re-use has been made in accordance with Policy AG6 and the application is supported by a statement of the efforts which have been made;**
- ii) where Chester-le-Street District Council is satisfied:-**
 - a) that such a use is the only means of ensuring the retention of the building; or**
 - b) residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business/employment use; and**
- iii) the criteria of Policy AG8 are fulfilled.**

Planning conditions withdrawing certain permitted development rights will be attached to all permissions.

Planning conditions will be attached to all permissions for residential conversions that form part of a scheme for the re-use of a building under Policy AG6, requiring the works necessary for the establishment of the employment use to be complete before the dwelling is occupied.

AG8 - CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS: GENERAL CRITERIA

Where a proposed conversion or adaptation is considered acceptable under Policy AG6 or AG7, planning permission will only be granted subject to the fulfilment of the following criteria:-

- i) the proposal does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the landscape quality of the area;**
- ii) within the Green Belt the proposal will be required to show that it does not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt or adversely affects the purposes of including land in the Green Belt;**
- iii) the proposal does not involve the extension of the existing building which, individually or cumulatively, would fundamentally and adversely affect the scale, character or any architectural qualities of the original building;**
- iv) the building is of a permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction. Rebuilding of up to a maximum of 33% of structural walls will be allowed; replacement of the roof will only be allowed if it is in the same form and position and using materials of a similar type as the original construction;**
- v) the scheme of conversion respects the character of the original building. This will involve the retention of existing door and window openings and other features and a minimum number of new openings. Details should be of a traditional and/or sympathetic design and materials;**
- vi) if the building is of visual, architectural or historic importance; the proposal does not damage the visual, architectural or historical character of the building or its surroundings;**
- vii) the proposal would not cause an unacceptable impact to rural amenity, nearby residents or other land users;**
- viii) access and other services can be provided without adverse impact on the appearance of the area or on other occupiers of land or buildings;**
- ix) the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable increase in the level of traffic on local roads, cause access or parking problems or require road improvements which would be harmful to the rural environment;**
- x) adequate foul and surface water drainage can be provided;**

- xi) the proposal does not adversely affect the character and/or appearance of the open countryside;**
- xii) the proposals must accommodate any nature conservation interests within the site;**
- xiii) the proposals make satisfactory safeguards for any bat roosts present;**
- xiv) in the case of residential conversions, the occupants will not suffer frequent or prolonged nuisance from adjacent land uses for example because of smell, noise, dust or dirt; and**
- xv) regard is given to the advice set out at Appendix IX**

9.15 Existing buildings in the countryside are a valuable resource and their preservation is important in maintaining elements that make up the countryside. Where they have fallen into disrepair this can be used as an argument for their conversion. If this is the case it is necessary to consider the impact of the resource on the landscape and character of the rural area. The new use must not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the countryside nor must it detract from the visual, architectural or historical importance of the original building. Further guidance is contained in Appendix IX.

9.16 Conversion to employment uses rather than residential can make an important contribution to the local economy. There are less likely to demand considerable alteration or disturb the external features of the building and therefore preferences will be given to the conversion of buildings for employment generating uses.

9.17 Residential conversions, however, have a minimal impact on the rural economy and can often have detrimental effects on the fabric and character of historic farm buildings. In addition, the creation of a residential curtilage around a newly converted building (within which can be such residential accessories as hardstanding, gardens, fences, washing lines etc) can sometimes have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside. Conversion of isolated buildings can also place additional demands on public services because of their location.

9.18 In order to prevent the reconstruction of buildings which have fallen into a ruinous state, the building will have to be structurally sound and capable of conversion without significant rebuilding or extension. Where proposals for the conversion of rural buildings would involve extensive alteration, rebuilding and/or extension, because a significant proportion of the structure is in a ruinous state, it is considered that any rebuilding will be restricted to a maximum of up to 33% of the structural walls and whether anything other than incidental reinstatement is required. Beyond this point, it is considered that any conversion proposals will be considered as new development in the countryside. Appendix IX provides further guidance and indicates that a report from a qualified structural engineer would be required to confirm the structural condition of the building where there is doubt.

- 9.19 Decay may, in some instances, be preferable to conversion where a building is so derelict that its conversion would have an adverse impact on the landscape. For example, an abandoned building will weather progressively, and the growth of vegetation will soften its appearance. However, the fact that a building may suffer dereliction if a new use is not permitted is not considered sufficient to warrant any significant relaxation of the policy regarding new development in the countryside.
- 9.20 Conversion to a residential use will normally be permitted where it is the last resort to preserving a rural building that is of a particular historical, visual or architectural merit. It will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that the building cannot be developed for employment use before consideration will be given to residential use. A building may be physically unsuitable for employment use because for example, of its particular character or location, or there may be no demand for such employment opportunities in the locality. If lack of demand is put forward as the reason that the building cannot be developed for employment use or other appropriate uses under Policy AG6, Chester-le-Street District Council will expect proof that the property has been widely advertised on the open market for a period of at least twelve months on at least four separate occasions at roughly equal periods at a price which reflects its value as an employment enterprise and that no reasonable offer has been refused. Such evidence will be strengthened when it is substantiated by a professional body/or a firm of chartered surveyors. Inadequate return on investment will not itself be sufficient justification to demonstrate that the building cannot be used for employment generating uses.
- 9.21 The detailed design for the conversion must retain the existing character of the building, extensions may not be appropriate. Chester-le-Street District Council wishes to ensure that, if residential conversion occurs the character of the area will not be subsequently adversely affected and, therefore any planning permission will normally include a condition to remove permitted development rights.
- 9.22 Rural buildings may provide roosting places for bats, which are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats and C.) Regulations, 1994. Chester-le-Street District Council is keen to ensure that conversion of a rural building does not pose a threat to remaining populations of these species (or any other protected species) and to that end, will consult English Nature on all applications for the conversion of rural buildings where it is known or considered likely that the buildings could provide roosting places for bats. If the building does contain roosting places, permission for its conversion will only be permitted where satisfactory safeguards for the bats can be agreed.

AG9 - NEW DWELLINGS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY WORKERS

Chester-le-Street District Council will not permit new dwellings within the countryside outside settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, unless it can clearly be shown that they are needed to support existing agricultural and/or forestry activities on well established agricultural units that

need to be located in the open countryside. This permission will be granted subject to:-

- i) a clear demonstration of established existing functional need to the local authority and that this need could not be met by another existing dwelling on the site or within defined settlement boundaries;**
- ii) the need relates to a full time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture or forestry;**
- iii) the application forming part of a financially viable existing farm holding;**
- iv) the imposition of an occupancy condition;**
- v) the proposed development being well related to any existing built development in the countryside;**
- vi) the proposed development not detracting from the environment or the visual amenity of local residents;**
- vii) the proposed development being of a scale and design with the use of traditional/appropriate materials that is sympathetic to its surroundings, the established operations and function of the enterprise;**
- viii) access and other services being provided in accordance with adopted highway standards without adverse impact on the appearance of the area or on other occupiers of land or buildings;**
- ix) adequate foul and surface water drainage being provided;**
- x) the proposed development being able to accommodate any nature conservation interests within or adjacent to the site;**
- xi) the proposed development being able to make satisfactory safeguards for any bat roosts present; and**
- xii) the attachment of certain conditions withdrawing permitted development rights.**

9.23 PPG7 states that new house building and other new development in the open countryside should be strictly controlled. The fact that a single house on a particular site would be unobtrusive is not by itself a good argument; it could be repeated too often. Isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification – for example where they are necessary to enable farm or forestry workers to live at or near their place of work.

9.24 In addition the Local Plan is intended to provide sufficient land for housing to meet future demands in locations, which relate to the availability of services and infrastructure and this therefore negates the need to provide dwellings in the countryside.

9.25 In any exceptional circumstances where housing is essential for the running of a viable agricultural building or a forestry enterprise, applicants should be able to demonstrate clearly why such an exception should be made and will need to provide evidence from such bodies as MAFF to support an application. In accordance with PPG7 Annex I the applicant will be required to clearly demonstrate that the demands of farming or forestry work concerned make it essential for one or more of the people engaged in this work to live at or very close to the site of that work. They will also be required to show that the unit and activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so. In assessing applications for such dwellings Chester-le-Street District Council will apply functional and financial tests. The functional test will establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for workers to be readily available at all times, both to tend animals or carry out agricultural processes at short notice or to deal with emergencies which could lead to crop damage. Where such tests are inconclusive, financial tests may be applied to give further evidence of need.

AG10 - REMOVAL OF OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS

Chester-le-Street District Council will refuse planning applications for the removal of an occupancy condition unless it is shown that the longer term need for dwellings for agricultural or forestry workers both on the established unit and in a particular locality no longer exists.

9.26 As long as agriculture continues to provide employment in the countryside, dwellings will be required to house those it employs. To release an agricultural worker's dwelling for general housing purposes whilst a need still exists either on the steading or in the vicinity of the holding will result in a demand for further housing development in the countryside. In order to be consistent in protecting the countryside, it is essential that dwellings built specifically for agricultural occupation should be kept for such use, unless it can be demonstrated that it is now redundant of such use.

9.27 In considering requests to remove occupancy conditions it will be necessary to demonstrate:-

- i) that the property has been widely advertised for sale and/or rent for a minimum period of one year as a dwelling for agricultural or forestry workers;
- ii) the valuation attributed to the property reflects the occupancy condition; and
- iii) that no reasonable offer has been refused.

AG11 - FRINGE DEVELOPMENT

In allowing any new development on or near the urban fringe, both within and outside the settlement boundaries, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that it is located and designed so as to minimise adverse impacts on nearby open land uses, including agriculture.

AG12 - RIGHTS OF WAY AND TRESPASS

Chester-le-Street District Council will work with Durham County Council and local farmers in order to help resolve problems associated with trespass and vandalism on public rights of way that run through agricultural land.

- 9.28 One of the main threats to agriculture in the District is the problem of trespass. Whether with intent or not, many people stray onto private land and this can cause problems with vandalism and theft. In Chester-le-Street District, this problem is exacerbated by the close proximity of many farms to the urban fringe. Often residential areas run straight into fields and residents are attracted to these fields for recreational purposes.
- 9.29 MAFF has undertaken survey work in various parts of the north-east to investigate the financial loss incurred by farmers as a result of trespass. A number of problems have been identified including arson, theft, fly tipping, abandoned areas and injury to livestock. Some trespass problems are caused by insensitive design of development encouraging the public to gain easy access to private land. Examples include the abrupt termination of housing estate roads into farmland, the lack of publicly available recreation areas and rights of way.
- 9.30 Chester-le-Street District Council will therefore adopt positive policies regarding the design of new development on the urban fringe. In consultation with local landowners, new development will be encouraged to include landscaping, the creation of new habitats and amenity open space for outdoor recreation, which would serve to enhance the quality of the area, minimise the visual intrusiveness of settlements and provide a buffer between the urban area and the open countryside. New footpaths should be clearly marked and managed and lead to and from where people want to go to minimise the deliberate and accidental trespass onto existing agricultural land. Policies within the Local Plan encourage increased formalised access to the countryside, the provision of public open space within the urban area and the creation of the Great North Forest in order to help combat these problems.

Chapter Ten

Transport

CHAPTER TEN **TRANSPORT**

INTRODUCTION

10.1 Durham County Council is the Highway Authority, responsible for transportation and highway proposals in the District. Trunk roads and motorways are the responsibility of the Highways Agency. A balanced approach, with the District and Durham County Council working together, towards integrated transportation and planning can make vast improvements to safety and amenity whilst also contributing to the more efficient passage of people and goods. In addition, improved communications are significant in providing employment opportunities by attracting new industry, this increases investment into the District and benefits existing industry.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

10.2 The aims of the Local Plan are therefore:-

- i) to locate significant new development in a way which will reduce the demand for movement and thus reduce reliance on private cars;
- ii) to promote choice in transport modes, especially in walking, cycling and public transport, through liaison with Durham County Council, developers and interested parties;
- iii) to ensure that cycle and car parking requirements meet the operational minimum and non-operational maximum standards adopted by Durham County Council;
- iv) to ensure that all new developments incorporate measures to improve their safety to pedestrians, such as traffic calming, improved lighting and wider footpaths;
- v) to initiate environmental improvements that makes existing areas safer for pedestrians, the disabled and cyclists;
- vi) to support Durham County Council's aim to ensure the provision of a public transport system throughout the District;
- vii) to encourage through means of advertising, pedestrian walkways, signposting etc, visitors to Durham County Cricket Club and the Riverside Park to use public transport (trains and buses) or cycles; and
- viii) to reduce, through land use planning measures, the adverse environmental impacts of traffic on shopping and residential locations.

POLICIES

T1 - ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The following road improvements will be sought:-

- i) B1284 Tinker Terrace, Great Lumley;**
- ii) Unc. 12.4/CS Roundabout (Ouston) to County Boundary.**

10.3 Chester-le-Street District is well served in terms of the road transport network. The A1(M) runs through the District as does the A167 to Durham and the A693 to Consett, these major networks have benefited from past improvements. No further major improvements are envisaged in the Plan period.

10.4 Durham County Council has identified the minor road improvement schemes, set out at Policy T1, which involve a proposed roundabout at the B1284/Black Lane junction to link this roundabout with the existing Tinkler Terrace roundabout and the realignment of the C5 roundabout at Ouston, north of the existing roundabout with the unclassified 12.4, in the vicinity of Low Urpeth.

T2 - PUBLIC FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to protect the existing network of public footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways. Provided that the amenity of the local environment or residents/local communities would not be adversely affected, the following new recreational routes are proposed:-

- i) from the Sustrans C2C cycle route to the town centre;**
- ii) a new cycle link with the Sustrans C2C cycle route at South Pelaw and Bowes Railway path near kibblesworth; and**
- i) from Chester-le-Street Riverside to Stanley via the Cong Burn Valley.**

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to secure their provision through:-

- 1. the multi-use of existing rights of way in the open countryside;**
- 2. the creation of new routes in partnership with public/private agencies and landowners; and**
- 3. acceptable development opportunities that are proposed through the Local Plan or arise during the Plan period.**

(NE7, NE8, NE10-NE13, RL13, TM10 and TM11)

10.5 The District possesses a comprehensive network of public footpaths and bridleways which provide a large variety of users with access to the countryside. In addition, Sustrans operates a cycle path along the route of the former Consett to Sunderland railway line which runs through the north of the

District from Beamish to Vigo. It is now part of the C2C Cycle route from Whitehaven to Sunderland (and eventually to Copenhagen) and will encourage more visitors to the District.

- 10.6 There are opportunities within the District to introduce a wider network of recreational routes particularly within the Great North Forest area. Policy T2 specifically seeks to expand upon this existing network by the creation of new recreational routes that encourage sustainable modes of transport. In the context of the policy, the main target users would be pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders. In particular, it is proposed that there should be cycle paths to link the C2C Cycle route to both the Town Centre via Stella Gill and to provide a link to the north of the District and Kibblesworth following the East Coast Rail Line. A further recreational route will interconnect with this network by providing a continuous route along the Cong Burn valley corridor starting from the Riverside complex through the Town Centre and joining the proposed recreational route at Stanley.
- 10.7 Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to maximise the use of the three routes for all users groups (particularly for the two routes linking with the C2C cycle path). The individual character of the third route following the Cong Burn Valley can significantly change over its length. On certain sections, it may be more appropriate to plan for only new or improved footpath routes due to the sensitivity of local nature conservation interests or the impracticalities of creating wide routeways on very steep slopes. However, advice will be sought from the appropriate agencies and organisations regarding the most suitable arrangements.
- 10.8 Where these routes are to be utilised by multi-user groups e.g. pedestrians and cyclists, the Council will require signage and information, at appropriate points, alerting cyclists of the need to give consideration to the needs of other slower users of the route.
- 10.9 Whilst it is important to concentrate on establishing continuous routes, Chester-le-Street District Council recognises that users will access these Recreational Routes in a variety of ways and at a variety of points. To maximise their value, Recreational Routes must be viewed as the 'spine', linked by the network of existing footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways. Where there are deficiencies in these links, Chester-le-Street District Council will explore the possibility of making further improvements to existing footpaths/bridleways and establishing new routes to provide the necessary continuity and opportunity for access.
- 10.10 In addition to the three proposed routes, Chester-le-Street District Council will investigate the possibility, in partnership with Durham County Council, local landowners and amenity groups, for establishing additional recreational routes linking Chester-le-Street with Waldrige Fell, Durham City and Sunderland.
- 10.11 As many of these routes will be on land in private ownership, Chester-le-Street District Council will ensure that land owners and occupiers are consulted at the earliest possible stage when new routes are under consideration or when existing routes are to be publicised. Where the routes

pass through development sites, Chester-le-Street District Council will expect provision to be made for the path.

T3 - PROTECTION OF STRATEGIC CYCLE ROUTES

Chester-le-Street District Council will continue to promote and encourage the use of the C2C cycle route and its connections, and ensure that the physical integrity of the route is maintained in order that the use of part of the route for future light rail use will not be precluded. The integrity of the Leamside Line that marks the eastern edge of Chester-le-Street District, and is currently a bridleway, will also be maintained for future light rail or high-speed services.

T4 - RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure:-

- i) the maintenance and enhancement of passenger train services to Chester-le-Street Railway Station in conjunction with Durham County Council;**
- ii) the continued improvement of the Railway Station and its environs in conjunction with Railtrack and Regional Railways North East; and**
- iii) the provision an integrated bus link between the Railway Station and the Riverside, particularly on event days.**

(NE17, NE18)

10.12 There are also greater opportunities for encouraging public transport within the District. The benefits of an efficient public transport network will be an aid to many of the aims illustrated in the Local Plan including, mobility of local labour, the elderly and the disabled, as well as environmental issues relating to pollution and traffic congestion within the Town Centre in particular and the District as a whole.

10.13 The main east coast (London – Edinburgh) rail route passes through the centre of Chester-le-Street and frequent regional trains, both north and south, serve the station.

10.14 Whilst both the station itself and the train services provided have improved in recent years, the advent of the Riverside and new housing development justify at least maintenance of these improvements, but ideally further station improvements (with a bus link between the station, Town Centre and the Riverside, particularly on event days) and enhanced train services.

T5 - BUS PROVISION

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure an appropriate level of bus service in conjunction with Durham County Council and bus operators, and will also seek to improve and enhance passenger waiting facilities, particularly in Chester-le-Street market place area.

