

Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024 - 2036



Regulation 14
Draft Plan and Policies

Foreword

The decision to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan was made to ensure that our Parish retains and preserves the special qualities that have attracted generations to choose this place to live and raise their families.

Change is inevitable, and many are naturally uncomfortable with it, fearing it will alter their surroundings and quality of life. However, this Plan aims to manage change sensitively and appropriately. It acknowledges the character and heritage of our community while embracing its current and future needs. The Plan outlines the community's hopes for our Parish and serves as a tool to stimulate good design. It guides the location, form, scale, appearance, sustainability, and impact of any future development.

With your support, this is achievable. By providing the best local planning policies, we can guide future development and preserve and improve the quality and character of our Parish. Together, we can create a people-first Parish where we, and those who come after us, can continue to enjoy living and working.

I want to express my gratitude to the members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party for their active involvement in shaping the Plan, and to everyone in our Parish who shared their views. I also want to thank our planning consultant, Jenny Ludman, for supporting us in drafting the Plan and providing the evidence necessary to justify the policies included. Finally, I want to thank the planning officers at the County Council's Neighbourhood Planning Team for their helpful guidance throughout the complex process of preparing this Plan.

I am delighted that after much hard work, our Parish is now one step closer to making our Neighbourhood Plan a reality.

Peter Purdom, Chair of Working Party

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Introduction

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The statutory framework for neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act in 2011. The neighbourhood planning process allows communities to develop a vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Neighbourhood Plans allow communities to choose where they want new homes and other kinds of development to be built, and to have their say on what those new buildings and places should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. This Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the neighbourhood area, which is the Parish of Rennington.

Neighbourhood plans must:

- Have regard to national planning policy and guidance;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local development plan;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
- Be compatible with legal obligations.

What is a Development Plan?

A Development Plan is a set of policies, proposals, and allocations setting out how and where land is to be developed with new homes, places of employment, services, and facilities. Development Plans consist of Local Plans, prepared by Local Planning Authorities, and Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by local communities. Together they form the statutory framework for future development of land and buildings. Neighbourhood Plans provide the detailed context of what kind of development will be supported in a Neighbourhood Area.

Planning law sets out that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies within the Northumberland Local Plan, together with those in this Neighbourhood Plan, form the policy framework for decision-making in this area.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning policy and guidance are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), respectively. Together they provide the most up-to-date planning policy and advice from central Government on neighbourhood planning. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with national planning policy.

Northumberland County Council's Local Plan

The Northumberland Local Plan sets the strategic planning policies and sets the general scale and distribution of new development, which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036, including housing. The plan includes the identification of key environmental designations.

The Local Plan may be reviewed from time to time, to reflect changes to the NPPF.

Sustainable Development

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The meaning of sustainable development for planning purposes is contained in the NPPF. In essence, the aim is to secure net gains across economic, social, and environmental objectives. Support for sustainable development is reflected in our vision and objectives for our neighbourhood area. These are set out in detail later in the plan.

Environmental Impact and Retained EU Law

Directive 2001/42/EC relates to the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This is often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the retained 'SEA Regulations') and it is these regulations that the plan must be compatible with to meet the Basic Conditions.

Following a request for a screening opinion to determine whether the Plan required a SEA, Northumberland County Council confirmed that one was required. This plan has been amended to incorporate, where feasible, any recommendations included in the SEA.

What will the Rennington Parish Neighbourhood Plan do?

The Rennington Parish Neighbourhood Plan sets out locally specific planning policies to provide clear guidance as to what kind of development will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area.

It will also give clarity to developers as to where development is likely to be supported, for example, by allocating housing sites, defining settlement boundaries and defining areas where development will not be appropriate.

The Plan contains policies about biodiversity, housing, design, the local economy, local green spaces, infrastructure, community facilities, and the historic environment. Importantly, once the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' by the Local Planning Authority (following a successful referendum), the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for the area and will have full weight in determining any future planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot

- go beyond the remit of National Planning Policy (set out in the NPPF), planning legislation or policies contained within the strategic plan (the Northumberland Local Plan) which already sets the scale and distribution of new development required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036.
- restrict development which is already permitted by law under permitted development rights for the alteration and extension of properties.
- contain policies about matters that cannot be dealt with by planning policies (for example, controlling litter, speed controls for roads, or other matters that are managed by other agencies).

