

# LONGHOUGHTON, BOULMER AND HOWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## Sustainability Support Paper

The key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan is sustainability – sustainability for the community and the services within it, for the environment, for the heritage, for housing and for the economy. It is about balance and there are many aspects that need to be considered. For each of the important issues we have therefore prepared a background paper and these can be viewed on the website; this short video introduces some of them and shows why the Parish is a special and valuable place that deserves to be protected whilst accommodating appropriate development.

The natural environment in this part of Northumberland is unique – from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the coast to the woodlands and farmland, it is one of the most valuable areas in the country and lies at the heart of our draft plan. Protecting and enhancing this will be a central aim and will seek to safeguard what makes our Parish special for the benefit not of only the community but also the internationally important flora and fauna.

Our built heritage too helps make our Parish unique. The parish church in Longhoughton is one of the most important buildings in the country and the gardens at Howick are amongst the nation's most valued. But some of our more local heritage is important too – the traditional houses in Boulmer or the estate buildings in Howick are vital to the sense of place in the Parish. The plan will seek to protect and enhance this local heritage.

One of the ways we can do this is by insisting on good design in any planning applications. For this reason we have commissioned a design guide for the plan. It will include matters such as house and building design to ensure it is appropriate for the area, materials used in construction, the scale and layout of individual developments and the relationship of buildings to the natural environment. It will also include guidelines on how development should enhance the villages and add to their attractiveness, linking to the green spaces and footpaths around.

The green-spaces around our community are therefore also vital. As well as the larger areas of natural habitats, smaller areas also allow greenery and open-ness to come in to the heart of our villages. These too should be protected and enhanced to allow easy access along green-ways and footpaths, to break-up the built areas and to allow views in and out of the villages – thus keeping the feel of what are still, at heart, traditional rural settlements.

Other issues too need to be balanced – for example, tourism and the benefits and challenges it brings, including second-home ownership and holiday lets. If a community is to be sustainable, it needs to have a resident population with children at the local school and using local businesses. Unquestionably, therefore, the central planning issue for the community is housing and the plan will contain a number of policies on how this can be accommodated in the future; how it should respect the environment and our heritage; what kind of housing we need, who it is for and how affordable it should be; and where it should go and how it is designed. The plan will lay out how we feel all these considerations should be balanced and suggest sites where housing might go in the future – subject of course to all the other considerations and the right quality of design.

The Neighbourhood Plan will last until 2036. In this period, the world will need to act to reduce the impact of climate change and these wider changes in society are happening very rapidly – the phasing out of diesel cars, carbon reduction targets being increased, people's changes to diet, demands for more tree planting and many more initiatives. Our plan therefore needs to be flexible

and will be reviewed regularly. It is also important we play our part in the wider needs facing humanity. By helping to protect and enhance what is special about our Parish, insisting on good design and looking to be sustainable, we will be contributing to this.

So, to summarise, sustainability has to be at the very core of the Neighbourhood Plan. Our proposals must aim to sustain the community of the Parish in terms of their needs and issues over the period of the Plan to 2036.

It means that we have to plan to provide for the needs of the community in all aspects of life in the Parish, irrespective of age, in relation to the use of land:

- Planning to ensure that the education facilities are adequate and well used.
- Planning to provide adequate medical facilities appropriate for all.
- Planning to provide adequate retail facilities.
- Planning to provide adequate services.
- Planning to provide adequate leisure and sporting facilities.
- Planning to protect the built environment.
- Planning to ensure quality design.
- Planning to conserve and enhance the natural world and biodiversity.
- Planning to provide an adequate infra-structure
- Planning to ensure that people are able to conduct their lives in a healthy and safe manner.
- Planning for a vibrant community where people have a sense of place and a feeling that they are part of a community and are valued and listened to.
- Planning to support existing businesses and encourage new businesses at an appropriate scale.

We need your help in making sure we get the balance right.