10.15 In discussion with bus operators, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that some buses are adequately equipped for people with impaired mobility, especially those in wheelchairs.

10.16 Buses play an important role in providing local services within the urban area of Chester-le-Street, and in providing frequent and regular links with Newcastle, Sunderland and the major towns in County Durham and Teeside.

T6 - PROVISION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT: GENERAL

Development proposals should be consistent with a safe and accessible public transport network and should help to encourage its use by all members of the public in order to reduce reliance on the private car. The access to new development should be located on, or as near as possible to, existing bus routes and footpath links should be available or, if not, provided to existing or proposed bus stops. Where the extension or diversion of an existing bus route, or other facilities related to the improvement of public transport, are reasonably required to serve the new development, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek an appropriate contribution from the developer through a Section 106 planning obligation.

10.17 A safe, accessible public transport system will contribute to the aims and strategy of the Local Plan by ensuring that all persons (both able-bodied and disabled) have access to the system, in accordance with the regulations contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Furthermore, this will facilitate the reduction in the number of private car journeys, reduce emissions and increase safety for all residents and visitors in the District.

T7 - SERVICING OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES

New development and redevelopment of existing properties in the primary and secondary shopping frontages of Chester-le-Street Town Centre will wherever possible be required to include provision for rear servicing by delivery vehicles. The provision of rear access to existing commercial premises will also be encouraged.

10.18 Before service traffic can be removed from Front Street it will be necessary to encourage existing commercial properties to provide rear access. Those properties that are required to provide rear access, under a condition of the planning permission, will be carefully monitored and enforcement action taken against those not complying with the condition. New development or redevelopment of existing properties should include provision for rear delivery.

T8 - CAR PARKING PROVISION

The design and layout of new development should seek to minimise the level of parking provision (other than for cyclists and disabled people) which, other than in exceptional circumstances, should not exceed the maximum levels set out in Appendix X.

10.19 Government guidance in the revised PPG13 advises that the availability of parking has a major influence on people's travel choice. Car parking in

particular can take up a large amount of space, can be costly to business and reduce the potential capacity of the development site. It therefore recommends that maximum amounts of car parking should be specified within new development and in areas accessible by other modes of travel (e.g. public transport, walking and cycling), in order to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour and release land for more productive purposes.

10.20 Particular emphasis is to be given to encouraging more sustainable forms of transport, such as cycling. The provision of quality cycle parking within new development sites will be important in promoting increased cycle usage. Further guidance on cycle parking and accessibility is contained at Appendix X.

10.21 The car parking standards referred to in Policy T9 and attached at Appendix X are based upon those contained in PPG13 and PPG3. Whilst they are limited in terms of the forms of development to which they are applicable, they do provide the basic requirements for parking in new developments. As the Highways Authority, Durham County Council provide technical advice in relation to the parking requirements for more detailed types of development according to its own parking standards. These guidelines are currently being reviewed by the County Council to reflect more recent advice on parking contained in PPG3, PPG13, the County Durham Local Transport Plan and the County Durham Cycling Strategy. Once adopted, the new parking standards will be incorporated into the Local Plan as supplementary planning guidance where the emphasis will clearly refer to minimising parking provision for the private motor car.

10.22 Whilst minimum standards will be set for cycle parking (in order to promote cycle use), maximum thresholds will be set for car parking for broad classes of development. If a development is expected to generate a higher level of car usage than can be accommodated by the maximum parking standards, the applicant should submit:-

- i) a transport assessment which reflects the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications of the proposed by the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site and the impact on the highway network adjacent to the site; and
- ii) a travel plan, that incorporates complementary measures designed to reduce the need for parking and encourage users to travel by modes of transport other than the car to access the site.

10.23 Parking provision that exceeds the maximum standards specified in Appendix X will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, where it is demonstrated through a transport assessment and a travel plan that a lower level of parking is not achievable through the implementation of measures to minimise the need for parking and car travel, and that a serious road safety or amenity problem would otherwise arise.

T9 - IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING CAR PARKS

During the Plan period, Chester-le-Street District Council will investigate opportunities and measures to deter long stay car parking opportunities within

car parks located within or adjacent to Chester-le-Street Town Centre and Local Retailing Centres, as defined on the Proposals Map. The best means of achieving this will be investigated by way of negotiations with local property owners and residents.

T10 – MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING CAR PARKS

In association with the investigations into long stay parking being carried out under Policy T9, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to maintain and enhance the availability, attractiveness and the safety of existing car parks.

10.24 Wherever possible, Chester-le-Street District Council will investigate and provide opportunities for off-street parking space which gives priority to short stay parking needs in order to reduce the number of shoppers travelling longer distances to competing centres where parking is much easier and cheaper. Managing the demand for longer term, commuter car parking, can also help contain the growth in traffic, make alternative modes of travel to the Town Centre more attractive and increase the competitiveness of the District.

10.25 In the interests of safety, convenience and the economic viability of Chester-le-Street town centre and the other settlements of the District, Chester-le-Street District Council will review car parks in respects of their management, access arrangements, security provision, the need for environmental improvement and sympathetic design of facilities, particularly where sites are in prominent locations.

T11 - DISABLED CAR PARKING

Parking provision for disabled drivers displaying ‘disabled driver’ stickers will be retained throughout the District. Consideration will be given to the further provision of such parking spaces within the centres of towns and villages throughout the Local Plan period in accordance with Appendix X.

10.26 Parking spaces for disabled drivers have already been allocated throughout the District. During the Plan period, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that the amount of disabled parking provision is increased to national standards. These provide convenient access to town centre facilities in locations where the parked vehicles will cause minimum interference with other road users. Parking areas for the disabled will be retained, and other suitable locations will be identified throughout the Local Plan period.

T12 - CYCLING

Chester-le-Street District Council, in partnership with Durham County Council will seek to identify a network of continuous routes for cyclists and ensure improved facilities for cycling in the District by:-

- i) encouraging the Highways Authority to ensure that the needs of cyclists are taken into account in the design of highway improvement schemes and traffic management schemes;**

- ii) **encouraging the provision of cycle parking facilities at existing public facilities at existing public facilities, shopping centres and other appropriate locations;**
- iii) **ensuring cyclist's needs are considered as part of new development and that appropriate facilities are provided, and ensure that new development makes provision for parking facilities in accordance with Policy T13 and Appendix X; and**
- iv) **encouraging the use of cycles through the development of a network of routes for cyclists, e.g. the C2C cycle route.**

T13 - CYCLE PARKING

Through planning conditions and planning agreements, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to provide secure cycle parking facilities in the Town Centre, in all areas connected with the C2C cycle route and associated with social and community facilities. See Appendix X.

(T2)

10.27 Cycling has a number of benefits and should be encouraged. It is an environmentally sustainable form of transport, is energy efficient and is a good form of exercise. The development of a network of continuous routes for cyclists, utilising existing roads and purpose built paths can assist cyclists and encourage cycling. The majority of cycling takes place and is likely to continue to take place on existing roads. A range of techniques is available to highway authorities to make cycling safer and to help cyclists share highway space with other road users. Measures to improve cyclists' safety can be incorporated into highway and traffic management schemes. Opportunities also exist to secure provision for cyclists as part of the development control process. Chester-le-Street District Council, in partnership with Durham County Council and a recently established Cycle Forum, is currently working on the production of a cycle network map within the District as part of a wider cycling strategy. Upon completion the finished plan will be incorporated into the Local Plan and Proposals Map at the earliest opportunity.

10.28 In encouraging the greater and safer use of cycles (Policy T2) provision needs to be made for users to be able to leave their cycles in convenient and safe locations. Bicycle parking areas require only one tenth the space for an equivalent number of cars, freeing up land for more productive purposes. Cycle storage facilities are relatively cheap to install and maintain. The provision of good parking facilities will help to avoid the unsightly and sometimes dangerous clutters of bicycles chained to various other items of street furniture. If parking is well positioned it will serve to increase the relative amenity of cycling and reinforce a positive image for it. Appendix X suggests the minimum standards for cycle parking provision.

10.29 Cycle parking facilities can be divided into short stay and long stay facilities depending on their location and the type of development that they are to serve. Short stay facilities (under two hours) should be sited as close as possible to the entrance of the building they are intended to serve. They

should be in a secure location where they can be overlooked and they should not block the footpath. They should be grouped together and well signed. For long stay parking a secure position is more important than accessibility. A roof or other protection from the weather is essential. A 'Sheffield' style stand provides for two cycles. Alternatives will be considered, but must offer at least equivalent capacity, robustness and degree of protection to users. Stands which support the cycle by the wheel are not acceptable. Storage facilities for equipment and accessories is useful. Table 1 of the revised Appendix X sets out the suggested ratios for long to short stay provision.

T14 - PRIVATE GARAGES

Proposals for private garages will normally be approved where:-

- i) on new developments garages are located 5.5 metres from the rear of the highway;**
- ii) on rear access ways and back lanes, where possible, garages are located at least two metres from the rear of the highway or are designed in such a way that the door does not project over the highway; or**
- iii) for a change of use of an existing building, an alternative provision may be satisfactory providing that the design is approved by Chester-le-Street District Council and the Highway Authority, Durham County Council.**

10.30 In new developments, locating garages 5.5 metres back from the highway will provide sufficient space to allow off-street parking in front of the garage. For garages on rear access ways and back lanes, a distance of two metres allows for sufficient manoeuvring space and ensures opening garage doors do not obstruct the highway.

T15 - ACCESS AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGN

Development proposals will be required to conform to the following criteria:-

- i) safe access to the site and the classified road system will be provided;**
- ii) the development should not create levels of traffic which would exceed the capacity of the local road network or create a road safety hazard;**
- iii) adequate links, access to, and provision for public transport will be incorporated within the layout of the site. Large development sites will be required to provide access for public transport;**
- iv) consideration is given to pedestrians and cyclists within the development site. Convenient, direct and safe routes will be provided;**
- v) where necessary, adequate provision for service vehicles will be secured for turning and manoeuvring; and**
- vi) effective access at all times for emergency vehicles is provided.**

10.31 Durham County Council, the Highway Authority, will be consulted on all applications, that approval have an implication on the highway network and where appropriate the Highways Agency will be consulted. A proposal will not be granted approval unless adequate traffic flows can be maintained, a safe access and egress are available and adequate provision is made for parking, servicing and manoeuvring. Good access to the public transport and adopted road networks are also important criteria.

T16 - ACCESS TO PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND LOCATIONS

Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that all public buildings and areas of open space are physically accessible to all members of the public.

10.32 Some people, especially the disabled and parents with young children in prams, often find that many public buildings and spaces are inaccessible – for example, shops with steps to the front entrance or those on two levels with steps between and badly positioned Automatic Transaction Machines (ATM's). In approving development or redevelopment proposals for such buildings and spaces, Chester-le-Street District Council will, in negotiation with developers, ensure that all public buildings are physically accessible to all members of the public.

T17 - GENERAL POLICY

All new development proposals should have regard to, and be consistent with, the provision of a safe and accessible transport network, and in particular with:-

- i) reducing reliance on the private car;**
- ii) encouraging the use of public transport; and**
- iii) encouraging walking and cycling as an effective means of transport.**

10.33 Residential, commercial and employment developments require careful siting location to help reduce the need for additional car journeys. It is appreciated that it is a personal decision as to where to live and work and whether to use a car. Locating land uses within easy access to reach each other and to the main public transport corridors will give the opportunity to use alternative methods of transport to the car.

Chapter Eleven

Public Utilities

CHAPTER ELEVEN **PUBLIC UTILITIES**

INTRODUCTION

- 11.0 The provision of public utilities such as water treatment and sewage works, renewable energy resources and telecommunications are essential to the well being of the District. The availability and capacity of such infrastructure and the need for additional or special facilities can have a major influence on the nature, location and timing of development. Government advice in PPG12 emphasises the importance of the role of the Local Plan in co-ordinating development with other public and private sector utility providers. Investment decisions made with an awareness of infrastructure development programmes and constraints can be made with greater confidence and can avoid costly delays in getting projects underway.
- 11.1 However, the supply of such utilities needs to be carefully assessed against the need to minimise the intrusion of such provisions, wherever possible, on both the built and natural environments such as the Green Belt, nature conservation areas, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

LOCAL PLAN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 11.2 Therefore the Local Plan aims to : -
- i) ensure that public utilities are provided to meet the needs of the District's population and that new development is adequately provided for;
 - ii) minimise the impact of public utilities upon the built and natural environment;
 - iii) have regard to the principles of sustainability and energy conservation.

POLICIES

PU1 - ENERGY CONSERVATION

Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage the effective use of passive solar energy and the reduction of wind chill in layout, design and orientation of buildings and the use of energy efficient materials and construction techniques.

(HP9, R1, R2, R10, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6)

- 11.3 Government policy is to stimulate the development of new and renewable energy sources wherever they have the prospects of being economically attractive and acceptable in order to contribute to:-
- i) diverse, secure and sustainable energy options;
 - ii) reduction in emission pollutants; and

iii) encouragement of internationally competitive industries.

11.4 The burning of fossil fuels to produce energy to heat and light homes has a significant effect on global warming through the greenhouse effect. Chester-le-Street District Council is very concerned about this fact and is taking many steps to ameliorate the problem. The orientation and inter-relationship of buildings is one way in which construction design can help to reduce demand. Other policies in both the Transport and Shopping Chapters also work towards ameliorating the effects.

PU2 - RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION

Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable energy sources will be encouraged provided that : -

- i) access for construction, supply and maintenance traffic, and transmission lines between the development and the point of connection to the grid, can be provided without permanent and / or significant visual or physical damage to the built or natural environments;**
- ii) the amenities of neighbouring occupiers will not be unacceptably affected by noise emission, visual dominance, shadow flicker, reflected light, or electro-magnetic disturbance;**
- iii) realistic means are in place to secure both the removal of the building(s) or structure(s) used for the production of energy, and the restoration of the site, when the installation becomes redundant;**
- iv) the proposal complies with Policies NE2, NE4, NE6-13, NE15-16, BE1, BE4, BE9-BE12 and BE16 and other relevant policies of the Local Plan.**

11.5 The UK contains about 1% of the world's population, but produces about 3% of the principal greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. The Government has set a target to reduce UK greenhouse emissions in 2000 to 1990 levels. Energy conservation makes a positive contribution to the protection of the environment through a reduction in the release of harmful emissions into the atmosphere.

11.6 The term renewable source covers those resources which occur and recur naturally in the environment. Such resources include heat from the earth or the sun, power from the wind and from water, energy from plant material and from the recycling of domestic, industrial or agricultural waste.

11.7 Chester-le-Street District Council supports the concept of exploiting renewable energy resources, although there are clear environmental impacts which must be carefully assessed on receipt of any specific proposal. Some of the small schemes do not cause much impact on amenity whilst others may have to be sited in areas of a higher landscape value, or in the Green Belt. Policies NE4 and NE15 provide the specific framework to assess applications, but all

proposals will need to be carefully considered against other policies in the Local Plan relating to the locality.

- 11.8 Policy NE 20(i) and NE 20(vii) are to be interpreted in light of the more specific Local Plan policies relating to the countryside, nature conservation and traffic. Cumulative impact arises in particular where there is inter-visibility of wind turbines for example, giving a cluttered appearance to the landscape. It could also arise where communities are exposed to the adverse environmental effects of more than one scheme, eg traffic, noise, etc. Where satisfactory arrangements are not made to meet the requirements of Policy NE20, planning permission will be refused.
- 11.9 Wind turbines can have particular environmental effects resulting from their height and motion. 'Electro-magnetic interference' is the interference which may be caused to radio and television signals by structures placed 'in the line of sight'; 'shadow flicker' is the flickering shadow cast inside nearby buildings by the rotating blades, whilst 'reflective effects' are the visual effects caused by sunlight reflecting from the blades.
- 11.10 In most instances an Environmental Assessment will be required to accompany development proposals (subject to the provision of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations, indicating how these matters can be mitigated.

PU3 - OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY POWER LINES OF 132 KV OR MORE

When consulted under the Electricity Act 1989, Chester-le-Street District Council will oppose the siting of overhead power lines of 132kV or over, suspended from lattice towers in or adversely affecting sites of national and international nature conservation interest unless the overriding national need for the development, the cost, and the scope for the development outside these areas have been examined and no alternative sites are available in less sensitive areas.

In addition, the siting of such power lines will be opposed in the following locations unless there is a clear requirement for the line and the cost and scope of the development outside these areas has been examined and no alternative sites are available in less sensitive areas:-

- i) in prominent visual locations within an Area of High Landscape Value;**
- ii) in designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance at County and District level;**
- iii) in, or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas, and sites of particular historic, archaeological or architectural interest;**
- iv) close to existing or allocated residential development ; or**
- v) across those areas used for open space/recreational purposes coloured brown on the Proposals Map.**

- 11.11 Where those areas cannot be avoided, the Council will urge that consideration be given to the underground installation of relevant sections of the proposed line. Where this is not feasible in practical, technical or financial terms or where greater damage would be caused to the ecology or archaeological interests, the Council will then require the careful overhead line routing to minimise the visual impact of these high voltage lines.
- 11.12 The National Grid Company is responsible for the national distribution network. Applications to install overhead electricity transmission lines are made to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under the powers of the Electricity Act 1989. In this process, Chester-le-Street District Council is a statutory consultee. In formulating its responses to any such proposals, Chester-le-Street District Council will consult with other relevant bodies.
- 11.13 It is recognised that the impact of larger electricity supply lines (132kV or over) which are suspended from steel lattice towers can be visually prominent and damaging in the landscape especially, within Conservation Areas and Areas of High Landscape Value. Similarly, the overhead routing of power lines would have an adverse affect on the amenity value of local communities. For this reason, it would be desirable to route lines away from both residential areas and those locations used for informal or formal recreation.

PU4 - OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY POWER LINES OF LESS THAN 132 KV

When consulted under the Electricity Act 1989, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek the siting of overhead power lines of less than 132kV away from the following locations unless there is a clear requirement for the line and the cost and scope of the development outside these areas has been examined and no alternative sites are available in less sensitive areas : -

- i) in prominent visual locations within the Area of High Landscape Value;**
 - ii) in / or adversely affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest or in designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance at County and District level;**
 - iii) in, or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas or sites of particular historic, archaeological or architectural interest; or**
 - iv) across those areas used for open space/recreational purposes and coloured brown on the Proposals Map.**
- 11.4 Where those areas cannot be avoided, the Council will urge that consideration be given to the underground installation of relevant sections of the proposed line. Where this is not feasible in practical, technical or financial terms or where greater damage would be caused to the ecology or archaeological interests, the Council will then require the careful overhead line routing to minimise the visual impact of these high voltage lines.