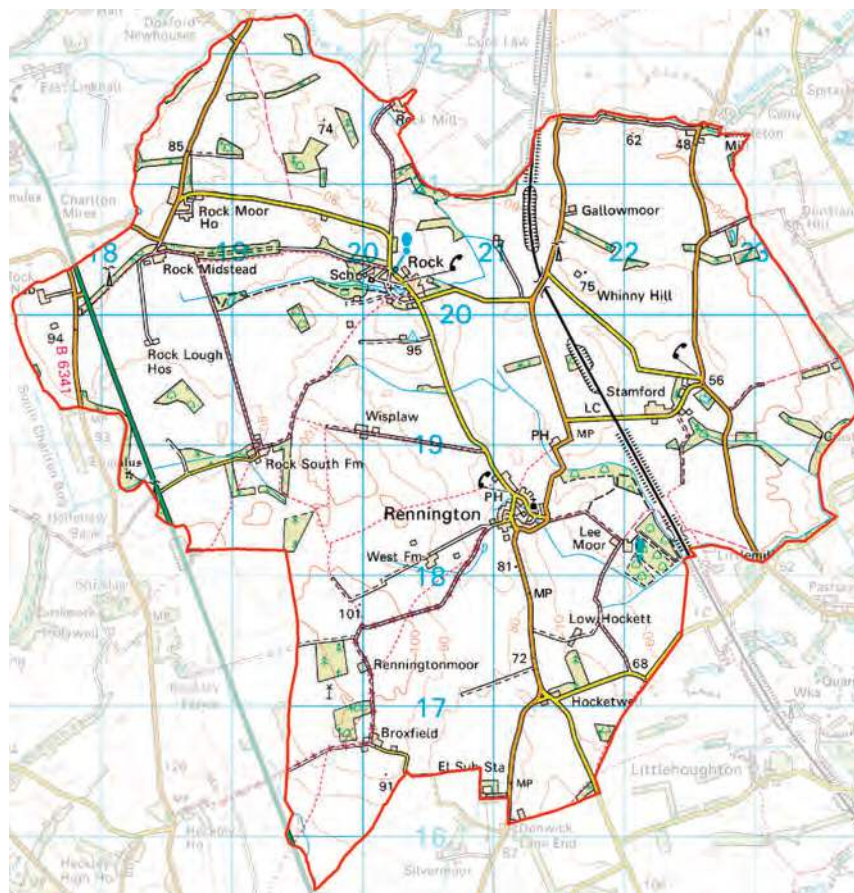
It should also be noted that a Neighbourhood Plan does not prevent the submission of speculative planning applications; nor does it stop the local planning authority granting planning permission proposals it considers to be justified having regard to the wider context of the Northumberland Local Plan and other material considerations.

Who is leading the process?

The Rennington Parish Neighbourhood Plan (the Draft Plan) has been prepared by a Working Group comprising members of Rennington Parish Council, and other residents from the Neighbourhood Area acting on behalf of the Parish Council. The Parish Council is the qualifying body, and they are responsible for the overall production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Geographical Area the Neighbourhood Plan Covers

The Neighbourhood Area is the same as the Parish of Rennington. It is shown on the map below, and will be shown on the Policies Maps.



Map of the Neighbourhood Area (Rennington Parish Boundary)

Evidence used to prepare the Plan

The Draft Plan has been produced following several community drop-in events and associated surveys to obtain the views of residents and to develop a vision for our community and to determine the objectives that will deliver that vision. The three main landowners in the parish: Northumberland Estates, Rock Estate, and Stamford Farms, have been consulted on the proposals.

The Steering Group has engaged a chartered planning consultant to support the group with the technical aspects of writing the Plan.

Some other sources of evidence have been produced by independent consultants commissioned by the Steering Group and from the Local Planning Authority and other stakeholders. A list of the evidence used to inform the development of the Neighbourhood Plan is included in Appendix C.

A Consultation Statement will be submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan, which will set out in detail the consultation that has taken place during the development of this Plan.

Rennington Parish – An overview

History

Rennington Parish is a rural parish about 4 miles north of Alnwick, with two small villages, Rennington and Rock, the hamlets Stamford and Broxfield, with farms of the same name, and a number of other farms and groups of farm cottages. Parts of the parish sit within the Northumberland Coastal Plain National Character Area. To the east is the sea, and to the west are the Northumberland Sandstone Hills. The area is predominantly farmland.

The largest village is Rennington, a rural village bordered by two Grade II listed farmhouses at North and South Farms, built in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In the 17th century, there were 15 farms in and around Rennington, 12 of them tenant farms. The village is an interesting circular shape originally formed by a large oval orchard on the east side, around which the main road curved, and a stream curves around the west side where there are beautiful views to the countryside. Next to South Farm is the Village Green with the old school built in the early 1800s. Next to that are the schoolmaster's house and new school, now the Village Hall, built in the 1890s. Now modern developments, barn conversions, and individual new houses fill the area that was the orchard and the farm buildings by North and South Farms. Rennington has the only public house, Horseshoes Inn, in the parish.

Rock is a smaller and very different rural village, built next to the originally 12th-century Rock Hall. Some of Rock Hall is still a ruin from a fire in 1752, and the rest was restored from the early 1800s. In front of the Hall is a small Norman church, a group of farm cottages and an old school. The hall, church, cottages, and school are all Grade II listed buildings, along with other buildings and remains in and around the village. Next to them is a large pond and woodland bordering on the road. Across the road is another group of old cottages, several modern developments, some on the land of old farm buildings and a cricket field. Most of this is within a large conservation area.

Population

Rennington is a rural parish, with a population (as at the 2021 census) of 361. The parish has a high percentage of older people (which is characteristic of many rural parts of Northumberland), with 36.8% of residents over the age of 65. Conversely, only 9.6% of the population are between the ages of 0 and 15. It is for this reason that one of the main objectives of the parish council is to rebalance the population to encourage more young people to live in the area.

46.5% of the population are in employment or actively seeking work.

Housing

There is a high proportion of rented housing (46%) in the Neighbourhood Area and a high level of second home ownership; the Housing Needs Assessment calculated the second home/holiday let ownership to be over 23% of the available housing stock. This figure has been confirmed by the 2021 census and business rate data. There is a lack of affordable and low-cost housing in the area, with new homes going on the market consistently at a higher cost than in other rural areas. This is partly due to scarcity of property in the area, and the location, close to the Northumberland Coast. As an example, a 1-bed terraced house in Rennington Village sold for £280,000 in 2024; a 3-bed for £440k and a 4-bed detached house in Rennington sold for over £600,000. These are not affordable houses for local families. Many smaller properties have been bought as second homes/holiday lets.

Community

There is a strong sense of community in the Parish. Residents have a sense of pride in the place that they live. Local facilities are well used, and the community is keen to support them. The Neighbourhood Area is criss-crossed by a network of footpaths and bridleways.