11.15 Equally, it is recognised that in certain locations overhead power lines of less than 132kV which, although smaller in scale than higher powers lines, can also have an adverse visual impact. Wherever possible, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek their routing away from such locations when it is consulted under the provisions of the Electricity Act 1989.

PU5 - WATER TREATMENT AND SEWAGE WORKS

Chester-le-Street District Council will enable water and sewage undertakers to meet their obligations provided that the development does not adversely affect the landscape quality of the area or areas of nature conservation importance and the proposal complies with all other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

All new treatment works will require comprehensive landscape and boundary treatment to help mitigate the visual impact of development.”

11.16 Providing clean water and dealing with sewage is an important requirement for the District. The statutory obligations and compliance with the relevant environmental standards and EC legislation, Urban Waste Water Directive (91/27/EEC) and Drinking Water Directive (80/778/EEC) will require the water and sewage undertakers to extend existing and develop new sites for such treatment. The views of the Environment Agency will be sought in such cases. Permission will normally be granted for such development provided that it does not adversely affect areas of nature conservation importance.

11.17 For sites which are particularly sensitive in terms of nature conservation and landscape, Chester-le-Street District Council may require an Environmental Statement to be submitted with any planning application. All new treatment works will require comprehensive landscape and boundary treatment to help mitigate the visual impact of development.”

PU6 - TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

For telecommunication development, Chester-le-Street District Council will take into account the following factors:-

- 1. the specific needs and locational requirements of the development;**
- 2. the dual use of existing installations, where technically and operationally possible;**
- 3. where it can be demonstrated that there are no other less harmful sites; and**
- 4. the siting and external appearance of apparatus has regard to the amenity of neighbouring land uses.**

Planning permission will be granted for those telecommunications proposals which:-

- i) where they are located within, or would be conspicuous from the Green Belt, and are otherwise consistent with Green Belt policy would not harm the visual amenities of the Green Belt;
- ii) where they are located within or adjacent to a SSSI, they would not adversely affect the ecological and/or geological interest of the SSSI;
- iii) where they are located within a Conservation Area or adjacent to a Listed Building or Scheduled Ancient Monument, they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or would preserve the Listed Building or Scheduled Ancient Monument, together with their settings;
- iv) where they are located within a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, they would not harm the nature conservation interest of the site, or would minimise damage to the designated site and compensate fully for the damage by habitat creation or enhancement elsewhere within the site or local area;
- v) where they are located within an Area of High Landscape Value, they would not significantly detract from the high landscape quality; and
- vi) in all cases, incorporate design and landscaping appropriate to their location.

Chester-le-Street District Council will resist applications which would:-

- iv) detract from the character and quality of the Green Belt or Areas of High Landscape Value;
- v) adversely affect areas of ecological and geological interest including SSSI's and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance;
- vi) have a detrimental impact on, or on the setting of, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings or areas of archaeological significance; or
- vii) result in a vertical structure that is incompatible with its surroundings.

11.18 Telecommunication developments can have a significant visual impact on the landscape. Due to operational requirements such developments may require elevated locations. Chester-le-Street District Council, when faced with an application, will attempt to ensure that prominent and intrusive locations are resisted especially within the Green Belt and Areas of High Landscape Value. Applicants will be expected to provide evidence that they have explored the possibility of alternative sites including the erection of antennae on an existing building, mast or structure. Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to ensure that the landscape character, nature conservation interest and quality of the Green Belt is not compromised by inappropriate location of new installations. Chester-le-Street District Council will encourage early

consultation with the telecommunication operators to enable the requirements of telecommunication networks and routing and phasing of network developments to be taken into account. Low-rise small-scale residential areas should be avoided and commercial, industrial or transport related land with existing structures such as lighting columns or other vertical structures should be favoured.

Chapter Twelve

Environmental Appraisal

CHAPTER TWELVE **ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL**

INTRODUCTION

- 12.1 The Government, through PPG12, has placed a major responsibility on local authorities to ensure that local plans take environmental considerations comprehensively and consistently into account.
- 12.2 The process for achieving this is known as an Environmental Appraisal. This is a method of identifying and analysing the potential environmental effects of the policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan.
- 12.3 The Environmental Appraisal has been applied to all the policies during the preparation process of this Local Plan. The purpose of this appraisal is:-
- i) to examine the environmental affects of policies in a systematic and structured way;
 - ii) to assist in the formulation of policies and to test these against the strategy of the Local Plan; and
 - iii) to allow those using the Local Plan to understand how the policies have had regard to environmental matters.

METHOD

- 12.4 The method is in two stages, firstly checking the environmental content of the Local Plan in relation to Planning Policy Guidance Notes and the County Durham Structure Plan Review. Secondly, the policies and proposals are checked to assess their impact on the “environmental stock”. Environmental stock has been defined using the criteria set out in the Department of the Environment’s Good Practice Guide (Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans).
- 12.5 These criteria are set out in Appendix XI Table 1. The criteria are divided into three broad categories of environmental impacts.
- 12.6 Each policy or proposal has been assessed against the criteria using the questions set out below each of the criteria headings. The assessments are then presented in the form of a matrix which is contained in Appendix XI Table 2. The assessments may change as more information becomes available and as the Local Plan is modified.
- 12.7 Five symbols are used in the matrix to indicate the likely effect of each policy. The symbols are as follows:-

- More environmentally beneficial
- ?→ Possibly environmentally beneficial
- ← More environmentally damaging

- ?← Possibly environmentally damaging
- = Little or no effect
- ↔ Possibly environmentally positive or negative

12.8 It must be remembered that although a particular policy may appear to have some adverse effect, when set to the context of a group of policies the overall effect may be beneficial.

12.9 As well as the matrix, the following section sets out a short commentary on the overall effect of policies and proposals under the various headings used for the environmental stock criteria.

SUMMARY OF POLICY EFFECTS

Global Sustainability

12.10 This category is concerned with the atmosphere and biodiversity (the entire range of animal and plant species) and the extent to which planning policies can influence change. The main factor affecting the atmosphere and change in climate is fossil fuel. Land use policies can be used to influence the location of development and reduce the need to travel and thereby influence the use of energy.

12.11 Policies promoting alternatives to the use of fossil fuel can all have a positive effect. Policies reducing the rate at which carbon monoxide is released into the atmosphere are beneficial, as are policies maintaining or safeguarding species habitats.

12.12 Transport Energy: Efficiency – Trips:-

i) Does the policy alter the need to travel by reducing the average length of trips, especially by car?

ii) Does the policy reduce the average number of trips especially by car?

12.13 The strategy of the Local Plan is to implement a North Durham Green Belt and direct new development to the built up areas. No new development is proposed which would generate very significant volumes of traffic. The protection of existing shopping facilities and employment sites and the creation of new facilities is intended to ensure people do not need to travel to obtain goods, services and employment.

12.14 Transport Energy: Efficiency – Modes:-

i) Does the policy encourage the greater use of public transport?

ii) Does the policy reduce the demand for private transport journeys?

iii) Does the policy encourage/promote walking and cycling?

- iv) Does the policy make the provision of public transport easier or more viable?
- 12.15 Concentrating development in the existing built-up areas increases the choice of transport and can encourage the efficient use of public transport. The Local Plan makes positive provision for cyclists and pedestrians.
- 12.16 Built Environment: Energy Efficiency:-
- i) Does the policy reduce the consumption of fossil fuels?
 - ii) Does the policy reduce the heat loss from buildings by orientation and design etc.?
 - iii) Does the policy reduce capital requirements, such as the energy to manufacture building products or quarry raw material?
- 12.17 The Local Plan seeks to influence the layout of sites to make best use of natural light and warmth. The opportunities to reduce the demand for building materials or quarried materials are limited.
- 12.18 Renewable Energy:-
- i) Does the policy protect sources of natural energy?
 - ii) Does the policy increase the opportunities for the use of renewable energy sources?
- 12.19 The policies seek to ensure that opportunities for renewable energy sources are protected and realised. However, the opportunities for alternative sources of energy will be limited and are constrained by other environmental factors.
- 12.20 Rate of Carbon Dioxide Fixing:-
- i) Does the policy encourage the protection and planting of trees and woodlands?
- 12.21 Trees absorb carbon dioxide and help to reduce other forms of pollution. The Local Plan contains policies which seek to retain the existing tree cover and encourage additional tree planting.
- 12.22 Wildlife Habitats:-
- i) Does the policy encourage the protection of designated areas of nature conservation importance?
 - ii) Does the policy encourage the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats?
- 12.23 The policies in the Natural Environment Chapter seek to ensure the protection of nature conservation sites valued for their national, regional and local

importance. These policies also seek to protect and where possible enhance other wildlife habitats.

Natural Resources

12.24 Air Quality:-

- i) Does the policy reduce levels of pollutants emitted e.g. traffic, industry and power generation?
- ii) Does the policy increase the opportunity for pollution to be absorbed?

12.25 The overall strategy of the Local Plan is to reduce the need to travel and to increase the use of public transport, which will have an impact on vehicle emissions. The Local Plan's ability to influence emissions from industry is limited. Improved energy efficiency and increased use of renewable energy all reduce the emissions from power stations. Tree planting can help to absorb pollutants.

12.26 Water Conservation and Quality:-

- i) Does the policy maintain current groundwater and river levels?
- ii) Does the policy maintain current water supply, especially groundwater and rivers providing public water supply?

12.27 The policies of the Local Plan seek to protect the water environment and water resources both in terms of quality and quantity.

12.28 Land and Soil Quality:-

- i) Does the policy safeguard current soil quality and quantity?
- ii) Does the policy reduce the contamination of soil and derelict land?
- iii) Does the policy protect the best quality agricultural land?

12.29 The policies in the local plan seek to retain the best and most versatile agricultural land. New development is directed to the built-up areas rather than undeveloped open land.

12.30 Minerals:-

- i) Does the policy encourage the husbanding of mineral resources?
- ii) Does the policy encourage the re-use of buildings?

12.31 Policies on mineral extraction are contained in the Minerals Local Plan Deposit Draft produced by Durham County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority. The opportunities in this Local Plan to influence the demand for minerals is limited. The policies encourage the reuse of buildings where appropriate.

Local Environmental Quality

12.32 This category is concerned with the protection of local environmental quality and features, including landscape and historical sites. Policies in the Local Plan which seek to minimise the environmental impact of development are considered to have a positive effect.

12.33 Landscape and Open Land:-

- i) Does the policy safeguard the countryside and areas of open land valued for “its own sake”?
- ii) Does the policy promote sensitive improvements to the landscape?
- iii) Does the policy ensure the diversity of the landscape?

12.34 A principal objective of the Local Plan is to implement the North Durham Green Belt and retain the open character of the landscape. Specific policies seek to protect designated areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest from harmful development. Policies seek landscaping measures to mitigate the impact of developments.

12.35 Urban Environment:-

- i) Does the policy safeguard the townscape quality and appearance?
- ii) Does the policy promote safety and security?
- iii) Does the policy promote the role and vitality of town and local centres?

12.36 The Local Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the built environment. The Local Plan seeks to obtain a high standard of design and layout. Specific policies seek to ensure crime is minimised and access to new development is available to all. Specific policies seek to retain the character and function of local town centres with opportunities for enhancement being sought.

12.37 Cultural Heritage:-

- i) Does the policy preserve and enhance conservation areas, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens and archaeological sites?

12.38 The Local Plan sets out the attention that will be paid to proposals for development affecting areas and buildings of historic value. New development should enhance such areas.

12.39 Public Access to Open Space:-

- i) Does the policy encourage access to open spaces for various recreational and sporting activities?

12.40 The Local Plan seeks to retain existing open areas, particularly close to built-up areas, and seeks to encourage opportunities for public access. Larger housing sites will be required to include children's play areas. Access to the countryside is encouraged by support for proposed and existing rights of way networks.

12.41 Building Quality:-

- i) Does the policy reduce the number of vacant and derelict buildings and promote urban renewal?
- ii) Does the policy encourage proper maintenance in certain areas and provision of buildings appropriate to their intended use?

12.42 The Local Plan seeks to ensure all buildings are retained in beneficial use appropriate to the character of the area and that urban land is reused for appropriate development.

CONCLUSIONS

12.43 The Environmental Appraisal has shown that the overall strategy of the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan and the specific policies and proposal broadly satisfy the environmental stock criteria. The assessments may change as more information becomes available and as the Local Plan is modified.

Appendix I

APPENDIX I: RESIDENTIAL ESTATE DESIGN – INDICATIVE STANDARDS AND HOUSEHOLD EXTENSIONS

INTRODUCTION

- 1) The following standards (relating to Policy HP9 in the Housing and Population Chapter of the Local Plan) deal comprehensively with the practical aspects of residential development in order to ensure the achievements of specific planning objectives, whilst also giving developers flexibility to achieve good design within those standards.
- 2) The indicative standards listed in Appendix I have been established to provide criteria for conventional types of housing development. Chester-le-Street District Council will require new development proposals to make the most efficient use of land and will seek to achieve densities of no less than 30 dwellings per hectare (net). In certain instances, the relaxation of these standards may be appropriate, for example in Conservation Areas characterised by traditional building styles of development, provided that other relevant policies in the Local Plan and amenities of the area are not compromised.
- 3) However, in those circumstances, privacy and outlook should be achieved by innovative design. It is not intended by setting out indicative standards to discourage good or innovative design and the creation of attractive developments. The following details give more guidance about the standards.
- 4) Chester-le-Street District Council believes that by achieving a high standard of design they will be able to create a sense of place for residents, adequate space around dwellings and ensure adequate privacy in the rooms, gardens and other outdoor areas of the proposed dwelling.

SPACE AROUND DWELLINGS

- 5) Developments are to be encouraged that follow good urban design principles and use the existing built and natural elements of the site, such as levels or tree cover, in the creation of an area's individual 'sense of place' and which reinforce and relate well to their setting.
- 6) Thoughtful and imaginative use should be made of all elements that make up a housing development, including contemporary but varying house types, different massing, roof shapes, building lines or the use of single storey elements such as garages and conservatories, which all add to an area's individualism.
- 7) The distance between buildings and the treatment of spaces around them have an important affect on the appearance of an area and the quality of life of its residents.
- 8) Standards for the provision of public open space in housing developments for children's play, sports and general amenity, are set out in Policy RL5 and Appendix V.

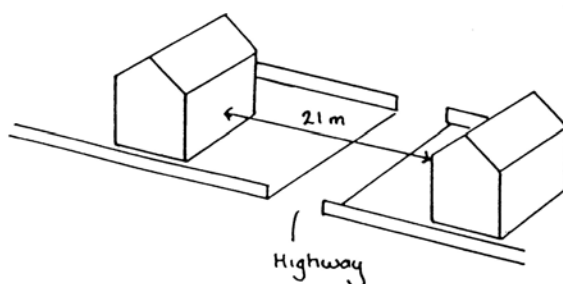
- 9) Sufficient space around dwellings should be provided for access, parking, children's play, outdoor relaxation and greenery.
- 10) The amount of private space around housing should be sufficient to ensure adequate privacy for an individual dwelling and a satisfactory appearance for the whole estate. The distance between buildings must however, be balanced against the mass of the building.

PRIVACY

- 11) Traditional privacy is achieved in two ways. Firstly by remoteness, where dwellings are set well apart, and secondly by design. This policy is an attempt to deal with the former, but standards can be influenced by the latter. Exemptions to the policy may be appropriate in the following situations:-
 - i) small dwellings or flats, especially those designed for the elderly or single people which have a communal garden;
 - ii) single storey courtyard housing which incorporates a paved and wall space as an integral part of design;
 - iii) on an infill site, particularly within a Conservation Area, where it is important that the development is in keeping with the form and character of the area;
 - iv) where the premises are converted to residential use, such as the 'living over the shop' initiative, where it is not always possible to achieve the same standard of design as on a clear/open site, provision for amenity space should, however, be provided; and
 - v) higher density starter homes.
- 12) In all cases the maximum degree of privacy should be obtained, especially where the property faces onto existing housing, and it may be that only windows in non-habitable rooms or those with obscured glazing will be allowed in such elevations.

STANDARDS BETWEEN 'PUBLIC' FACES

- 13) Current highway standards for residential estate roads, including footways and verges, set the fronts of properties approximately 21 metres apart. This distance is considered to be appropriate when addressing the issue of privacy in the layout of the 'public' zones in a housing estate.



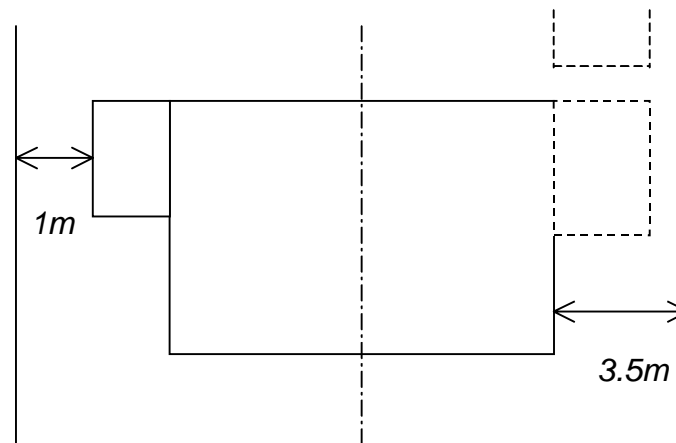
- 14) The developer should also avoid fixed building lines which offer a rather monotonous landscape. Building lines must be varied to achieve a sense of enclosure. Selected dwellings may be positioned on or near the back edge of the footway provided there is no intrusion of privacy.
- 15) The construction of walls and planting within both gardens and highway verges should also be considered in order to integrate buildings, create enclosures and break up those public areas. The siting of garages forward of the main front wall of a dwelling can also be used.

PLOT SIZES

- 16) In order to achieve the minimum standards of privacy, plot sizes shall not be less than the following distance relative to the type of dwelling and its siting on the plot:

a) Plot Widths

- 17) These are dependant on the type of dwelling and may therefore vary. The local planning authority will assess plot widths in relation to the proposed type of dwelling, but will not be prepared to approve plot layouts without such details. It shall generally be required to maintain an access way with a minimum width of one metre to the rear of the dwelling, to secure access for refuse disposal and fire services. Such an access way shall not pass through any room or garage, but can be a covered passageway. Where vehicular access or a future garage is provided, a 3.5 metre gap shall be left between the dwelling and the site boundary. The number of driveways should also be paired in order to reduce access points onto an estate road.



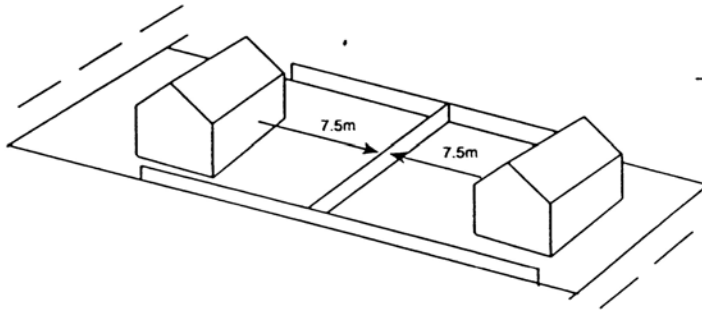
b) Plot Depths

- 18) These will vary depending on whether the dwellings are single storey or two storey. A distinction must be drawn between the front and rear of the dwelling or the 'public' and 'private' sides of the dwelling. The 'public' side is that elevation facing onto a public highway or area of public open space, the 'private' side faces onto the private garden area.

BETWEEN PRIVATE FACES

a) Single Storey Development

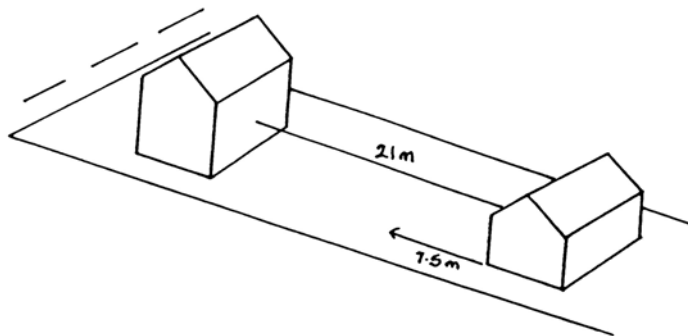
- 19) The distance between the private side of a dwelling and the rear property boundary shall not be less than 7.5 metres. When facing another single storey development, a minimum of 15 metres between the main window to the habitable rooms will be required.



- 20) Where only the minimum depth of 7.5 metres is approved, permitted development rights for extensions will, where necessary, be restricted in order to protect the amenity/privacy of adjoining occupants.

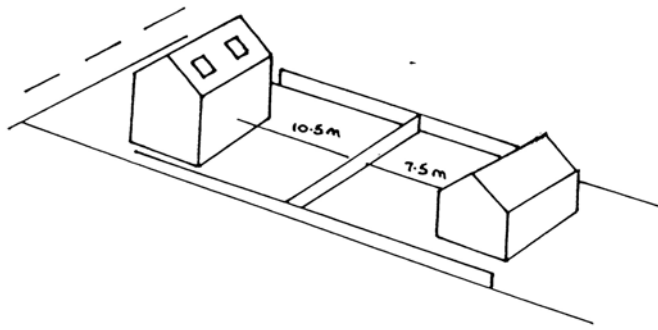
b) Two Storey Dwellings (inc. Dormer Bungalows)

- 21) With two storey developments the problem of overlooking is one from the first floor. A minimum 21 metres back to back distance is required (irrespective of whether this is between existing or new development).



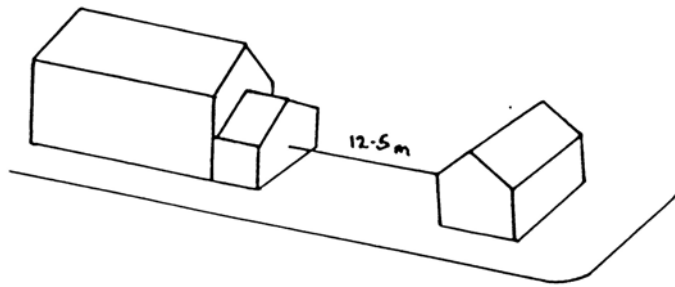
c) Two Storey Facing Single Storey

- 22) Where two storey development backs onto a single storey development, the standards required will be the same as for two storey development i.e. minimum distance of 21 metres (unless a special design solution is used i.e. roof lights) then a minimum of 18 metres between properties may be acceptable depending upon site levels.

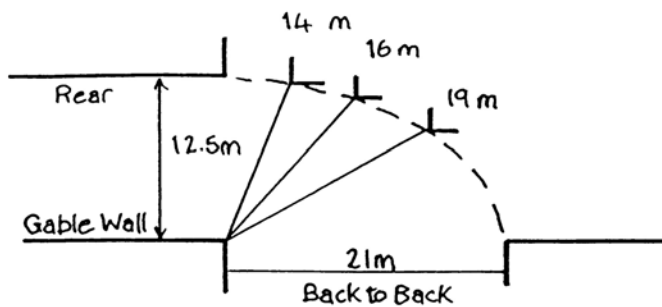


d) **Dwellings facing Gable Walls**

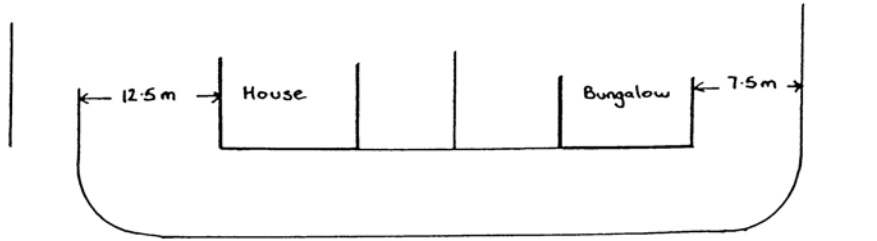
- 23) There should be not less than 12.5 metres between the main window of a habitable room (to both single and two story buildings) and a gable elevation (including garages) with no windows to habitable rooms in that elevation.



- 24) Where dwellings are off set and do not, therefore, directly overlook one another, the privacy distances may be reduced to reflect this depending upon site characteristics i.e. levels or the existing development pattern of the area.



- 25) The following diagram relates to plots with a frontage on two adjacent sides to the public highway or other public space. In such cases, one outlook shall be over that space for a distance of at least 7.5 metres in the case of a bungalow, or 12.5 metres in the case of a two storey building.

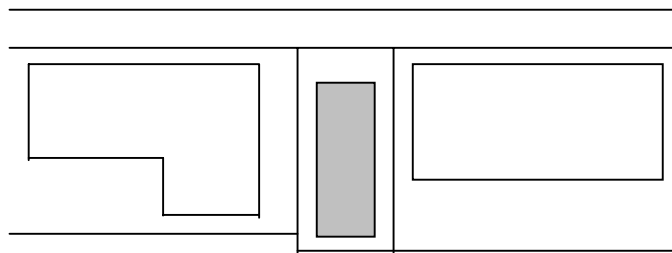


INFILLING

26) Infill development can often contribute to and enhance the street scene. To ensure this occurs infilling should be in keeping with the built form and should not attempt to fill in all the gaps within settlements. Generally, infilling should reflect both the design and orientation of the adjoining dwelling(s).

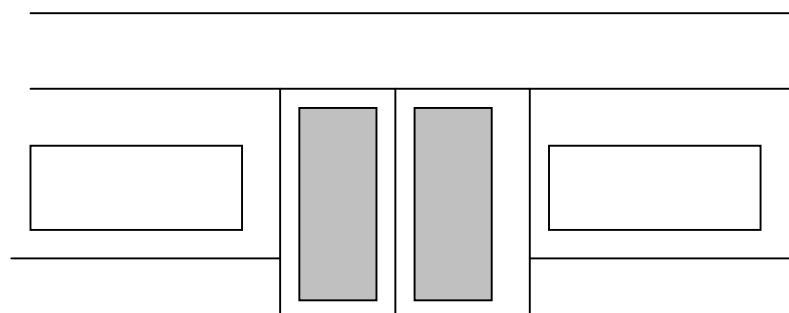
i) Unacceptable

- ★ Site is too narrow to accommodate a house which would be in keeping with the adjoining dwellings



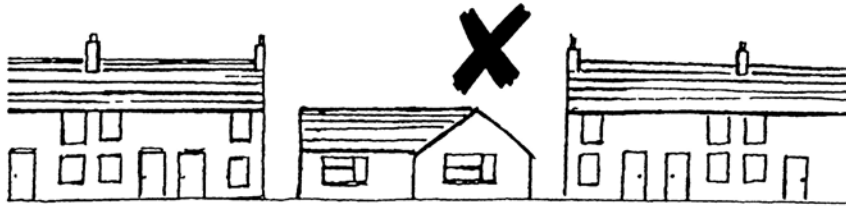
ii) Unacceptable

- ★ Houses have wrong orientation, gable ends facing forwards. Out of keeping with street scene.



iii) Unacceptable

- ★ Generally infilling should mirror the type of houses adjoining either one or two storey. Single storey bungalow out of place adjoining two story terraces



iv) Acceptable

- ★ Continue existing built form



HOUSE EXTENSIONS

INTRODUCTION

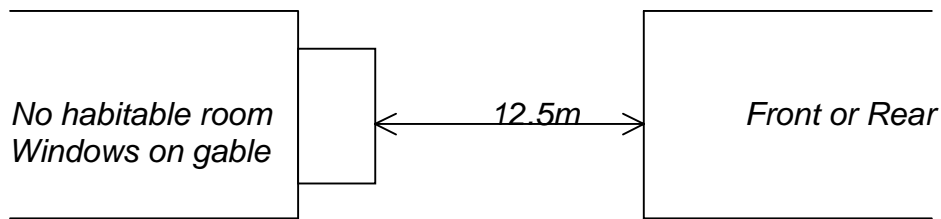
- 27) Policy HP11 refers to, and deals with, extensions and alterations to existing dwellings. It is therefore essential that these guidelines are read in conjunction with the policy requirements.
- 28) The Council in exercising its development control function will not only seek to protect the character of an area from badly designed or unsympathetic extensions, but also protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from a loss of amenity, through significant loss of light, lack of privacy, etc.
- 29) All extensions should respect the form of the existing building and its relationship to its neighbours. In general, they should be in scale with the original property and have an appropriately pitched roof. Door and window details, other architectural features and the material used in the construction, should be in keeping.
- 30) Facing materials should match in colour and texture to those on the existing building. This is particularly important to extensions in prominent locations or to any elevations bordering areas accessible by the public.

SIDE EXTENSIONS

- 31) Extensions exceeding the height of existing buildings will normally appear to be out of scale and character and incongruous in the street scene. Most extensions to the side are therefore single or two storey. Where, because of the age of the property, it is not possible to match brickwork exactly, side extensions should be set back a minimum of one brick width to avoid problems of unsightly bonding. Extensions that encroach forward of the building line or

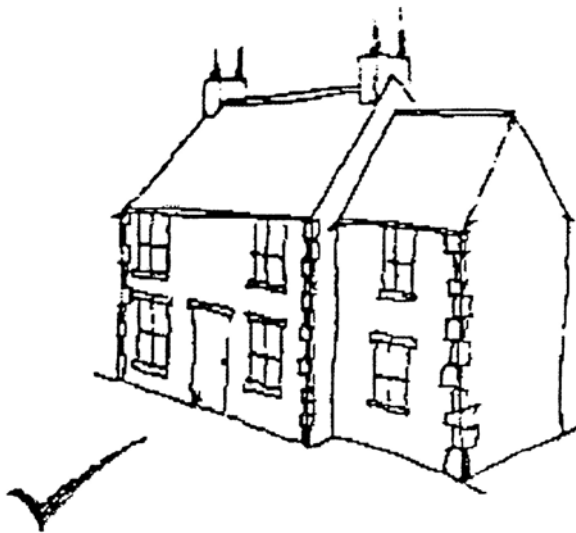
wrap around the dwelling should be avoided, unless characteristic of that particular area, as they do not relate well to the existing form of the house. The privacy of neighbouring occupiers should be respected and windows in side elevations should not directly overlook a neighbouring garden. Non-habitable room windows should be further than 12.5 metres from a principle window of a neighbouring property.

Plan View – Single or Double Storey Extension



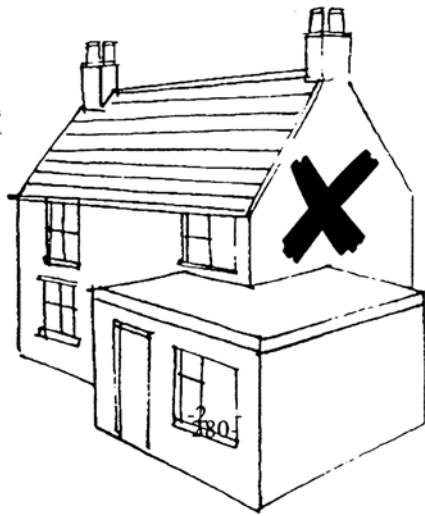
i) Acceptable

- ★ Extension is subordinate to existing house
- ★ Design matches existing house design
- ★ Use of matching features, such as windows and guttering
- ★ Extension set back from front of house



ii) Unacceptable

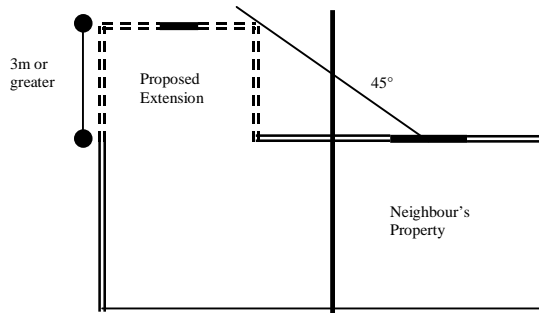
- ★ Avoid wrap around extensions which do not relate well to existing form of house and is out of character with the house design
- ★ Flat roofs and windows not in keeping with existing house
- ★ Features such as windows and guttering which do not match the existing building



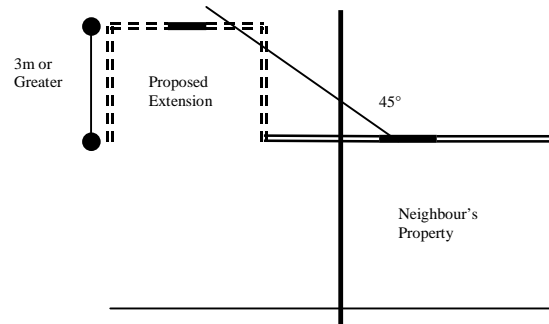
- 32) Durham County Council recognises in its car parking standards that the more bedrooms a house has, the more likely it is to own two or more cars. In order to prevent the removal of off-street parking, side extensions should incorporate a garage or other form of car parking accommodation unless there is an alternative site approved for parking. A driveway of at least 5.5 metres should be provided between the front of the extension and the back edge of the pavement. The hard surfacing of the whole front garden to provide for car parking should be avoided.

REAR EXTENSIONS

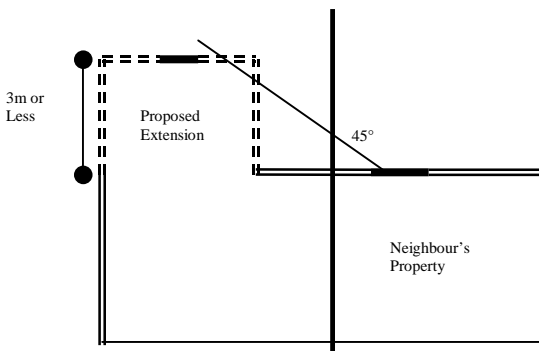
- 33) The guidelines for the likely acceptability of rear extensions are largely dependant on the house type and its individual merits.
- 34) On older types of terraced property (i.e. pre-war), the length of rear extensions will be determined by individual site characteristics including existing extensions, site levels, remaining garden area, etc. Anyone applying for permission for the extension of an older property can assist in the improvement of the character of an area by pairing extensions or following the pattern of existing extensions.
- 35) On detached, semi-detached and modern terraces (i.e. post war), in order to protect a neighbour's amenities, single storey extensions on the common boundary should not exceed 3 metres in length, unless it can be adequately demonstrated that the resultant loss of daylight requirements to, or outlook from, the adjacent property would be negligible.
- 36) As a guideline, the Council will consider whether the proposed extension will infringe on the area formed by a line taken at a 45° angle from the centre of the closest window to a principle room on a neighbouring property. If it does not, then an extension of more than 3 metres may be acceptable. Two storey extensions must adhere to the 45° rule.



Complies with 45 degree rule.
Both proposed groundfloor and first floor extensions would normally be acceptable.



Does not comply with 45 degree rule.
Both proposed groundfloor and first floor extensions would normally be unacceptable.

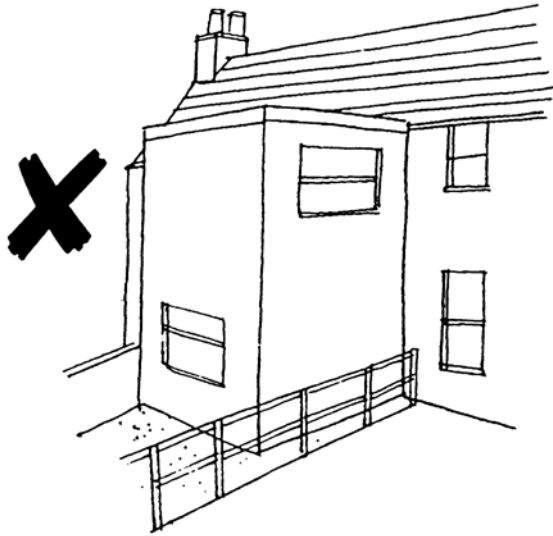


Although 45 Degree Rule not complied with, would normally be acceptable for proposed groundfloor extensions as length does not exceed 3m. For first floor extension, normally unacceptable.

37) In order to protect privacy and prevent overlooking, extensions that have blank walls facing a neighbour's principle window should be at least 12.5 metres away from that window. Where a first floor extension with a new principle window is constructed, the elevation should, unless offset, be 21 metres away from any facing neighbours rear window. In cases where a balcony is proposed which will be overlooking a habitable room, permission will not be granted. Balconies therefore require careful positioning. Finally, rear extensions will not be granted planning permission if, as a result of the extension being erected, any remaining garden size would be less than 10 square metres.