Natural and Historic Environment

The parish is predominantly rural, with much of the land being used for agriculture and some game shooting. Rock Conservation Area, which contains 16 of the 30 listed buildings in the parish, is of historic interest for its buildings and historic designed landscape. Around the parish, there are several plantations of woodland, and the Stamford Burn and the Stamford Cruck run through the area, forming important wildlife corridors. The Neighbourhood Area is close to the Northumberland Coast National Landscape.

Local Economy

The Neighbourhood Area has three small business parks – the Lee Moor, Rock Moor, and Rock Midstead. Tourism is a major economic sector in the wider region and does provide employment opportunities. However, residential units being converted to holiday lets exacerbates the problem local communities face in having access to affordable housing.

Development

There has been the redevelopment of two brownfield sites in the village of Rennington, plus one in Rock and one in Stamford Cottages. Since 2016, there have been some 34 new dwellings built in the Neighbourhood Area, with planning consent having been given for a further 16 dwellings, resulting in only a 10% increase in the population due to the number of second homes and holiday lets. These developments have not always been sympathetic to the local architectural style. Many of the new dwellings have been sold as second homes/holiday lets, meaning that there has been little benefit to the local community. There are some examples of high-quality design, and this Neighbourhood Plan will seek to reinforce and clarify what types of design will be appropriate in any new housing.

Vision and Objectives

After a number of consultation questionnaires and events, the Parish Council has determined a vision for the Neighbourhood Area. The objectives follow on from the vision, and the planning policies seek, as far as they are able to, to deliver them.

Our vision

To ensure that the Parish retains and conserves the special qualities that have attracted generations of people to choose this as a place to live and raise their families by sustaining Rennington Parish as a thriving community in its own right.

The vision will be achieved by incorporating policies into the Neighbourhood Plan that:

- enhance and protect the natural living environment and promote biodiversity.
- ensure that any new development does not impact adversely on the important green spaces of the parish. Retain or enhance existing landscape features and preserve important views and vistas.
- promote easier accessibility and improve quality of life by supporting walkers, cyclists, and horse riders with the development, upkeep, and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways.
- ensure the design, materials, layout, and appearance of any new housing supports and reinforces the character and distinctiveness of Rock, Rennington, and the surrounding farmsteads.
- ensure that new developments reflect the local architectural vernacular and protect the historic and heritage assets both in the Rock Conservation Area and the wider parish.
- promote energy efficiency and sustainability.
- sustain Rennington Parish as a thriving community in its own right.

Housing

- To ensure that any additional housing in the Neighbourhood Area is of the right mix to meet the needs of residents in the Parish and to encourage a more diverse demographic.
- To support initiatives to provide a supply of housing that is more affordable to meet local needs.
- To ensure that all new housing developments are proportionate in size to the settlement they are in or adjacent to.
- To ensure that all new housing is for principal occupancy and to support changes from holiday let to principal occupancy residential use.

Services and Community Facilities

- To support local services and facilities currently available and to encourage the establishment of new facilities appropriate to the rural area.
- To protect community recreational facilities such as Rennington Village Hall and Rock Cricket Ground and any other places that are valued by the community.
- To improve non-car links between places in the Neighbourhood Area and beyond by supporting the improvement of footpaths and cycleways, particularly those that link the settlements.

Design, Local Character and Heritage

- To ensure the design of new development respects the unique identity and character of each of the settlements in the Parish through the introduction of a Design Code for the Neighbourhood Area.
- To preserve the special historic character of places in the Parish and make an inventory of places that could be identified as locally significant heritage assets.

The Natural Environment & Biodiversity

- To preserve and promote wildlife in the Parish through the designation of wildlife areas and the identification of wildlife corridors.
- To recognise the natural beauty of the Parish and to design policies that conserve and enhance the landscape.

Rural Employment

- To support the local economy with policies to encourage the creation and growth of small to medium-size enterprises.

Policy Overview

The Rennington Neighbourhood Plan must be read as a whole document, with each policy read alongside all others that are relevant. Policies do not contain cross-referencing because it is understood that the plan must be read as a whole. In some cases, other policies in the Northumberland Local Plan will be relevant, particularly where there are areas not covered by the Rennington Neighbourhood Plan, which focuses on specific areas of locally relevant policy.

Explanatory text precedes each policy. While not in itself a policy, it is relevant to the interpretation of the policy to which it relates and how it is to be interpreted. For example, the Design Code policy has a significant amount of explanation preceding the policy, which will assist with interpretation.

Planning Policies



The objective of these planning policies is to ensure that any new housing in the Parish contributes to the creation of a permanent, vibrant, and sustainable community and economy with a particular emphasis on encouraging a more diverse population with a balanced mix of age groups.

Northumberland County Council identified housing requirements for Neighbourhood Areas. Due to the amount of housing delivered already over the present plan period, the Council has clarified that there is no need for any further delivery of housing. In consultation with the community, it is proposed that an additional 2 development sites, identified within the parish, will be supported in order to help deliver on our vision for the Neighbourhood plan, namely to:

- ensure that any additional housing in the Neighbourhood Area is of the right mix to meet the needs of residents in the Parish and to encourage a more diverse demographic.
- support initiatives to provide a supply of housing that is more affordable to meet local needs.

Proposals for future new housing development will be supported on the allocated sites included in the Neighbourhood Plan, and within the settlement boundaries of Rock and Rennington. Other land outside settlement boundaries or allocated housing sites will be treated as open countryside and will be subject to planning policy that relates to new development in the open countryside.

The total number of dwellings built or given planning permission during the plan period (April 2016 to October 2024) is in the region of 50 units, an approximate 30% increase. Anecdotally, many of the dwellings that have been built in recent years have been sold as second homes or holiday homes.