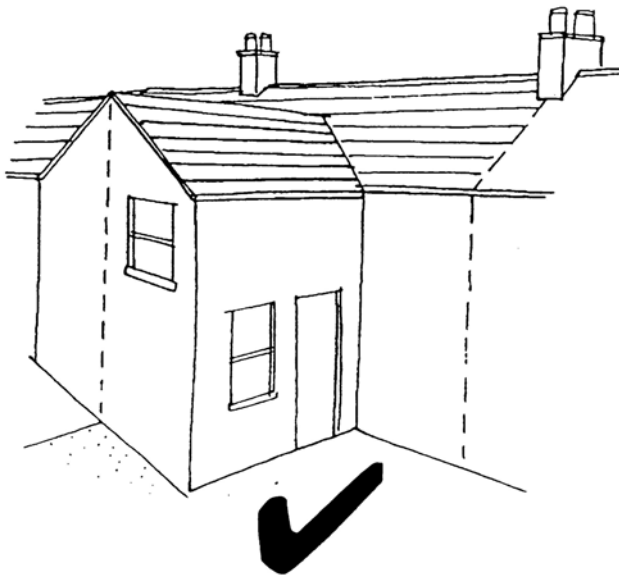
i) Unacceptable Rear Extensions

- ★ Overshadows neighbouring properties
- ★ Windows in flank wall overlooks adjoining garden
- ★ Inadequate garden space remaining
- ★ Design does not match existing house
- ★ Extension begins to dominate house
- ★ Full width two storey extension leads to overhanging gutters, valley gutters and prevents neighbours from extending their property.



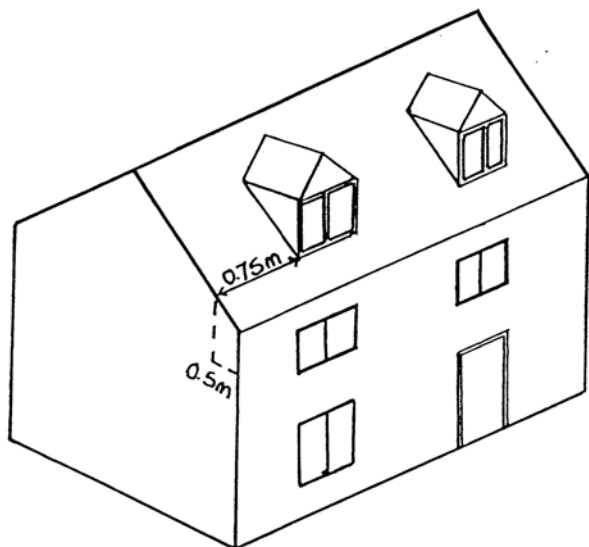
ii) **Acceptable Rear Extensions**

- ★ Does not take up the whole width of the house
- ★ Matches up with a neighbouring extension
- ★ First floor window kept to gable so as not to overlook neighbouring property



DORMERS

- 38)** Dormer extensions, particularly those on front of properties, can have a dramatic effect on the appearance of an area as they significantly alter the roof slopes and can form intrusive features. The Council will therefore generally encourage the construction of dormer extensions on the rear elevations where their impact on the street scene is considered less important, provided that these do not unacceptably overlook adjoining properties. As well as being sympathetic to the design of the building, dormer extensions should also retain at least 0.75 metres of existing roof to the side and 0.5 metres to the lower edge. It should however be noted that some dormers can be constructed under permitted development rights.

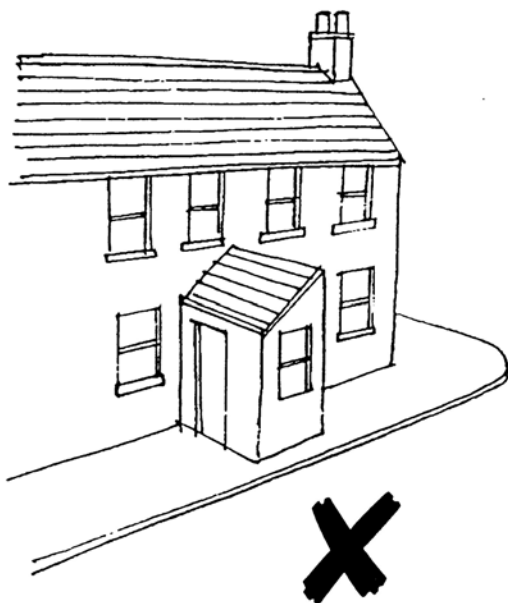


PORCHES

39) Porches may only be constructed within their own curtilage and must be in keeping with the design and form of the existing house. Although many porches may be erected under permitted development rights, the Council will seek to ensure that those which require its approval accord with the above guidance.

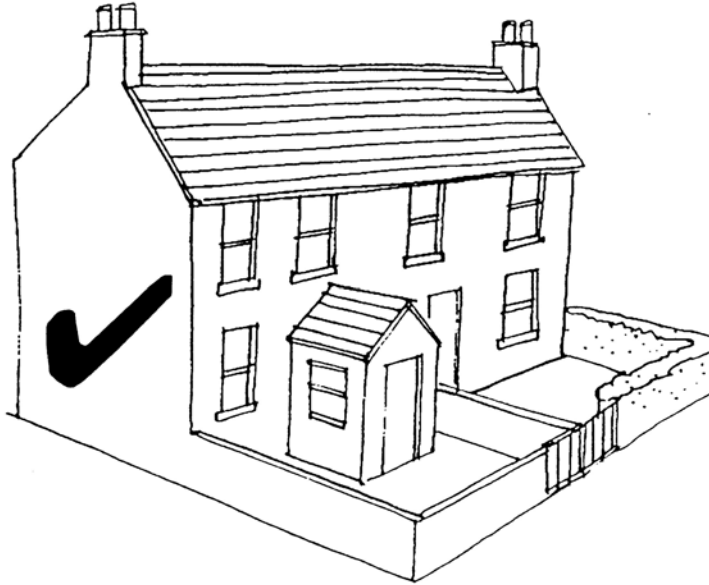
i) **Unacceptable**

- ★ extension extends out onto the street



ii) **Acceptable**

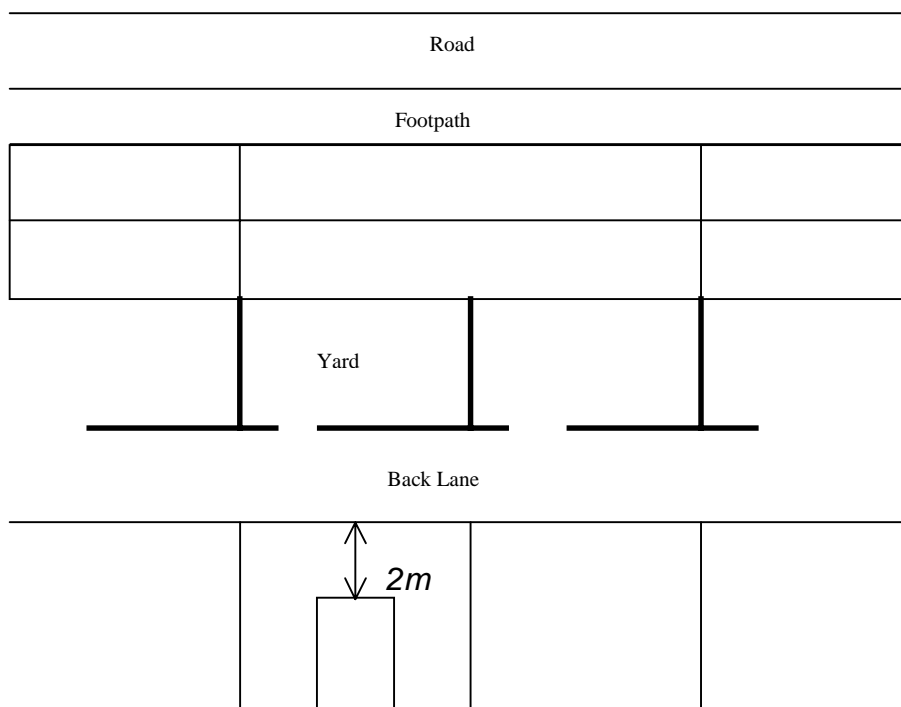
- ★ extension is contained within the street's own curtilage
- ★ extension is in keeping with the design and form of the existing house



GARAGES

- 40) Domestic garages should follow the same guidelines as those for extensions and should be of a high quality of design especially where their location is prominent. Garages should be subordinate to the house, use similar or matching materials to the house and where possible be set back from the front of the house. The Council will also seek to ensure that no trade or business use (i.e. car repairs) takes place from these garages.
- 41) Where domestic garages are accessed via a rear lane, the garage should be set back from the front lane by a minimum of 2 metres. This will ensure that the garage can be opened safely without its doors swinging out over the lane.

Plan View



CONSERVATORIES

- 42) Conservatories and sun lounges should adhere to the same guidelines as single storey extensions. Due to their purpose, they are however constructed largely from glass. Where the conservatory is to be constructed adjacent to the common boundary of a property, the Council will normally request that the side elevation be constructed from obscured glass. A suitable screen fence or landscaping may be acceptable, but in such circumstances the Council will ensure such screening will be retained via the imposition of a planning condition.

WINDOWS

- 43) One of the most important decisions to be made in designing a new house or extension concerns the proportion, placing and design of windows. The guidelines applying to windows varies according to the building type and its location.

a) Windows in New Houses/Extensions

- i) The window design should always be considered as part of the whole building;
- ii) window design should attempt to respect the character of the adjacent properties or buildings in the surrounding area; and
- iii) new windows should provide visual interest and be well designed

b) Conservation Areas

Where an "Article 4 Direction" has been approved relating to window alteration in a Conservation Area:

- a) stained hard wood, aluminium and UPVC windows should be avoided. External joinery should normally be of timber in an appropriate and traditional style (i.e. vertical sliding sash);
- b) traditional window proportions and shapes should be used as a basis for design;
- c) decorated mullions in paired or triple sashes which have a structural as well as a visual purpose should not be removed;
- d) staining and varnishing of timber is not appropriate. New frames must be finished with a top coat of white gloss;
- e) careful consideration should be given to the design of the glazing bars and detailing of any moulding on the frame; and
- f) double glazing units may not always be considered appropriate unless their inherent design drawbacks are overcome, using windows which are more sympathetic in design and materials is preferable.

c) Listed Buildings

Alterations to window openings and frames in listed buildings require listed building consent as they will affect the building's historic and architectural character.

The following alterations will not be approved:-

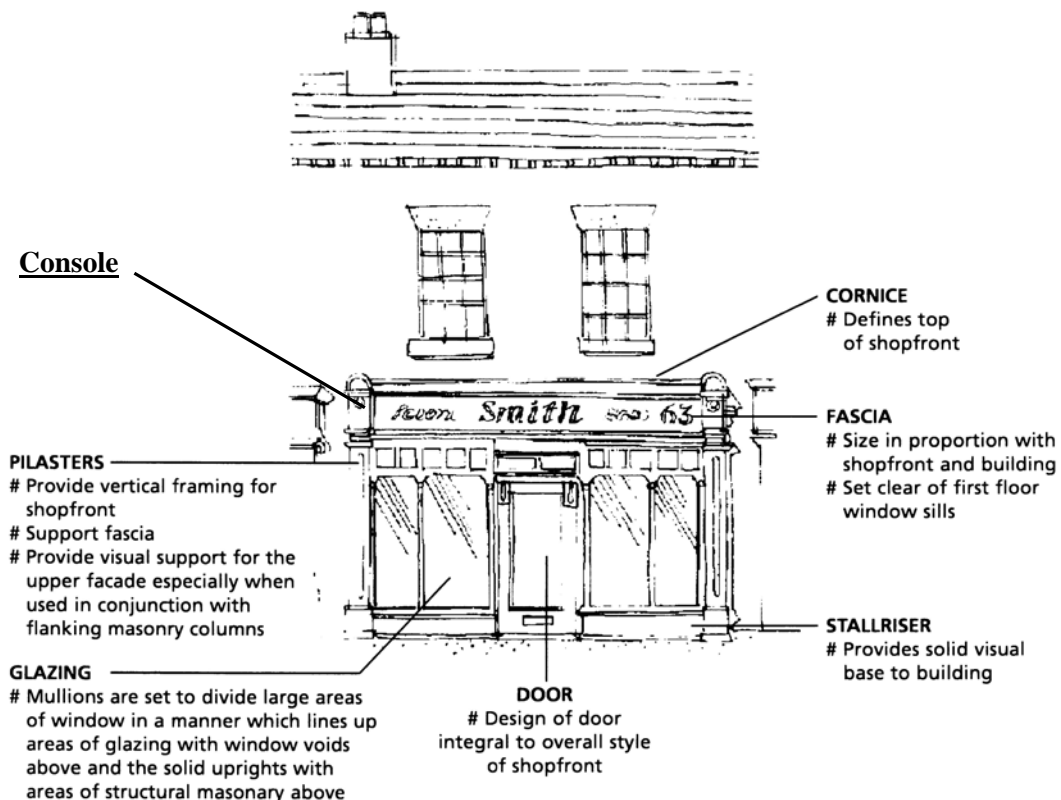
- a) replacement of frames to a different pattern – repair or as a last resort duplication is always preferable; and
 - b) enlargement, alteration or the moving of a window opening. Historic buildings evolve over time and, as such, often show a sequence of changes up to the date that they were listed. Attempts should not, therefore, be made to restore buildings to a particular period.
- 44)** Further guidance is contained in “Windows Design Guidelines in County Durham”, published by Durham County Council.

Appendix II

APPENDIX II - SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND RETAIL FRONTAGES

INTRODUCTION

- 1) The guidance for shop front design should be read in conjunction with policies R10 to R14 in the retail chapter. The policies outline the principles of good design which, if observed, will contribute to the development of attractive town and village centres.
- 2) Planning permission is required for the alteration of an existing shop front or installation of a new one. Shop fronts need to be designed to fit in with the rest of the building and adjacent buildings in the frontage as they are a major contributor to the overall visual environment of the shopping centres.
- 3) Although there is a wide diversity of buildings within a shopping centre there are a lot of features that make up the shop frontages that they all have in common. It is these features that, when installed, can result in a frontage with character and style.



- 4) Materials should be chosen to conform with the historic character of the area, and with the building above and where suitable to each side. Timber is the most suitable and versatile material for brick and stone buildings. It is important that they are painted and not stained.
- 5) The diagram illustrates the various components that make up the shop front:-

- i) Fascia – This is an important part of the shop front and should be incorporated within the overall design rather than added as an afterthought;
 - ii) Pilasters – The pilasters form the outer edge of the shop front and provide support for the fascia and the upper floors. On older buildings original pilasters should be retained and repaired, where necessary with the original materials;
 - iii) Stallriser – The stallriser provides the base of the building and helps to break up the expanse of glass;
 - iv) Glazing – Glazing bars should be divided up into smaller bars to avoid excessive large areas of glazing; fanlights can be introduced below the fascia;
 - v) The shop door – This also makes up an important part of the shop front. They should be recessed from the main frontage and should be level or ramped to assist wheelchair users or people with prams. They should also be well integrated into the overall design of the shop front;
 - vi) Shutters – Outside of business hours shutters have a major influence on the visual environment of shopping centres. This guidance should be read in conjunction with policy R14 and the document “Secured by Design”. Shutters are of obvious importance for the security of shops after trading hours have ended, however unless they are sensitively designed they can often lead to the creation of a visually hostile environment. It is therefore essential that the box, shutter and guide rails which make up the shutter be as sensitive as possible to the appearance of the shop front. Boxes should be incorporated within the fascia, the shutters should be open grill and colour co-ordinated and the grill rails likewise should be colour co-ordinated. Security shutters should preferably be either perforated, punctured, or open grills. Solid shutters are acceptable in certain locations. All shutters, grills and guide rails should be painted and colour co-ordinated with the shopfront.
- 6) Further Guidance is contained in “Shop Fronts: Design Guidelines in County Durham” published by Durham County Council.

ASSESSMENT OF RETAIL AND NON-RETAIL FRONTAGES – POLICIES R7 & R15

INTRODUCTION

- 7) Policies R7 and R15 refer to the percentages of street level frontages in non-retail uses. The following provides guidance in the calculation of these percentages.
- 8) The following are INCLUDED within the total frontage length:
 - ★ All retail and commercial frontages (e.g. Uses Classes A1, A2, A3, B1 and Sui Generis) including any display windows, doors or blank walls forming part of the unit;

- ★ Non-retail frontages which are clearly part of the overall street frontage, rather than being set back from it;
 - ★ Outstanding planning consents are included when calculating frontages in particular uses;
 - ★ Both sides of the street, where applicable, are included when the overall frontage is calculated;
 - ★ Vacant buildings with existing planning permissions.
- 9)** The following are EXCLUDED from the total frontage length : -
- ★ Access points to side streets, alley ways or service yards;
 - ★ Vacant sites without planning permission (but including space utilised for car parks which clearly form part of the overall street frontage);
 - ★ Buildings set back from or behind the Street Frontage (e.g. Mains Park Road, Middle Chare)."

Appendix III

APPENDIX III - POLICIES SPECIFICALLY RELATING TO CHESTER-LE-STREET TOWN CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

- 1) These policies are to be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 - Chester-le-Street Town Centre.

POLICY REF	POLICY/PROPOSAL
Natural Environment	
NE9	Wildlife Corridors
NE15	Protection of Significant Views
NE17	Environmental Action Areas
Built Environment	
BE2	Public Art
BE3	Designation and Review of Conservative Areas
BE10	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
BE12	Assessments of Sites of Archaeological Interest
BE15	Demolition of Listed Buildings
BE15A	Demolitions Within the Curtilage of a Listed Building
BE16	The Settings of Listed Buildings
BE17	Alterations, Extensions and Conversions of Listed Buildings
BE19	Environmental Improvements
BE20	Designing Out Crime
BE21	Policy Obligations
Housing	
HP14	Living Over the Shop
Retailing	
R1	Major Retail Development and Key Town Centre Functions
R3	Retail Warehouse and Bulky Goods Retailing
R4	New Retail Opportunities
R5	Chester-le-Street Market
R6	Non-Retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages
R7	Non-Retail Uses in Secondary Shopping Frontages
R8	Amusement Arcades/Centres
R9	Provision of Window Displays
R10	Design for Retailing and Town Centre Developments: General
R11	Shopfront Design : General
R12	Shopfront Design : Advertisements
R13	Shopfront Design : Disabled Access
R14	Shopfront Design : Security Shutters
Industry	
IN3	General Industrial Estates
IN7	Industrial Development Beyond Defined Industrial Estates
Tourism	
TM13	The C2C Cycle Route
Transport	
T2	Recreational Routes
T4	Rail Passenger Services
T5	Bus Provision
T7	Chester-le-Street Town Centre Traffic Management
T8	Servicing of Commercial Premises

Appendix IV

APPENDIX IV - PRESTIGE INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

INTRODUCTION

- 1)** Policy IN3 deals with the development of prestige industrial estates and these guidelines should be read in conjunction with the requirements of that policy. The Local Plan identifies and designates different types of industrial estate throughout the District, including one prestige estate at Drum Lane. This estate is only available for companies requiring a site with a high standard of access and a good quality environment ie offices. Development on Drum Lane Estate will only be approved for business (class B1), general industry (class B2), or storage and distribution (class B8) uses. A high standard of site layout, design and landscaping will therefore be required.

GUIDANCE

- 2)** Developers will be encouraged to employ innovative design, particularly on corner sites with two main frontages. Designs should seek to create an interesting and varied outline, preferably contained under a dual pitched or hipped roof. Interest may also be created by incorporating innovative glazing features and architectural or artistic features in the external elevations. A public entrance should be well designed to form the focal point of the building frontage. Simple box-like sheds should be avoided.
- 3)** A variety of complementary building materials may be used, incorporating an attractive colour scheme. Bland featureless elevations onto public highways should be avoided.
- 4)** Company sign boards and logos should form an integral part of the overall design of the building frontage, preferably related to the building entrance. The location, size, design and colour of any sign boards should be appropriate to the overall design of the building and the general appearance of the area.
- 5)** All developments will be required to include appropriate landscaping to provide an attractive setting. Major proposals will be required to include landscaping on the outer edge of the development in the form of tree and shrub planting.
- 6)** The design of the forecourt and entrance is particularly important and developers will be encouraged to include artistic elements with attractive lighting and landscaping to enhance the overall appearance of the development.
- 7)** Full details of the landscape proposals will be required to be submitted as part of the detailed planning application.

Appendix V

APPENDIX V - FORMAL PLAY SPACE PROVISION

INTRODUCTION

- 1) This guidance should be read in conjunction with Policy RL5 of the Recreation and Leisure Chapter. The policy requires residential developments to devote a proportion of the development site for children's' play schemes. In some situations, developers may be given the option of making a commuted payment in lieu of the physical provision in the locality or where there is a more appropriate provision/site than within the development site itself.

LOCATION/SITING

- 2) The following general principles must be followed. The play space must be:-
 - i) an integral part of a footpath system of adoptable standard;
 - ii) within reasonable walking distance of home i.e.
 - a) for small children 2-5 years old within 200m of every home with no intervening traffic flow;
 - b) for older children 5-15 years old within 400m of every home.
 - iii) in full view and integrated into a development so as to acknowledge that play is an important aspect of community life.
 - iv) away from situations where it might cause nuisance e.g. adjacent to old persons' dwellings, or gable walls of dwellings; and
 - v) easily accessible for maintenance purposes.

LAYOUT

- 3) A plan of the proposed playspace must be drawn accurately to a scale of 1:200 or larger.
- 4) The layout must provide:-
 - i) a sense of enclosure for the users, without hiding it from view or isolating it. For instance, earth mounding, planting or low fencing can all achieve this;
 - ii) landscape treatment – sensitive landscape treatment can go a long way towards producing a rich environment conducive to the children's' physical, social and psychological development, etc. Strenuous attempts must be made to preserve existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows or changes in level. A safe play environment that takes into account points of entry into play space and the circulation of children around items of play equipment should be provided;
 - iii) access for disabled children.

EQUIPMENT

- 5)** The type and siting of equipment shall be subject to the approval of Chester-le-Street District Council. The following comments offer some general guidance:-
- i) each play area shall contain, on average, at least one item of equipment for every 50 square metres of play space;
 - ii) the equipment selected shall cater for physical experiences from the following – climbing; sliding; balancing; rocking; swinging; (with each item catering for a different physical experience). In addition areas intended for the over sevens may incorporate an aerial runway or other equipment of a more adventurous type;
 - iii) consideration shall be given to the use of equipment by disabled children;
 - iv) appropriately sited seating and litter bins shall be provided;
 - v) the materials and colours chosen shall be appropriate to the surroundings;
 - vi) cycle racks shall be provided where appropriate.

FENCING

- 6)** General guidance requires:-
- i) fencing shall be to a minimum height of 750mm and not so high as to prevent supervision;
 - ii) particular attention shall be given to the means of access in order to exclude dogs and facilitate entry by children, buggies and wheelchairs; e.g. some form of kissing gate or self-closing gate.

SURFACING

- 7)** The following provides general guidance:-
- i) a variety of materials shall be provided in the play area according to intended use;
 - ii) an impact absorbing surface shall be used throughout the minimum use zone of any equipment from which a fall is possible;
 - iii) Chester-le-Street District Council will offer advice on the choice of appropriate surfaces;
 - iv) a smooth, firm surface shall be provided at the access points and leading to and around seating.

PLANTING

- 8)** The following principles must be followed:-
- i) tree and shrub planting shall be used, in association with ground modelling and fencing, to give a strong framework to the play area;
 - ii) all planting must be of a robust nature to withstand heavy use and shall be planted in bold groups;
 - iii) poisonous species must obviously be avoided;
 - iv) careful choice of plants will not only give year-round aesthetic appeal, to stimulate the sense of sight, hearing and smell, but can also attract wildlife to the area, which is obviously an added benefit for children;
 - v) shrub planting in toddlers' play areas, shall not exceed a general height of 1200mm;
 - vi) a grass area or play lawn shall be incorporated in each play area of sufficient size to allow casual ball games.

FUTURE MAINTENANCE

- 9)** Policy RL6 of the Local Plan sets out the arrangements for commuted maintenance payments if developers require Chester-le-Street District Council to adopt the play space. These costs will be secured through a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

OFF-SITE PROVISION UNDER LOCAL PLAN POLICY RL5

- 10)** Chester-le-Street District Council aims to ensure an adequate provision of play facilities distributed across the District in such a way as to satisfy the needs of local communities. In order to attract maximum use of facilities, with the minimum disturbance to nearby residents, Chester-le-Street District Council will seek to identify suitable sites that can be used, improved or are required to serve each local community within the District.
- 11)** In taking this overall view of play provision, Chester-le-Street District Council is prepared in certain circumstances (i.e. in order to achieve the optimum pattern of distribution), to offer developers the option of making a capital contribution to provide the play facilities elsewhere in the local area.
- 12)** The commuted payment option will be applied by Chester-le-Street District Council on a discretionary basis and will be dependent on the level of local provision and priorities which have been identified. Early contact should be made with Chester-le-Street District Council to establish whether the commuted payment option will apply in individual circumstances. For larger developments and locations in which there is a shortfall in provision, the developer will be expected to make provision on site. In certain circumstances, there may be cause to pool commuted payments from a number of small developments within a single locality to allow provision to be

made by Chester-le-Street District Council to serve these developments collectively. This could be through new areas or improvements to existing play areas.

- 13)** Planning permission will not normally be granted for schemes which do not make adequate provision for children's play (either commuted payments or direct provision) up to the required standard. Conditions may be attached to planning permissions regarding the provision of play space. Provision for play (either on site or commuted payments), must be made in renewal of planning permission where the original permission was issued before the operation of this policy.
- 14)** The payment will be secured under a legal obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and in accordance with Policy BE22. The agreement will be entered into before planning permission is granted and the payment will be made in full once the first dwelling of the scheme is occupied. The provision of the facilities by Chester-le-Street District Council will be made within a time scale agreed with the developer. The time scale will form part of the Section 106 Obligation.

Appendix VI

APPENDIX VI - AIMS OF THE GREAT NORTH FOREST

INTRODUCTION

- 1) Community Forests are multi-purpose forests designed, developed and managed to provide for timber production, nature conservation, landscape enhancement, leisure and recreation.
- 2) The aims of the Community Forest are to:-
 - i) provide a positive framework to influence the regeneration of Green Belt and urban countryside areas;
 - ii) provide a permanent, high quality environment, responsive to the leisure needs of local urban communities;
 - iii) improve the landscape of areas close to towns and cities to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment in which to live and play;
 - iv) contribute to enhancing the economic attractiveness of towns and cities through the creation of more appealing locations for industry and commerce;
 - v) provide opportunities for the diversity of agricultural management and alternative use for surplus land taken out of farming;
 - vi) provide thriving havens for wildlife with their diverse tree cover and varied landscapes, protecting and enhancing existing sites of interest;
 - vii) offer new opportunities for active sport and recreation within a countryside setting;
 - viii) establish a supply of local timber and other woodland projects;
 - ix) provide new opportunities for education and learning at all levels, particularly in conjunction with the national curriculum;
 - x) create employment in both timber and leisure related activities;
 - xi) create opportunities for all sections of the community to support, build and use their own countryside; and
 - xii) contribute to global environmental improvements through filtering pollution and green house gases and releasing oxygen.

Appendix VII

APPENDIX VII - CARAVAN AND CHALET DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 1) This guidance should be read in conjunction with policies TM4 and TM7, contained within the Tourism Chapter.
- 2) The development of caravan sites and chalets inevitably raises the issue of the effect that such development will have on the appearance of the countryside. Caravans are not attractive in themselves and are invariably light coloured. Sites therefore can have a severe effect on the landscape unless carefully located and well screened with suitable landscaping. Where caravan sites are permitted, there will always be a certain level of visual impact and it would be unrealistic to expect any new sites to be completely invisible from all viewpoints. Nonetheless it is essential that any new sites do not materially detract from the appearance of the countryside which is a strong asset for the District in terms of tourism promotion.
- 3) Central Government Advice on caravans is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 21 on Tourism, which advises Councils to consider in their development plans whether facilities for the caravanner are adequate to allow “reasonable freedom to wander and explore.... and a reasonable choice of sites”. However, the PPG recognises that this objective must be reconciled with the protection and preservation of what people come to see, and that special consideration is needed for proposals for new sites. The Council is in no doubt that holiday and touring caravan parks will remain an important element in the self-catering holiday sector, and will contribute as much to the local economy as conventional holiday accommodation whilst using less land for the purpose.
- 4) Locations which would affect statutory Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Reserves or other wildlife sites as identified in the District Plan, should be avoided. In considering whether a site is adequately screened, it will be necessary to consider whether the operator of the proposed site will have control of the woodland providing the screening, to avoid a situation where a site might be later exposed to view by felling operations by the adjoining landowner.

SERVICE FACILITIES

- 5) It is recognised that site service facilities such as shops may be necessary; however the scale of any such ancillary uses should be appropriate to the needs of the site only, in order to discourage use by the general public which may cause disturbance to local residents.

INTERNAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN

- 6) In order to achieve a satisfactory scheme it will be necessary to ensure that an integrated landscaping approach for the whole site, which breaks up the pitches into smaller clusters of preferably not more than 10 caravans, is applied. Essential site amenities should be carefully designed, most notably toilet blocks.

SEASONAL SITES

- 7) In situations where the autumn leaf fall will leave the site exposed to a view, a condition will normally be imposed to require all or some caravans to be removed between October 31 and March 1 and put into storage.

WINTER STORAGE

- 8) Subject to satisfactory screening existing during winter, storage will normally be permitted on appropriate areas controlled via a planning condition. Indeed, it is appropriate at an early planning stage for developers to identify suitable areas of the proposed site for storage purposes, and carry out advance planting to ensure maximum screening.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENTS

- 9) Under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, the Council may require an environmental statement from the developer. The statement should include the full environmental affects of the proposal. The power to require a statement is discretionary on behalf of the Council but will generally be required for larger caravan or chalet developments, especially if the proposed site is in a sensitive area in either landscape or ecological terms.

Appendix VIII

APPENDIX VIII - SITING AND DESIGN OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

INTRODUCTION

- 1) This guidance should be read in conjunction with policy AG3 contained within the Agriculture Chapter.
- 2) Due to the wide variety of proposals for agricultural buildings it is very difficult to provide a set of comprehensive guidelines. Farmers are therefore encouraged to hold pre-application discussions with the Council's Planning Officers in order to obtain advice regarding the siting and design of new buildings. The following guidelines have been drawn up to help to achieve a design which satisfies the operational requirements as well as acceptable visual requirements:-
 - i) careful consideration should be given to the impact of a new building when viewed from several locations in both the immediate vicinity and in the wider countryside i.e. from main roads, public footpaths and other similar vantage points;
 - ii) subject to the operational needs of the farm, the impact of a new building can be reduced by siting close to existing development, and utilising existing walls and accesses, which may also reduce costs;
 - iii) existing hedgerows and trees should be retained where possible and new buildings should respect the existing field boundary pattern;
 - iv) buildings located on the crest of a hill are visually intrusive, and also exposed to the weather. If such a location is unavoidable, special consideration will be necessary to the design (i.e. colour);
 - v) on sloping sites it is normally best to align a building parallel with the contours and use cut and fill as opposed to underbuilding. If different floor levels are practical, the building should be stepped down the slope.

SCALE AND FORM OF BUILDING

- 3) The following guidelines should be followed:-
 - i) a large new building should not be located close to an existing small one since this will accentuate the scale of the new building. Trees can sometimes help to mask differences in scale;
 - ii) the use of an 'L' shaped plan, providing the floor space in more than one unit, using a multispans building or providing overhanging eaves can all help to reduce the apparent size of a new building;
 - iii) where possible, roof pitches should be matched to those on existing buildings, even where it is perceived that a low roof pitch might reduce the total height of the building. It is preferable that new roofs appear in harmony with pitched roofs;

- iv) large roofs can be broken up by functional elements such as ventilators, skylights, gutters or downpipes.

COLOUR AND CLADDING MATERIALS

- 4) Guidance for colour and cladding materials require:
 - i) an appropriate choice of cladding materials and colours, in sympathy with the location, is essential to minimising visual impact;
 - ii) darker colours are generally more acceptable and as a general rule the roof of a rural building should be darker than the walls in order to help make the building look smaller;
 - iii) where more than one colour is used they must be in harmony – specific advice is contained in British Standard BS5502 part 20;
 - iv) use of the same or similar colours on new and existing buildings can help to unify a group. In some cases it might be appropriate to paint existing buildings to provide unity with the new structure;
 - v) the limited use of contrasting light colours can help to break up the apparent bulk of a large building;
 - vi) too many materials can cause visual disunity;
 - vii) choose appropriate materials for the climate which will weather well over time;
 - viii) the use of traditional materials (e.g. treated timber) can harmonise with existing buildings, and is highly practical where space boarding for ventilation is required;
 - ix) within a forest setting, vertical rather than horizontal cladding complements the vertical form of trees.

SURROUNDINGS

- 5) Guidance requires that:
 - i) consideration should be given to the best way of integrating a new building with its immediate surroundings and landscape;
 - ii) existing trees and shelterbelts should be retained, and where appropriate augmented;
 - iii) native trees should be used for new planted areas, rather than fast growing conifer hedges;
 - iv) any areas proposed for new planting should take account of any plans for new development;

- v) waste material and redundant material should be removed, as should obsolete buildings except where these are built in the local building style and are worthy of retention;
 - vi) consideration should be given to how hard-surfaced areas should link together and where resurfacing is needed use materials appropriate to a rural area.
- 6)** Where possible applicants will be encouraged to reuse and adapt existing farm buildings, particularly where these are built in the local building style and are considered worthy of retention. Where this is not practical, proposals for new agricultural buildings should take account of the potential for the conversion of existing buildings in accordance with Policies AG6, AG7 and AG8 in the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance on Conversion of Rural Buildings contained in Appendix IX.