Settlement Boundaries: Rennington and Rock

The settlement boundary for Rennington was defined by Northumberland County Council during the production of the Northumberland Local Plan. The boundary was drawn around the built

environment and areas adjacent that had already been granted planning consent. The Neighbourhood Plan does not propose to alter this settlement boundary.

Even though there was originally a settlement boundary defined by Alnwick District Council for Rock, this policy was not carried forward (saved) into the Northumberland Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will define a new settlement boundary (shown in the policies map) for Rock. The new settlement boundary does not attempt to replicate the old settlement boundary but is defined tightly around the current built environment and allows for a future small development north of the Avenue.

Policy RR1: Rennington and Rock Settlement Boundaries

The settlement boundaries for Rennington and Rock are shown on the Policies Map.

Proposals for development within the settlement boundaries will be supported where they accord with policies elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Land outside the settlement boundaries which is not already identified for housing will be treated as open countryside whose intrinsic character and beauty must be recognised in all decision-making on development proposals.

Affordable Housing to meet Local Needs

To ensure that we have a truly sustainable community, we will seek to encourage housing that meets the needs of all sectors of our community. However, we particularly would like to provide housing for young families and first-time buyers who have a need for local housing. Recent house sale prices demonstrate that even very small dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area are out of reach of the average young family income. The Housing Needs Assessment determined that to be able to afford a medium-priced house in the Parish, the purchaser would need a salary of £100,000 with a 10% deposit and mortgage ratio of 3.5 times salary.

NCC's Housing Delivery team informed Rennington Parish Council that the delivery of affordable housing in the Parish was unlikely, leaving the provision of affordable housing to developers when building housing estates of more than 10 dwellings or on sites of more than 0.5 hectares. Developments of this size are unlikely to be proportionate to the size of the existing settlements. To ensure that any new developments are more affordable for local people and younger families, the Plan has policies to deliver a more diverse mix of housing whilst still being economically viable for developers and to ensure that any new developments are for principal occupancy only.

The Housing Needs Assessment that was carried out by consultants (AECOM) on behalf of the Parish Council identified specific housing needs in the Neighbourhood Area. This affordable housing policy supports the delivery of affordable housing. The full Housing Needs Assessment is included in the evidence base documents for the Neighbourhood Plan, and sets out in some considerable detail, the specific issues that the Neighbourhood Area faces in terms of housing to meet local needs.

Policy RR2: Affordable Housing to meet Local Needs

Development proposals of 10 or more units or more than 0.5 hectares will be expected to provide on-site 25% affordable housing.

Proposals for new affordable housing developments to meet an identified local need by providing affordable housing to buy and/or rent will be supported where the proposals accord with policies elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Where planning permission is granted for affordable housing to meet a local need, this will be retained in perpetuity as affordable housing to meet a local need through a legal agreement known as a S106 agreement.

New Housing Developments

To protect the environment and encourage biodiversity, all new dwellings should, as far as possible, demonstrate the use of low-carbon technology and be required to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, in line with national requirements. A detailed landscaping scheme will be required in any planning submission.

Being a rural area with very limited public transport, a car is seen as being essential to access services (shops, schools, doctors, etc.) in the local towns and villages and to travel to places of employment. For example, the nearest shop is over 4 miles away. Empirical evidence suggests that most dwellings in the parish have 2 motor vehicles. In order to discourage the need for on-street parking, all new dwellings must provide an adequate number of allocated off-street car parking spaces.

The Housing Needs Assessment also identified the mix of housing it would be desirable to achieve in the parish through any housing allocations. As the future delivery of housing in the parish will be market-led, this mix of housing is unlikely to be achievable. This policy sets out what mix of housing is expected out of any housing development of 3 or more dwellings.

Policy RR3: New housing development

Proposals for all new housing development, including those on the allocated housing sites shown on the Policies Map, must:

a) incorporate a mix of housing types and sizes to meet local needs as set out in the Housing Needs Assessment for Rennington Parish. This will mean the following must be incorporated where practical:

20% - 4 or more bedrooms

60% - 3 bedrooms

20% - 1 - 2 bedrooms

b) demonstrate the use of low-carbon technologies.

c) demonstrate with justification onsite delivery of a Biodiversity Net Gain greater than 10%.

d) provide a detailed landscaping scheme in any planning submission.

Housing Allocations

While the Local Plan has not specified a new housing target for the area, it is recognised that delivery of the vision for a more diverse demographic will not be deliverable without some proportionate housing development. The Parish Council carried out a comprehensive site assessment of suitable housing sites in the Neighbourhood Area. This was followed by a consultation document on proposed settlement boundaries and potential housing sites. A questionnaire was issued to every household in the Parish, and this was followed up with two public meetings held in May 2024, in Rock Church and Rennington Village Hall.

Of the potential sites, two were supported by the community as being suitable for housing development - one each in Rock and Stamford. The detail of these consultation reports and outcome of the consultations with the local community is included in the background evidence documents and will be detailed in the Consultation Statement which will be submitted for examination with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The two policies below provide detail and a Design Brief for each of the two sites. The policies below also include detail with regard to the materials, design, scale, and layout of any applications on these sites.

Policy RR4: Land West of Cricket Field, Rock

This site is allocated for up to 8 dwellings comprising a mix of housing as set out in Policy RR3. All dwellings will be for principal occupancy only. These restrictions will be secured by condition or legal agreement.

Layout: Dwellings to be provided as a maximum, two storey with front gardens onto road or facing each other with gable ends to the road, in the style of existing traditional estate housing development in Rock.

Boundary treatments: Low stone walls to the front, hedgerow/stone walls to the rear.