Appendix IX

APPENDIX IX - THE CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS

INTRODUCTION

- 1) Policies AG6, AG7 and AG8 deal with the conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses, these guidelines should be read in conjunction with the requirements of these Policies. Central Government guidance on the conversion of rural buildings in the countryside is given in Planning Policy Guidance note 7: "The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development".
- 2) The guidance points out that:-

"there are often opportunities for reuse or adapting existing rural buildings for new commercial, industrial or recreational uses."
- 3) It states that there should normally be no reason for preventing the reuse or adaptation of agricultural or rural buildings for new uses, 'provided that their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings'. It also states that proposals are more likely to be acceptable if they 'respect local building styles and materials'.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL GUIDELINES

- 4) Applications to change the use of rural buildings must be accompanied by detailed plans showing the effect of the conversion on the external appearance of buildings. It is essential that the detailed proposals retain and enhance the original character of the building. In most circumstances, development involving listed buildings will require planning permission. Any application for permission must also be accompanied by an application for Listed Building Consent, in order that both can be considered together. In such cases, the retention of internal features (e.g. roof structures) can be an important consideration and therefore full 'working drawings' will be required.
- 5) When considering proposals for conversion, the following policy issues will be addressed by the Council:-
 - i) The proposed use
 - a) Proposals should ideally generate economic benefits. Residential proposals will be considered only as a last resort;
 - b) In addition to the above matters a proposal must not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers or the area as a whole.
 - ii) Dereliction
 - a) Buildings that have fallen into substantial disrepair will normally not be allowed to be rebuilt and converted. A building will be considered to need rebuilding when a significant proportion of the structure is beyond repair, for example the roof is missing or any part of the main walls are

missing/unsound or anything other than incidental reinstatement is required.

iii) Structural condition of the building:

- a) If there is doubt concerning the structural condition of the building, applications must be accompanied by a report from a qualified structural engineer demonstrating that the building is physically capable of adaptation with minimal, if any, re-building of the existing structure. Whilst it is appreciated that during the course of conversion work unforeseen structural problems can be encountered, a thorough appraisal of the building and a realistic expectation of the amount of adaptation that will be possible should normally avoid problems. If the extent of rebuilding proposed is considered excessive, consent will be withheld. Proposals to demolish or rebuild the whole structure will be strongly resisted.

iv) Extensions

- a) The addition of minor extensions to existing buildings may be acceptable where:-
 - 1) they are subservient to the building; or
 - 2) they are necessary in order to achieve a normal sized building and are not too domestic in appearance. In case of listed barns, it may be particularly difficult to provide extensions without diminishing the architectural interest of the building.

v) Relationship to farm sub-division proposals

- a) Policy AG9 seeks to control the unnecessary increase in the number of new agricultural dwellings arising from the break up of farms. In terms of the Policy, the conversion of a redundant farm building and its sale to persons not employed full time in agriculture could have implications for any future proposals to erect a new dwelling for agricultural purposes elsewhere on the same original farm unit.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- 6) The following guidelines may help to achieve a design which is acceptable in visual terms:-
 - i) The key objective of any conversion scheme should be to facilitate the new use whilst retaining the original character and identity of the original building. Attempting to change the appearance of the building to a typical domestic dwelling will not normally be appropriate;
 - ii) The original materials used in the construction of the building should ideally be retained and where necessary restored (eg replacing corrugated tin roofs with slate);

- iii) If extensions are proposed they should be minimal in size and should be built in a similar style to match the existing building;
- iv) In order to retain the character and appearance of the building the number of new window and door openings should be minimised. The retention of the existing fenestration pattern with minimum, if any, additions is often crucial to the success of a proposal, and is therefore, encouraged;
- v) Any new window and/or door openings which are necessary should be designed to match any existing openings in terms of height, proportion and sill and lintel details. Full strength glazed windows and French doors, will normally be inappropriate;
- vi) If a chimney flue is required, this should be sited as unobtrusively as possible and normally constructed of materials to match the existing building;
- vii) Any external features that reflect the original use of the building (eg hay loft doors or jibs) should ideally be retained. This will assist in the preservation of the real identity of the building;
- viii) If possible, original doors should be copied;
- ix) If possible, existing roof timbers should be retained. These can form an attractive feature if retained and exposed by the use of warm roof construction;
- x) Garaging should, where possible, be provided by the conversion of suitable outbuildings. A proliferation of sheds, conservatories and outhouses should be avoided;
- xi) Rainwater goods should ideally be coloured black. Cast iron will be required on listed buildings. In the case of some listed barns, it may be necessary for rainwater goods, soil pipes etc. to be contained within the internal fabric;
- xii) Window frames and external timber should normally be painted (avoiding overly bright colours). The use of staining may only be acceptable in some instances, although generally the use of paint will be more appropriate;
- xiii) A test panel for the repair and repointing of stonework and brickwork may be needed in some cases;
- xiv) Where possible, any recent or inappropriate additions to the building should be removed and as far as possible, the buildings original character and appearance restored;
- xv) Where no existing access track to the property exists, care will be needed in the positioning of any new access and, where possible, existing routes should be utilised. Hard kerbs, tarmac and concrete drives should be avoided. Informal grass verges, gravel and granite set driveways would be more appropriate;

- xvi) Rooflights within the roofscape should be limited in number and conservation rooflights are recommended ;
- xvii) Planting adjacent to the buildings should be of native species if possible, (i.e. Hawthorne hedges rather than conifers)

Appendix X

APPENDIX X - PARKING GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

- 1) These accessibility guidelines are to be read in conjunction with Policies T8 and T13. They are based on those guidelines contained in national policy guidance notes PPG3 “Housing” and PPG13 “Transport” and upon the cycle parking standards prepared by Durham County Council as the Highways Authority. Whilst Table 1 provides a broad indication of the parking requirements in accordance with national planning policy, Durham County Council are in the process of reviewing its parking standards to cover parking standards for a more detailed types of development. Once adopted, these standards will be incorporated into the Local Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Table 3 denotes the minimum cycle parking guidelines for cycle parking provision within new developments.

Table 1: Maximum Parking Standards

USE	National Maximum Parking Standard 1 space per square metre (m ²) of gross floorspace unless otherwise stated	Threshold From and Above Which Standard Applies (gross floorspace)
Food retail	1 space per 14m ²	1000m ²
Non food retail	1 space per 20m ²	1000m ²
Cinemas and conference facilities	1 space per 5 seats	1000m ²
D2 (other than cinemas, conference facilities and stadia)	1 space per 22m ²	1000m ²
B1 including offices	1 space per 30m ²	2500m ²
Higher and further education	1 space per 2 staff + 1 space per 15 students (see note 1)	2500m ²
Stadia	1 space per 15 seats (see note 2)	1500 seats
Residential	1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling	

NOTES:

1. The standard for students relates to the total number of students attending an educational establishment, rather than full-time equivalent figures.
2. For stadia, sufficient coach parking should be provided to the satisfaction of the local authority and treated separately from car parking. Coach parking should be designed and managed so that it will not be used for car parking.
3. Parking for disabled people should be additional to the maximum parking standards. Development proposals should provide adequate parking for disabled motorists, in terms of numbers and design (see Traffic Advice Leaflet 5/95, Parking for Disabled People).
4. For mixed use development, the gross floorspace given over to each use should be used to calculate the overall total maximum parking figure. For land uses not covered in these standards, the most stringent regional or local standards should apply.

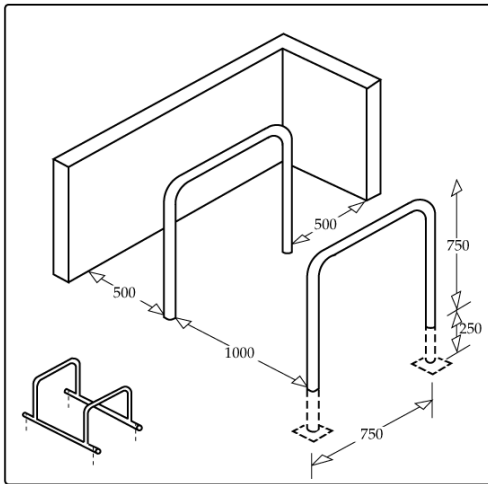
PROVISION OF CYCLE PARKING

- 2) A major factor inhibiting the use of cycles is the lack of certainty in being able to find a secure, safe place to leave the bike at the end of the trip. Cyclists will be deterred if their cycles are stolen or damaged as a result of poor cycle storage provision. Bicycle parking areas require only one tenth of the space as for an equivalent number of cars, freeing up land for more productive purposes. Cycle storage facilities are relatively cheap to install and maintain. The provision of good parking facilities will help to avoid the unsightly and sometimes dangerous clutter of bicycles chained to various other items of street furniture. If parking is well positioned it will serve to increase the relative amenity of cycling and reinforce a positive image for it.
- 3) Minimum standards for cycle parking provision are set out in Table 1. Should it appear, in particular circumstances that this provision may be inadequate to meet the demand for cycle parking then additional provision may be required.
- 4) The location and design of cycle parking facilities are crucial in terms of their effectiveness. The document 'Cycle-friendly Infrastructure', published jointly by the Department of Transport, Institute of Highways and Transportation, Cyclists' Touring Club and the Bicycle Association, should be consulted for more detail.
- 5) In central areas of the County's main towns, and in some other, more local centres, specific provision for cycle parking, particularly long stay parking, may not be appropriate. In such instances a combined payment towards the provision of facilities may be required.

Short stay cycle parking

- 6) It is recommended that short stay facilities, catering for visitors expected to stay for under two hours, should be sited as close as possible to the entrance to the building they serve. They should be in a secure location where they can be overlooked from the building or by passers by. They should not block the footpath, and should be grouped together and signed.
- 7) Facilities should be easy to use and must minimise the potential of damage to the bike: stands which support the bike by the wheel only are not acceptable. 'Sheffield' type stands or wall mounted loops are the most appropriate designs. A Sheffield stand should be 750mm high and longer than 700mm, and if at least 1000mm exists between stands then each can accommodate two bikes. Wall loops should be at a height of 750mm, project 50mm from the wall, and be at least 1800mm apart (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Cycle parking stands - suggested dimensions



Long stay cycle parking

- 8) When catering for commuters or visitors expected to stay about 2 hours or more, a secure position is more important than accessibility, although both would be ideal. A roof or other protection from the weather is essential. Storage facilities for equipment and accessories are useful. Suitable designs include cycle lockers or areas set aside within buildings or in supervised car parks. They will often incorporate their own locking device, which may be money, token or key operated. Their location should be well signed.
- 9) Table 2 shows suggested ratios for long to short stay provision.

Table 2: Cycle Parking Ratios

Use	Ratio long: short stay spaces
Retail and commercial premises, residential and non-residential institutions (except schools, but including hospitals and clinics)	1:2
Office, business and leisure use	7:1
Assembly/leisure use (including libraries, theatres, lecture theatres, cinemas)	1:10
Public transport (bus/rail) stations	Long stay only
Car parks	Long stay only
Residential flats	Long stay only
Secondary schools/halls of residence	20:1

Table 3: Cycle Parking Guidelines for Development Control

Land use	Minimum provision
1. Residential	
Dwellings	Nil
Residential flats Cycle spaces in flats should preferably be provided within the building, to provide greater security.	1 per flat

Other high density housing (housing association, local authority, starter homes or terraced housing)	Nil
2. Special residential	
Elderly/nursing home	6 spaces per 100 residents
Sheltered accommodation (restricted to elderly 60/65+ and to 1 bedroom units)	1 space per 5 flats
Semi retirement accommodation (where individual units are self contained)	1 space per 5 flats
Purpose built accommodation	1 space per 5 students
Community housing for the disabled or other special types of hostel	Assessed on individual circumstances
3. Hotels/motels/guest houses	1 space per 8 bedrooms
4. Restaurants/cafes/public houses/licensed clubs/hotel bars open to non-residents	1 space per 50m ² public area (4 spaces minimum)
5. Fast food/hot food take-away shops	Nil
6. Retail	
a) general retailing	1 space per 200m ² GFA (minimum of 4 spaces)
b) supermarkets under 4000m ² GFA	1 space per 200m ² GFA (minimum of 4 spaces)
c) superstores/hypermarkets over 4000m ² GFA	1 space per 200m ² GFA
d) non-food retail warehouses	1 space per 200m ² GFA (minimum of 4 spaces)
e) DIY stores	1 space per 200m ² GFA (minimum of 4 spaces)
f) garden centres	1 space per 200m ² GFA (minimum of 4 spaces)
7. Cash and carry warehouses	4 spaces
8. Storage and distribution warehouses	2 spaces

9. Industrial buildings	1 space per 500m ² GFA (minimum of 4 spaces)
10. Offices	1 space per 300m ² GFA
11. Car sales	2 spaces minimum
12. Garages/service stations/car repair workshops	1 space per 200m ² GFA (2 spaces minimum)
13. Education	
a) nursery/primary/secondary schools	Secondary schools - 1 space per 5 students
b) colleges of further education (e.g. university, teacher training and technical colleges)	1 space per 5 students
14. Places of worship	1 space per 100 seats (minimum of 4 spaces)
15. Places of entertainment: cinemas, theatres, bingo halls, concert halls (including public halls with fixed seating)	1 space per 40 seats (minimum of 4 spaces)
16. Community centres and other public halls (including public halls without fixed seating)	1 space per 100m ² floorspace (minimum of 4 spaces)
17. Art galleries, museums and exhibition halls	1 space per 300m ² of public floorspace (minimum of 4 spaces)
18. Hospitals	6 spaces per 100 beds
19. Clinics, health centres, doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons	1 space per 3 consulting rooms (2 spaces minimum)
20. Libraries	1 space per 500m ² GFA (4 spaces minimum)

21. Sports facilities	1 space per 20 patrons able to use facilities at any one time (minimum of 4 spaces)
22. Touring caravan and camping sites	1 space per 10 tent spaces (minimum of 4 spaces) (camping sites only)
23. Self catering holiday accommodation	Nil

Appendix XI

APPENDIX XI - ENVIRONMENTAL STOCK CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. Tables 1 and 2 are to be read in conjunction with the Environmental Assessment completed on all policies in the Local Plan as outlined in Chapter 11.

GENERAL CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF POSITIVE IMPACT
<p>Global Sustainability – primarily concerned with atmospheric and climatic stability and with the conservation of biodiversity.</p>	
1. TRANSPORT ENERGY: EFFICIENCY – TRIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing trip length • reducing the number of motorised trips
2. TRANSPORT ENERGY: EFFICIENCY – MODES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing public transport share • increasing attraction of walking and cycling
3. BUILT ENVIRONMENT: ENERGY – EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing heat loss from buildings • reducing capital energy requirements • increasing CHP potential
4. RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding wind, water, wave and biomass potential increasing direct solar gain
5. RATE OF CO2 “FIXING”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing tree cover especially broad leaved woodland
6. WILDLIFE HABITATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding designated sites (eg SSSIs) • increasing general wildlife potential (eg corridors)
<p>Natural Resources – husbanding of natural resources concerned with appropriate use, and where necessary, appropriate protection of our resources or air, water, the land and its minerals.</p>	
7. AIR QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing levels of pollutants (CO₂, SO₂, NO_x, O₃, Pb, NH₄, etc)
8. WATER CONSERVATION AND QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining groundwater and river levels • safeguarding water supply purity
9. LAND AND SOIL QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding soil quality and soil retention • reducing contamination/dereliction • safeguarding good quality agricultural land

GENERAL CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF POSITIVE IMPACT
10. MINERALS CONSERVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing consumption of fossil fuels and minerals • increase reuse/recycling of materials
<p>Local Environmental Quality - conservation of local environmental quality concerned with the protection and enhancement (and sometimes retrieval) of local environmental features and systems ranging from landscape and open land to cultural heritage.</p>	
11. LANDSCAPE AND OPEN LAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing designated areas (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc.) • enhancing general landscape quality • retaining countryside/open land
12. URBAN ENVIRONMENT "LIVEABILITY"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing townscape quality • increasing safety and sense of securing • improving aural and olfactory environment
13. CULTURAL HERITAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding listed buildings and conservation areas • safeguarding archaeological/geological value
14. PUBLIC ACCESS AND OPEN SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing/maintaining quality and availability in urban and rural areas
15. BUILDING QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining /improving the maintenance and continuous renewal of buildings

Table 2: Environmental Assessment Matrix

	Global Sustainability						Natural Resources				Local Environmental Quality				
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
POLICIES	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Trips	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Modes	Built Environment Energy Efficiency	Renewable energy potential	Rate of CO ₂ “fixing”	Wildlife habits	Air quality	Water conservation and quality	Land and soil quality	Minerals	Landscape and open land	Urban Environment	Cultural heritage	Public access to open space	Building quality
NE1	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	?→	→	=	→	=	=	?→	?→
NE2	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	?→	→	=	→	=	=	?→	?→
NE3	↔	↑	↑	=	→	→	↔	?→	→	=	→	↔	=	→	→
NE4	↔	↑	↑	?→	→	→	↔	?→	→	=	→	?→	=	→	→
NE5	↔	↑	↑	?→	→	→	↔	?→	→	=	→	?→	=	→	→
NE6	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	?→	=	=
NE7	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	→	→	=	→	=	=	→	=
NE8	=	=	=	?→	→	→	→	→	→	=	→	?→	=	→	=
NE9	=	=	=	→	→	→	→	=	?→	=	→	?→	=	?→	=
NE10	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	?→	?→	=	→	=	=	?→	=
NE11	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	?→	?→	=	→	?	→	→	?→
NE12	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	?→	?→	=	→	→	→	→	?
NE13	=	=	=	=	?→	→	=	?→	=	=	→	=	=	=	=
NE14	=	=	=	→	=	?→	=	→	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=
NE15	=	=	?→	=	→	→	→	?→	→	=	→	=	→	?→	→
NE16	=	=	=	?→	?→	?→	=	=	?→	=	→	→	→	=	=
NE17	=	=	=	?→	?→	?→	=	=	?→	=	→	→	→	=	=
NE18	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	?→	→	=	→	→	→	?→	?→
NE19	=	=	=	=	?→	→	=	?→	?→	=	→	→	=	?→	=
NE20	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	→	→	→	=	=	→	=
NE21	↔	↑	↔	=	→	→	→	?→	?→	=	→	↔	=	→	→
BE1	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	?→	→
BE2	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	?→	→	→
BE3	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	=	→
BE4	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	→	→
BE5	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	=	→
BE6	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	=	→
BE7	=	=	=	=	→	=	→	=	=	=	→	→	→	=	→
BE8	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	→
BE9	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	?→	=	?→	=	→	?→	→	=	?→
BE10	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	=	=
BE11	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	=	=
BE12	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	=	=
BE13	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	?→	=
BE14	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	=	=
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BE17	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	=	→
BE18	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	=	→

	Global Sustainability						Natural Resources				Local Environmental Quality				
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
POLICIES	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Trips	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Modes	Built Environment Energy Efficiency	Renewable energy potential	Rate of CO² “fixing”	Wildlife habits	Air quality	Water conservation and quality	Land and soil quality	Minerals	Landscape and open land	Urban Environment	Cultural heritage	Public access to open space	Building quality
BE19	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	=	→
BE20	=	=	?→	=	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	→	→
BE21	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	?→	→?	→
BE22	=	?→	=	=	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=	=
HP1	↔	↔	←	=	↔	=	↔	↔	↔	←	↔	↔	↔	?←	↔
HP2	↔	↔	←	=	↔	=	↔	↔	↔	←	↔	↔	↔	?←	↔
HP3	↔	↔	↔	=	↔	=	↔	↔	?←	=	?←	?←	=	=	=
HP4	↔	↔	↔	=	↔	=	↔	↔	?←	←	↔	→	=	→	→
HP5	↔	?→	↔	=	↔	=	↔	↔	?←	←	↔	?←	=	→	→
HP6	?→	?→	↔	=	=	=	?→	↔	↔	←	→	↔	↔	→	→
HP7	?→	?→	↔	=	=	=	?→	↔	↔	←	→	↔	↔	→	→
HP8	?→	?→	↔	=	=	=	?→	↔	↔	←	→	↔	↔	→	→
HP9	?→	→	→	=	↔	=	?→	=	=	=	→	→	=	→	→
HP10	?→	?→	↔	=	=	=	?→	↔	→	←	→	↔	=	→	→
HP11	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	=	?→	=	?→
HP12	?→	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	?→	=	?→
HP13	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=
HP14	?→	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	→	?→	=	?→
HP15	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	→	=
HP16	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=
HP17	?→	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	?→	=	?→
HP18	→	→	?→	=	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	=	=
R1	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	←	→	→	?→	=	→
R2	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	←	→	→	?→	=	→
R3	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	←	→	→	?→	=	→
R4	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	←	→	→	?→	=	→
R5	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	←	→	→	?→	=	→
R6	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	→	=	→	?→	=	→
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R15	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	→	=	→	=	=	?→
R16	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	→	=	→	=	=	?→

	Global Sustainability						Natural Resources				Local Environmental Quality				
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
POLICIES	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Trips	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Modes	Built Environment Energy Efficiency	Renewable energy potential	Rate of CO² “fixing”	Wildlife habits	Air quality	Water conservation and quality	Land and soil quality	Minerals	Landscape and open land	Urban Environment	Cultural heritage	Public access to open space	Building quality
R17	→	→	↔	=	=	=	→	=	?←	←	=	→	=	=	=
R18	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	→	=	=	→
R19	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	→
R20	→	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=	→	→	=	=	?→
R21	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	?→
R22	→	→	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	=	?→
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TC2	?→	→	=	=	=	=	↔	=	?→	↔	?→	→	?→	=	→
TC3	→	→	?→	=	=	→	=	→	→	→	→	→	→	?→	?→
IN1	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?←	←	=	↔	←	←	→	=	=	→
IN2	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?←	←	=	↔	←	←	→	=	=	→
IN2	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?←	←	=	↔	←	←	→	=	=	→
IN3	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?←	←	=	↔	←	←	→	=	=	→
IN4	↔	↔	↔	=	→	↔	↔	=	↔	←	↔	→	=	=	→
IN5	↔	↔	↔	=	→	↔	↔	=	↔	←	↔	→	=	=	→
IN6	=	=	=	=	→	?→	→	=	?→	=	?→	→	=	?→	=
IN7	=	=	=	=	→	?→	→	=	?→	↔	→	→	=	?→	=
IN8	↔	↔	↔	=	=	=	↔	=	=	=	=	→	=	?←	=
IN9	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?←	?←	=	↔	↔	?←	?→	=	=	=
IN10	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?←	?←	=	↔	↔	?←	?→	=	=	=
IN11	←	?←	=	=	=	=	?←	=	=	→	=	→	=	=	→
IN12	→	→	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	→	=	=	=
RL1	↔	↔	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	→	→
RL2	↔	↔	?→	=	=	?→	=	=	?→	=	→	→	→	→	?→
RL3	→	→	?→	=	=	?→	?→	=	?→	=	→	→	→	→	?→
RL4	=	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	→	→	?→	→	=
RL5	→	→	=	=	→	?→	=	=	=	=	→	→	?→	→	=
RL6	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	→	=	→	=
RL7	=	=	=	=	→	→	?→	=	→	→	→	→	?→	→	→
RL8	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	→	=
RL9	=	→	=	?→	→	→	→	=	→	=	→	?→	?→	→	=
RL10	↔	↔	=	=	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	→	=
RL11	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	→	=
RL12	=	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	?→	=	=	→	=	→	?→
RL13	=	→	=	=	?→	?→	?→	=	=	=	→	?→	?→	→	=
RL14	=	→	=	=	?→	?→	?→	=	=	=	→	?→	?→	→	=
RL15	?→	?→	→	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	→	→	→	→
TM1	←	↔	?←	=	=	?→	↔	=	=	=	→	=	→	→	→

	Global Sustainability						Natural Resources				Local Environmental Quality				
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
POLICIES	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Trips	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Modes	Built Environment Energy Efficiency	Renewable energy potential	Rate of CO ² “fixing”	Wildlife habits	Air quality	Water conservation and quality	Land and soil quality	Minerals	Landscape and open land	Urban Environment	Cultural heritage	Public access to open space	Building quality
TM2	=	→	=	→	→	→	→	=	→	=	→	?→	=	→	→
TM3	↔	↔	↔	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	?→	→	?→	→	?→
TM4	↑	↑	=	=	=	=	↑	=	?←	=	=	→	?→	?→	=
TM5	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
TM6	↑	↑	=	=	=	=	=	=	?←	=	=	→	=	=	?→
TM7	?→	=	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
TM8	↔	↔	=	?→	?→	?→	?→	=	?→	=	→	→	?→	→	=
TM9	=	→	=	=	?→	?→	?→	=	?→	=	→	→	→	→	=
TM10	→	→	↔	=	=	?→	→	=	=	=	?→	=	=	→	=
TM11	→	→	↔	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	?→
TM12	→	→	↔	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	=
TM13	→	→	↔	=	?→	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	?→
TM14	?→	?→	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	=
AG1	=	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	=	→	?→	=	=	=	=	=
AG2	=	=	=	=	=	↔	↔	=	↔	=	↔	=	=	=	=
AG3	?←	?←	=	=	=	?→	?←	↔	↔	=	?→	→	=	=	→
AG4	↔	↔	=	=	?→	?→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	→	?→	=
AG5	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	↔	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=
AG6	↔	↔	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	→	=	→
AG7	↔	↔	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	→	=	→
AG8	↔	↔	?→	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	→	=	→
AG9	↔	?←	↔	=	→	→	↔	↔	?→	→	→	=	→	=	→
AG10	↔	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?→	=	?→	=	?→
AG11	↔	↔	=	=	=	→	↔	=	→	↔	←	→	?→	=	=
AG12	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	→	?→	→	=
T1	?←	?←	=	?←	=	←	←	=	←	=	=	→	→	=	=
T2	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	?→	?→	→	?→
T3	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	?→	→	?→
T4	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=
T5	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=
T6	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=
T7	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	=
T8	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=
T9	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=	=
T10	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	?←	→	=	=	=
T11	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	=
T12	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	?→	=	=
T13	→	→	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	→	→	→	?→
T14	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	=
T15	↔	↔	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	?→	→	=

	Global Sustainability						Natural Resources				Local Environmental Quality				
CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
POLICIES	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Trips	Transport Energy: Efficiency – Modes	Built Environment Energy Efficiency	Renewable energy potential	Rate of CO₂ “fixing”	Wildlife habits	Air quality	Water conservation and quality	Land and soil quality	Minerals	Landscape and open land	Urban Environment	Cultural heritage	Public access to open space	Building quality
T16	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	→
T17	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	→	→	=	=
PU1	=	=	→	→	?→	=	→	?→	=	→	=	=	=	=	=
PU2	=	=	→	→	→	↑	↑	→	=	=	?→	=	=	=	=
PU3	=	=	=	=	→	→	↑	=	↑	=	→	→	→	?→	=
PU4	=	=	=	=	→	→	↑	=	↑	=	→	→	→	?→	=
PU5	=	=	=	=	=	→	?→	→	?→	=	→	→	=	?→	=
PU6	=	=	=	=	=	→	=	=	=	=	?→	→	→	=	=

Appendix XII

APPENDIX XII – INDEX OF POLICIES

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Glossary

GLOSSARY

Action Areas are sites singled out for comprehensive treatment, whether through comprehensive redevelopment or for rehabilitation and improvement, or for large-scale new development.

Advertisements are controlled by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.

Agricultural Land Classification refers to the quality of land graded 1 (best) to 5 (poorest) compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Allocation is the use assigned to a piece of land.

Amenity is the pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location, which contributes to its enjoyment by residents or visitors.

Ancient Woodlands are those, which have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD to the present day and have been cleared only for under wood or timber production. Some may constitute the relics of the natural tree cover or forest, which developed after the retreat of the last glaciations 10,000 years ago and have never been cleared for farming. Others may be woods and have developed on land, which was farmed or grazed before the medieval period.

Areas of High Landscape Value are designated by the County Durham Structure Plan as areas deemed as being particularly distinctive and attractive in landscape terms.

Backland Development is an area of land with no highway frontage located to the rear of an existing site or building.

Built Environment comprises the majority of land occupied by buildings or curtilages, areas of formal public access such as roads, footpaths and parks and archaeological sites of all historic periods.

Brownfield Land is either derelict land or land previously used for housing, transport, utilities, industry, commerce, community services (hospitals, schools including their ground), defence, minerals and landfill – see previously developed land.

Caravan means any structure designed for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted, but does not include:-

- a) any railway rolling stock which is for the time being on rails forming part of a railway system; or
- b) a tent.

Caravan Site means land on which a caravan is stationed for the purpose of human habitation and land, which is used in conjunction with land on which a caravan is stationed.

Chalet means a building, normally constructed in timber, suitable generally as holiday accommodation rather than as a permanent residence due to the lack of amenities incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.

Circulars are guidance issued by a Government Department, usually, but not always, in support of a statutory instrument.

Coalescence refers to development that causes the erosion of the strategic gaps of open countryside between two or more settlements.

Coast-to-Coast (C2C) cycle route is a route for cyclists co-ordinate by Sustrans that runs from Whitehaven to Sunderland and eventually to Copenhagen, Denmark.

Conservation Areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority and considered of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable not to harm.

Countryside is all the area within the District that is outside defined settlement boundaries which excludes land/sites specifically identified in the Local Plan and on the Proposals Map for industrial sites.

County Wildlife Sites are areas considered to be of county-wide importance, designed on a non-statutory basis by Durham County Council.

Community Facilities include schools and colleges, day centres, health centres, crèches, art galleries and museums, public libraries, public halls, places of worship, waste disposal and recycling, renewable energy and telecommunications. Many of these are not directly controlled by Chester-le-Street District Council and so are not covered in this plan.

Commuted Sum is money paid to Chester-le-Street District Council for the provision of community facilities in connection with a development.

Development means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change of use of any building or land (Section 55 Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

Disabled see "Impaired Mobility".

Derelict Land is land so badly damaged by industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment.

DOE is the Department of the Environment.

Durham Wildlife Trust is a charitable organisation promoting nature conservation in the North East.

English Heritage is a national body funded by the Government whose main roles are to promote and give advice on building matters, its full name is the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

English Nature is a national body funded by the Government, which promotes nature conservation and provides specialist advice on any nature conservation issues.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a technique and a process by which information about the environmental effects of a project is collected by a developer and from other sources, and taken into account by the local planning authority in forming their judgement on whether a development should go ahead. Under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, the Local Planning Authority is obligated to 'screen' proposals to determine whether an EIA is required (either before or after a proposal is submitted) and may offer a view of what should be included as part of any EIA.

Examination-in-Public is held to provide the County Planning Authority with more information through public discussion of certain issues before reaching decisions on the Structure Plan, and is chaired by an independent inspector.

Fascia is the moulded frame above a shop window, which normally displays the shop name and business.

Farmstead is the farmhouse and buildings, excluding land holdings.

Farmholding includes the total landholdings on the farmstead.

Farm Diversification is the process of broadening the economic base of industrial farm businesses, within the overall structural changes in agriculture brought about by the reform of the European Community's Common Agricultural Policy, through the development of tourism, crafts and small-scale business enterprises on farms.

General Industrial Estates cater for new, growing and existing industrial and business uses of small to medium sizes that support local employment generation.

Great North Forest is one of 12 Community Forests in Great Britain run in partnership between the Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission and Local Planning Authorities. The principle aims are for environmental improvements, and to provide greater opportunities for recreation and leisure within easy reach of the urban population.

Green Belts are a policy device established through development plans for the prevention of urban sprawl by safeguarding land surrounding urban areas. The land within Green Belts have a variety of land uses and do not simply mean green fields. Green Belt policies are more long term and permanent than other planning policies.

Greenfield Land includes land and buildings that are currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes, and land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously (e.g. parks, recreation grounds, and allotments - even though these areas may contain certain urban features such as paths, pavilions and other buildings). Also excluded is land that was previously developed but where the remains of any

structure or activity have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings), and where there is a clear reason that could outweigh the re-use of the site - such as its contribution to nature conservation - or it has subsequently been put to an amenity use and cannot be regarded as requiring redevelopment. For a more comprehensive definition see PPG3 "Housing" Annex C. See Previously developed land.

Historic Parks and Gardens are landscapes which are the product of preconceived designs and which are of local importance in visual and topographical terms.

Housing Associations are non-profit making organisations which provide housing for rent and/or shared ownerships.

Impaired Mobility includes those with physical or sensory disabilities, elderly people and those with toddlers or infants in pushchairs.

Informal Open Space is open space provided for the enjoyment and amenity of residents and visitors which does not contain marked out pitches or other facilities.

Infill Sites are small-scale development sites incorporated into the existing pattern of the built up area.

Infrastructure is the term given to services, which need to be in place to serve development, eg roads and footpaths, electricity, water and sewerage services.

Landfill Sites are those where waste is tipped to fill a hole or raise the surface level.

Listed Buildings are buildings included in the Schedule of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, approved by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed Buildings are protected by statute, and consent is required for alterations.

Local Agenda 21 is the local environmental initiative for sustainable development, aimed at translating the global concerns expressed at the Rio Summit 1992 into local action.

Local Nature Reserves are sites owned, leased or managed under agreement by the local planning authorities. They are designated under terms of the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949.

Local Needs are where people choose or demonstrate a need to live or remain in a locality through work or socio-economic consequences and where accommodation is not available to them. Categories of need could include:-

- a) existing residents needing separate accommodation in the area (eg married couples, people leaving tied accommodation and retirement);
- b) people whose work provides important services and who need to live close to the local community;

- c) people who are not necessarily resident locally but have long-standing links with the local community (eg elderly people who need to move back to a village to be near relatives);
- d) people with the offer of a job in the locality who cannot take up the offer because of the lack of affordable housing.

In relation to the provision of affordable housing, “local” will normally refer to the Parish in which the site is located, but may in more rural localities include the adjoining parishes.

Local Industrial Estates are those, which cater for the more un-neighbourly industrial and business uses. Their location and layout seek to minimise any loss of amenity of local land-users.

Local Plans set out the Local Planning Authority’s detailed policies for the control of development, use of land and allocate land for specific purposes (ie the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan).

Local Planning Authority is Chester-le-Street District Council.

Local Plan Period is the length of time that is catered for by the Plan. The period envisaged for this Plan extends to 2006.

MAFF is the ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

National Playing Fields Association is a national voluntary body which campaigns and provides guidelines for the provision of playing fields, public open space and playgrounds.

National Nature Reserves are the sites of national and international importance for nature conservation, owned, leased or managed under agreement by English Nature.

Natural Environment comprises the environment which exists in spite of, or relatively independent from the activities of human beings. The natural environment exists to a greater or lesser degree in all areas, including the built up areas.

North Durham Green Belt see “Green Belt”.

Permitted Development Rights are those in which certain forms of development, set out in the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995, are permitted without the need to obtain express planning permission. In some circumstances, the permission given is subject to extensive qualification and restrictions.

Phasing is the mechanism, which ensures that development occurs in a certain order – usually achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or the signing of a suitable Section 106 Planning Obligation.

Policies set out how the District Council will achieve the general aims of the Local Plan.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) are topic-based notes issued by the D of E, which provide the broad framework within which local planning authorities should decide policies on planning matters.

Previously-developed land - is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously-developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. The definition includes defence buildings and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures.

The definition excludes land and buildings that are currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes, and land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously (e.g. parks, recreation grounds, and allotments - even though these areas may contain certain urban features such as paths, pavilions and other buildings). Also excluded is land that was previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings), and where there is a clear reason that could outweigh the re-use of the site - such as its contribution to nature conservation - or it has subsequently been put to an amenity use and cannot be regarded as requiring redevelopment. For a more comprehensive definition see PPG3 "Housing" Annex C.

Primary Shopping Frontage refers to the core shopping areas of Chester-le-Street where the principle ground floor uses fall within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

Proposals set out the specific steps that local planning authorities will implement to achieve the general aims of the Local Plan.

Proposals Map is an obligatory component of the Local Plan, which shows the geographical application of its proposals as accurately as possible on a base map prepared from an Ordnance Survey map.

Prestige Industrial Estates are sites containing high standards of landscaping suitable for industrial and business users requiring high profile locations.

Public Rights of Way are designated under the Highways Act 1980. The administration of Public Rights of Way is carried out by Durham County Council.

Recreational Routes are a strategic network of paths that are accessible not only to those on foot, but wherever possible, also by cyclists and horse-riders. Utilising the existing networks and promoting extensions they will provide a visually attractive network that link sites of nature conservation and architectural interest.

Regionally Important Geomorphological/Geological Sites are non-statutory sites of regional importance recognised by English Nature and local planning authorities.

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) is the policy framework for the preparation of Structure Plans issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment. RPG7 (September 1993) covers the counties of Durham, Cleveland and Northumberland.

Renewable Energy is the energy that flows naturally and repeatedly. It includes energy from the sun, wind, oceans and water falling.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) are archaeological sites protected under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act and approved by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. SAMs are nationally important and consent is required for any works which may affect such a site or setting.

Section 106 Obligations are obligations made between the developer and local planning authority, or a developer may undertake to carry out an undertaking unilaterally. Planning obligations might restrict the use of land, require certain activities or operations to be carried out, or require payments to be made to the Council. They are drawn up under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Settlement Boundaries are defined boundaries around the urban area and other settlements, outside which, development not requiring a countryside location will not be permitted.

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is a listing and reference source of all known archaeological sites and historic features within County Durham. It is maintained by the Art, Libraries and Museums Department of the County Council and provides information, guidance and advise on archaeological and associated development matters.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest are the most important national sites in nature conservation terms notified by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Acts 1981-85.

Structure Plans are documents produced by the County Planning Authority (Durham County Council), which provide a strategic policy framework for development control for the local planning authorities within the County.

Sustainability is a wider term, which reflects a strategy for continued economic development without detriment to environmental and natural resources.

Sustainable Development is normally regarded as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, ie development which can be accommodated without resulting in unrecoverable environmental damage (See also Local Agenda 21).

Sustrans is a civil engineering charity which has built over 300 miles of shared-use cycle routes throughout the UK. A Sustrans route to the C2C cycle route runs from Consett to Sunderland passing through the north of the District.

Tandem Development is where one dwelling is situated immediately behind another sharing the same access.

Traffic Calming are localised measures to slow traffic and create an environment conducive to calm driving and benefit residential amenity generally.

Traffic Management Schemes are schemes to control the flow and quality of the environment over a wide area.

Tree Preservation Order is a mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value.

Use Classes are determined under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. It places uses of land and buildings into a number of categories or classes. Planning Permission is generally required for changes of use between the classes but not within the same class.

Vitality and Viability is a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the “health” of a shopping centre, which takes into account numbers of people visiting the centres, the quality of empty shop units, the quality of the range of shops and the services and the general environment for shoppers.

Wildlife Corridors are linear areas of the countryside usually sandwiched between, or within built up areas. They provide an important resource for wildlife links that allow movement of wildlife.