Materials: Natural stone, natural slate roof tiles, timber windows, dormers and porch detailing to reflect that on traditional estate dwellings in Rock.

Open space: An area of open space to the south of the site within the Conservation Area as shown on the Policies Map will be retained as public open space.

Tree planting: All existing trees must be retained with the access designed to avoid existing mature trees. A belt of native woodland trees will be planted on the northern boundary of the site.

Access: Access to the site will be from the eastern boundary of the site subject to highway safety being acceptable.



Recent development in Rock showing attention to detail reflecting local character.

Policy RR5: Stamford

This site is allocated for up to 6 dwellings. To complement the existing arrangement at Stamford, the dwellings should be built in a terrace style comprising a mix of housing as set out in Policy RR3. All dwellings will be for principal occupancy only, and this will be secured through a legal agreement or planning condition.

Layout: Dwellings to be provided as a maximum of two-story terraces, the orientation of which must align with existing terraces at Stamford to reflect the local character of the settlement.

Boundary treatments: Low stone walls to the front, hedgerow/stone walls to the rear.

Materials: Natural stone, natural slate roof tiles, timber windows and chimneys. Although many of the existing dwellings at Stamford have been at some point in time rendered, this is a relatively recent alteration and one which should not be replicated in any future housing development.

Landscaping: Any existing trees within and adjoining the site must be retained, and a detailed landscaping scheme must be submitted with any planning application.

Access: Access to the site will be from the existing access to the north of Stamford.



Stamford - reflecting local character.

Principal Occupancy Dwellings

One of the issues affecting affordability of dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area is the lack of availability of housing for young families. Often it is these smaller units that are most desirable as holiday homes, second homes, or commercial holiday lets, meaning the problem of affordability is further exacerbated.

Given that one of the main aims of the plan is to diversify the population to encourage more younger families to the area, the Parish Council commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment (delivered through the Government's Neighbourhood Plan Support Packages) which concluded that there was a lack of affordable housing in the Neighbourhood Area. It also concluded, using census and business rates data, that over 23% of the housing stock in the Neighbourhood Area has no usual residents.

Policy RR6: Principal Occupancy

All new dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area will be secured as principal occupancy dwellings. This will be secured by planning condition or Section 106 agreement. This policy applies to new build dwellings and proposals to convert existing buildings into new dwellings.

A dwelling being defined as 'its ability to afford those who use it the facilities required for day-to-day private domestic existence' (Gravesend Borough Council v Secretary of State for the Environment (1982)) regardless of use class.

Design in New Development



Single-storey vernacular design, with low front walls, chimneys, Welsh slate roof, and dressed stone.

The design quality of new homes has become a national policy priority. Good design of residential buildings does not only provide safe, warm, and functional places in which to live but can enhance the sense of place, impacting positively on the whole community.

The National Design Guide highlights that good design involves careful attention to other important components of places, including the context of buildings and places, hard and soft landscaping, technical and social infrastructure. A well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials, and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including:

- the layout (or masterplan);
- the form and scale of buildings;
- their appearance;
- landscape;
- materials; and
- their detailing.

Residential dwellings should be:

- functional and practical.
- sit comfortably in their environment;
- maximise the use of natural light and ventilation;
- ensure a smooth flow and connectivity between different areas;
- be sustainable and energy-efficient;
- provide adequate storage; and
- offer privacy and security.

The Parish Council commissioned the production of a Design Code from AECOM. The document specified design principles for Neighbourhood Plan Area (Appendix C).



Recent housing development adjacent to the green in Rennington.

Policy RR7: Design in new development

Development proposals must complement the local vernacular and be designed to reflect the Design Code set out in this Neighbourhood Plan in Appendix C.

Development proposals in Rock must demonstrate how they preserve or enhance the character of the Rock Conservation Area. Particular regard should be had to the setting of listed buildings and the importance of the natural and designed landscapes.

Development of poor design that fails to reinforce local character and enhance the sense of place will not be supported.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Non-designated heritage assets, which may be buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, or landscapes, may be identified by neighbourhood plans as having significance that merits consideration in planning decisions although they do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

Being identified as a non-designated heritage asset does not confer any specific protection. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 216) states:

‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

The decision to identify a non-designated heritage asset must be based on sound evidence. Objective selection criteria must be used to identify each asset, and both criteria and content should be tested through public engagement. The criteria include: age and rarity, architectural and artistic value, historical and cultural value, community and social value, group value, and condition.

Settlements in Rennington Parish were predominantly built to house agricultural workers. Whilst there has been significant development both in the major settlements of Rock and Rennington, the heritage centres of these settlements have mainly been left untouched by these developments.

The centre of Rock has been designated a conservation area and has a significant number of designated heritage assets within the area. As the conservation area status offers much higher levels of protection for heritage assets than identifying them as non-designated heritage assets, it is not proposed to list any of the non-designated heritage assets found in Rock.

A number of farmsteads in the parish (Broxfield, Rennington Moor Farm, and Rennington West Farm) have assets that could qualify as non-designated heritage assets, but as these are within the curtilage of designated heritage assets, they too are offered a degree of protection.

In Rennington, even though it is an old settlement, the majority of the buildings originate from the 19th century or later. It contains buildings and areas of local architectural, social, and cultural significance. While there may be other buildings of merit in Rennington, the following were considered to have the most significance within the village.

	Significance	Comments
Former educational buildings on the west side of Rennington Green 	Group value Educational historic and cultural interest Community and social value	To the west of Rennington Green is an example of evolution of both school architecture and the changing importance of education of the children of the Parish from early in the 19th century through to the later Victorian period. The Old School, built in the early 1800s, is long and low with small-paned horizontal casement windows, unlike later Victorian high ceilinged school halls. Next to the Old School is the later Victorian school master's house and the 'new' school, now the Village Hall, both built in the 1890s in traditional styles.
South Farm Cottages 	Architectural interest Agricultural historic and cultural interest Community and social value	Off Rennington Green, the Lonnen leads to South Farm Cottages. These farm workers cottages have been substantially preserved in their original form. Other examples of farm workers cottages in the parish have been substantially extended even to the extent of having additional stories added. These were built around the same time as Rennington House, South Farm's farmhouse, (cira 1810) with similar tall 12-paned Georgian windows.
The Horseshoes Inn and adjacent cottages 	Historic and cultural interest Community and social value	The view north east from Rennington Green would be recognisable to inhabitants from the Victorian era. The Horseshoes Inn, which has been a public house since at least 1841, with its attached terrace of 2 workers cottages and the cottages opposite provide a sense of place and continuity in the heart of the village. The single-storey building attached to the left of the pub was originally the blacksmith's. The Thomas Wilkins 1782 map of Rennington, shows there was a smithy on the premises. In the 1851 census the publican was also the blacksmith and a farmer. The Horseshoes Inn is the social centre of the village, augmented by the Village Hall.

	Significance	Comments
All Saints Church 	Historic and cultural interest Community and social value	All Saints Church was rebuilt in 1830, on the site of a Norman chapel, by the third Duke of Northumberland, Hugh Percy. It was extended in 1865 and again in 1871. As well as being a place of worship it also hosts community events.

Policy RR8: Non-designated Heritage Assets

Development proposals affecting the significance of any heritage assets, or their settings, should take into account its significance and the scale of any harm or loss.

If a loss of all or part of a heritage asset or its significance is to be permitted, developers will be required to record the asset to advance understanding of its significance:

- NDHA1: The former educational buildings to the west of Rennington Green, Rennington
- NDHA2: South Farm Cottages, Rennington
- NDHA3: The Horseshoes Inn and the buildings adjacent, Rennington
- NDHA4: All Saints Church, Rennington

Any development will be required to protect these assets or require substantial public benefit to offset any harm or less of the heritage asset.

Community and Recreational Facilities



Rock Cricket Club

Policy RR9 sets out planning policy in relation to community facilities identified in the Neighbourhood Area.

The policy applies to registered Assets of Community Value as well as community facilities that have not been registered. All the facilities named in the policy have been identified by the local community in the initial 2021 consultation survey, as being of value, and therefore contribute to the sustainability and cohesion of the Neighbourhood Area.

The public house in Rennington, The Horseshoes Inn, is the only identified community facility which is also a business. Other facilities are outdoor recreational facilities which are also highly valued in the community, in particular the Cricket Club in Rock.

Policy RR9: Community and Recreational Facilities

The following community facilities are of significant value to the local community and are shown on the Policies Map:

- CF1: Rennington Village Hall
- CF2: Cricket field at Rock
- CF3: Church of St Philip & St James, Rock
- CF4: The Horseshoes Inn, Rennington
- CF5: All Saints Church, Rennington

Proposals requiring planning permission that involve the loss or change of use of any of these facilities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer required, viable, or if there is the provision of alternative equivalent facilities within or adjacent to the settlement.

The provision of new community facilities, including the provision of a new clubhouse for Rock Cricket Club, will be supported providing there is no adverse impact on local amenity and on highway safety.

Walking and Cycling

The walking and cycling network includes those routes that are used by pedestrian. They provide recreation and leisure opportunities and promote healthy living. Routes can include established pathways and cycle routes, public rights of way, bridle paths, and paths of a more informal nature.

Policy RR10: Improving Access

Any new development within the Neighbourhood Area should be well connected and have access that is safe and well-integrated to existing developments, and in particular, that pedestrian and cycle access is included. The policies map identifies areas where cycle and footpath access could be improved, and proposals to improve these routes will be supported.

All new development in the Neighbourhood Area must be well connected to local services and facilities in the villages by incorporating safe pedestrian, cycle, and highway access.

Support will be given to development that will improve or extend the existing footpaths and bridleways within the parish where it allows greater access for all to local services and facilities, green spaces, and neighbouring areas. Any development that would adversely impact the network, identified on the County Council's Definitive Map, will not be supported.

Local Green Spaces



Village Green in Rock

The Neighbourhood Area contains several green spaces that are already allocated through the Northumberland Local Plan as Protected Open Space. Some of these sites are now allocated as Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan, due to the additional level of protection the designation gives, and to reflect the value the community has for these spaces. In order for land to qualify as Local Green Space, it must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its:

- beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field),
- tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

The sites listed in Policy RR11 (described in more detail in Appendix A) - and shown on the Policies Map - are designated as areas of Local Green Space, which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within Green Belts. This means that proposals for inappropriate development on these sites will not be supported except in very special circumstances.

The Local Green Spaces have all been assessed to ensure they meet the requirements of a Local Green Space. They are all highly valued by the local community.

Policy RR11: Local Green Spaces

The sites listed below and shown on the Policies Map are designated as areas of Local Green Space which will be protected in a manner consistent with national policy.

- LGS1: The Green, Rennington (community and recreational value)
- LGS2: Field south and west of North Farm (historic and landscape value)
- LGS3: Field to the north of Rennington House (historic setting and view)
- LGS4: Land to the south cricket field (amenity value)
- LGS5: Rock village green (amenity value)
- LGS6: Land to north of old vicarage (biodiversity)

The Natural Environment and Biodiversity

The Neighbourhood Area contains several sites and areas that are valued for their biodiversity. The neighbourhood plan proposes to identify wildlife corridors.

Wildlife corridors are described below and shown on the policies map. These sites have been identified as being of particular local biodiversity importance within the Parish because of the species that are found in them and the potential links with other areas of biodiversity value.

- The Avenue, linking Rock and Rock Midstead
- The Lonnen, Millpond, and Race
- The Plantations in and around Rock Village
- Stamford Burn

Within the parish, mature trees are important to the 'feel' of the area, and the policy seeks to encourage the planting of trees and avoid their loss. It should be noted that all trees in the Conservation Area are automatically protected.

Policy RR12: The Natural Environment and Biodiversity

All development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity in the Neighbourhood Area.

The following wildlife corridors have been identified and are shown on the Policies Map:

- NEB1: The Avenue (connecting Rock and Rock Midstead)
- NEB2: The Lonnen and Mill Race in Rennington
- NEB3: The Plantations in and around Rock Village
- NEB4: Stamford Burn

Trees and woodlands in the Neighbourhood Area, including the Plantations around Rock and the Mill Chase woodland in Rennington, will be conserved and, where possible, enhanced. It is a requirement that any proposed development protects and enhances these wildlife corridors.

Proposals for development which involve the loss of hedgerows and mature trees will be resisted.

Coastal Mitigation

The Northumberland Coast is of national and international importance for its wildlife.

Policy RR13: Coastal Mitigation

To ensure that the impacts arising from increasing levels of recreational disturbance on coastal Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European Sites can be addressed, all development within 7km of the coast that will result in a net increase in the number of residential units or tourist accommodation will be required to contribute to the Coastal Mitigation Service or provide alternative mitigation of demonstrable effectiveness.

Within a zone, as shown on the policies map, extending between 7km and 10km from the coast, only major development will be required to make a contribution to the Coastal Mitigation Service, or provide alternative mitigation of demonstrable effectiveness.

All financial contributions required in accordance with this policy will be secured by way of a planning obligation under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, or any subsequent amending legislation.

There are no coastal sites in the Neighbourhood Area, but parts of the Neighbourhood Area are within 7km and 10km of designated coastal areas, and so the policy applies to these areas.

Local Economy



Lee Moor Business Park

There are three business parks in the Neighbourhood Area: Lee Moor, Rock Moor, and Rock Midsteads. Aside from these business parks, the predominant industries within the parish are agriculture and tourism, but the number of people employed in these sectors is small.

The community is keen to support existing businesses and encourage the setting up of small to medium-sized businesses.

Whilst the number of second homes and holiday lets has a significant impact on the vitality of the community, it is recognised that tourism is an important sector of the wider economy, particularly in this part of Northumberland.

Policy RR14 seeks to support the existing businesses and support proposals which provide local employment. It also supports the expansion of the business parks, where this can be done sustainably. The policy identifies the specific business parks where planning applications will be supported for economic development proposals.

Policy RR14: Employment and Rural Enterprise

Proposals to expand existing businesses and services within the settlement boundaries of Rennington and Rock Villages identified on the Policies Map will be supported.

Support will be given to proposals which provide local employment opportunities including the expansion of small to medium sized enterprises at the business parks identified on the policies map and below:

- EMP1: Lee Moor
- EMP2: Rock Midstead
- EMP3: Rock Moor

APPENDIX A

Designated Heritage Assets (listed buildings)

Rock

10, 12 and 14, Rock Village

11, Rock Village

15 and 17, Rock Village

19, Rock Village

21 and 23, Rock Village

9, Rock Village

Barn and Engine House on North Side of Main Rock Farmbuilding Group

Bridge over Stream 50 Metres South of Church Saints Philip and James, Rock

Church of Saints Philip and James, Rock, Northumberland, NE66

Dovecote 30 Metres South East of Rock Farmhouse

Entrance Screen to Rock Hall

Limekiln South of Kiln Plantation 700 Metres South East of Rock Midstead

Rock Farmhouse and Adjacent Estate Office

Rock Hall (II*)

Signpost at Road Junction South of Rock Farm

Smithy at South East Corner of Main Farmbuilding Group Rock

The Chapel Outbuildings and Yard Walls at North End of Rock Hall

Village Hall, Rock, Northumberland, NE66

Walls of Former Garden to North of Rock Hall

Yard Walls to South of Farm Buildings Rock

Rennington

Cartshed/Granary and Bothy 100 Metres North East of Rennington South East Farmhouse

Rennington War Memorial, All Saint's Church, Rennington

Mile Post 400 Metres South of Rennington South East Farm

Milepost 300 Metres North of Denwick Lane End

North Farmhouse, Rennington

Privy and Attached Wall Behind Bothy 100 Metres North East of Rennington South East Farmhouse

Rennington Moor Farmhouse and Attached Farmbuilding

Rennington South East Farmhouse

Elsewhere in the Parish

Milepost 400 m south of Rennington South East Farm

Covered Reservoir 100 m north of Rennington West Farmhouse

Little Mill Farmhouse

Round Limekiln to east of the limery

Main Limekiln to the east of the limery

APPENDIX B

Local Green Spaces

LGS 1 The Green Rennington



The Green is central to the village of Rennington. The site is used for community events. The Village Hall, once the village school, dominates the west corner. Also on that side are the Old School and Schoolhouse, and on the south side are the now renovated farm buildings and mill of South Farm. The Green is at the end of what was once a large circular orchard, now developed. There is a seating area in the southwest corner.

LGS2 Field south and west of North Farm



Rennington was a circular village surrounding a large circular orchard except where the road goes around the east side. It is dominated by the North and South Farms, each of which has a large field for grazing forming the south and west boundaries of the village. The field south and west of North Farm (LGS 2), which also shows the historical pattern of ridge and furrow ploughing, forms a rare viewpoint from the village to open countryside and of the

village from the north and south. Similarly to the fields south and west of Rennington House, this field forms a natural boundary between North Farm and the village.

LGS3 Field to the north of Rennington House



The Grade II listed Rennington House was built in 1810 on the slope above the old farm buildings of South Farm, with a small paddock (LGS 3) separating the house from the farm. Rennington House dominates the south side of the village and is the first building seen when arriving from the south. This small paddock to the north of Rennington House shows signs of ridge and furrow ploughing suggesting it has been used for grazing since the medieval times. It is part of the farmstead setting and helps preserve the agricultural history surrounding Rennington House with its pond, mill race, mill house and farm buildings.

LGS4 Land to the south of the cricket field



This piece of green space has a lane from The Avenue to Rock Hall, the church and the original village, a copse of mature trees and area of grass. A small space is used for parking for the church, cricket club and Rock Farm Trail.

LGS5 Rock village green



The Rock village green is a triangle of grass with benches and a few mature trees (several beautiful trees were destroyed by storm Arwen in 2021) where a lane turns off the main road to the old village, the Norman church and Rock Hall.

LGS6 Land to the north of the old vicarage



This is a wooded area to the south of the large pond, the old village and the village green. It has stone pillars either side of a track which suggests it was once a road to Rock Hall. This wooded area is a haven for wildlife.

APPENDIX C

Evidence and Supporting Documents

Planning documents

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance (as updated)
Northumberland Local Plan (2022) (strategic policies)

Environment and Biodiversity

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Advice (NCC) (date tbc)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) (date tbc) of the Rennington Parish Neighbourhood Plan
MAGIC maps information on habitats (separate maps included)
Local Green Spaces background report (Rennington Parish Council) August 2024

Historic Environment and Design

Design Code for Rennington Parish AECOM 2023
Rock Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Matters: North of England Civic Trust (and Alnwick District Council) (2008)
Local Heritage Listing (Historic England advice note – Second edition)
Non-designated heritage assets – (Rennington Parish Council) August 2024

Settlement Boundaries and housing site allocations

Settlement Boundary Consultation – Rennington Parish Council (March 2024) (includes settlement boundary methodology)
Housing Sites Assessment (following ‘call for sites’) Rennington Parish Council (March 2024)
Settlement Boundaries and Housing consultation document and responses paper
Information Leaflet to public (Housing) following ‘call for sites’ (September 2023)
Public Meeting results (26th October 2023 in Rennington and 18th October 2023 in Rock)

Rennington Housing Needs Assessment AECOM (March 2023)
Housing Survey results: Rennington Parish Council (October 2023)

Census information

Glossary of Terms

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions⁸¹:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

For Build to Rent schemes, affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent). b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used. c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households. d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market? It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value), and rent-to-buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to the Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Amenity: A positive element or elements that contribute to the positive character of an area, such as lack of noise and disturbance, openness, landscape, townscape, opportunities for recreation, etc. **Basic Conditions:** The Localism Act (the Act) sets basic conditions that neighbourhood development plans or orders must meet. These are that the plan or order must: a) have appropriate regard to national policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Regulation 14 draft plan – Version Secretary of State, b) must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, c) must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area, and d) must not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU and Human Rights obligations.

Biodiversity: The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species, and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

Community Facilities: Local services and facilities that benefit the community, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship.

Density (of development): The amount of building within an area of land. For housing, it is expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

Development: Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining, or other operation in, on, over, or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.'

Development Plan: The complete set of statutory land use policies and proposals for an area, used in making planning decisions. It includes adopted council development plan documents such as Local Plans, Core Strategies, and Neighbourhood Plans. In this Neighbourhood Area, the Development Plan consists of the Northumberland Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan when 'made'.

Environmental report: The report that documents the assessment of the draft Plan and accompanies the draft Plan for pre-submission consultation. The environmental report needs to contain certain information as set out in Schedule 2 to the SEA Regulations 2004.

Evidence base: The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development. Evidence base data is also gathered to prepare a neighbourhood Plan and is submitted to the Examiner along with the other Examination Documents.

Habitat: An area or natural environment in which an organism, species, or population normally lives. Habitats take many forms and should not be considered in isolation as they are linked and overlap with each other.

Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA): This is a general term which describes the full step-wise process required in making assessments of the impacts on European sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, including the steps of screening for likely significant effects and making appropriate assessments.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Independent Examination: The process by which an independent person examines a plan document to ensure that it is 'sound' (in the case of a Local Plan) or meets Basic Conditions (in the case of a neighbourhood Plan).

Infrastructure: The physical entities (for example, roads, railways, sewers, pipes, telecommunications lines) that are necessary for communities to function and move around.

Landscape Character: The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, and human settlement.

Local Green Space: A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans.

Local Plan: The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area.

Material consideration: A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): A Government document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): National Planning Practice Guidance is regularly updated. Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities.

Neighbourhood Area: Rennington Parish has been designated as the Neighbourhood Area.

Neighbourhood Plan: A Plan by a Parish or Town Council - the 'qualifying body' - for a particular Neighbourhood Area. Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan.

Northumberland County Council: The unitary authority for Northumberland as of 1st April 2009.

Northumberland Local Plan: The Northumberland Local Plan was adopted in March 2022 and forms the Development Plan for this area alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. Previously Developed Land (PDL) or Brownfield Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds, and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Rural exception site: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example, where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems): A sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water in a manner that will provide a more sustainable approach than more conventional practices, such as routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse.

Sustainable development: Defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Also defined in the NPPF.

Sustainable transport modes: Any efficient, safe, and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing, and public transport.



Website: rennington-pc.go.uk