

**Northumberland Local Plan
South East Ponteland SPD
Draft for consultation**

October 2015

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1. Background

Introduction

1.1 All local planning authorities are required to have an up to date Local Plan. Local Plans should:

- Set out a vision for growth and identify the quantity, broad location and key sites for new housing, employment, shops and community facilities;
- Identify how, through the planning process, the environment will be protected and enhanced;
- Be in line with national planning policy principles as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG); and
- Reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

1.2 Policies within the Local Plan are the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications. The Local Plan is made up of several different documents (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 The Local Plan



1.3 The Council is currently preparing a new Northumberland-wide Local Plan, which will comprise of a Core Strategy and a Delivery Document. Together these documents will replace the adopted Core Strategies and Saved Local Plan policies of the former local planning authorities that made up Northumberland prior to local government reorganisation in 2009.

1.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are complementary documents that provide additional advice and information relating to specific Local Plan policies and proposals. Whilst they are non-statutory documents, they add further detail to the policies within the Core Strategy (for example, on the development of specific sites). SPDs are capable of being a material consideration but do not form part of the Development Plan.

Strategic context

1.5 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's Spatial Vision for communities in Northumberland to be more resilient, its economy to be thriving and the balance between young and older people living in its towns and villages to be more even.

1.6 The Core Strategy makes provision for at least 24,320 new homes in Northumberland between 2011 and 2031. The Core Strategy will ensure a continuous supply of housing over the plan period that is aligned to job growth and infrastructure capacity. This is a key outcome of the Core Strategy, the realisation of which will require the focus of new housing development to be in the Main Towns and Service Centres across Northumberland, with an additional level of housing development in smaller settlements that is appropriate for the size of the settlement.

1.7 Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy, the Council has highlighted that, in certain settlements, existing Green Belt boundaries do not provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of growth required to deliver both objectively assessed housing and economic development needs and support sustainable development. It is therefore necessary through the Core Strategy to review Green Belt boundaries in order to provide settlements with sufficient space for future economic and residential development. In accordance with the provisions of national policy, the Council considers the need to provide land in the correct places, to deliver sustainable development, constitutes exceptional circumstances.

1.8 Ponteland is one of the settlements that has been identified as requiring a change to the Green Belt boundary. Figure 1.2 shows that the settlement's existing inset boundary is tightly drawn around the built-up area and there is no safeguarded land for future development.

1.9 The Council consider that there is a need to provide additional housing and employment land over and above what could be accommodated in the settlement's current inset boundary. The green belt release proposed for Ponteland is shown in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.2 Existing Green Belt designations surrounding Ponteland

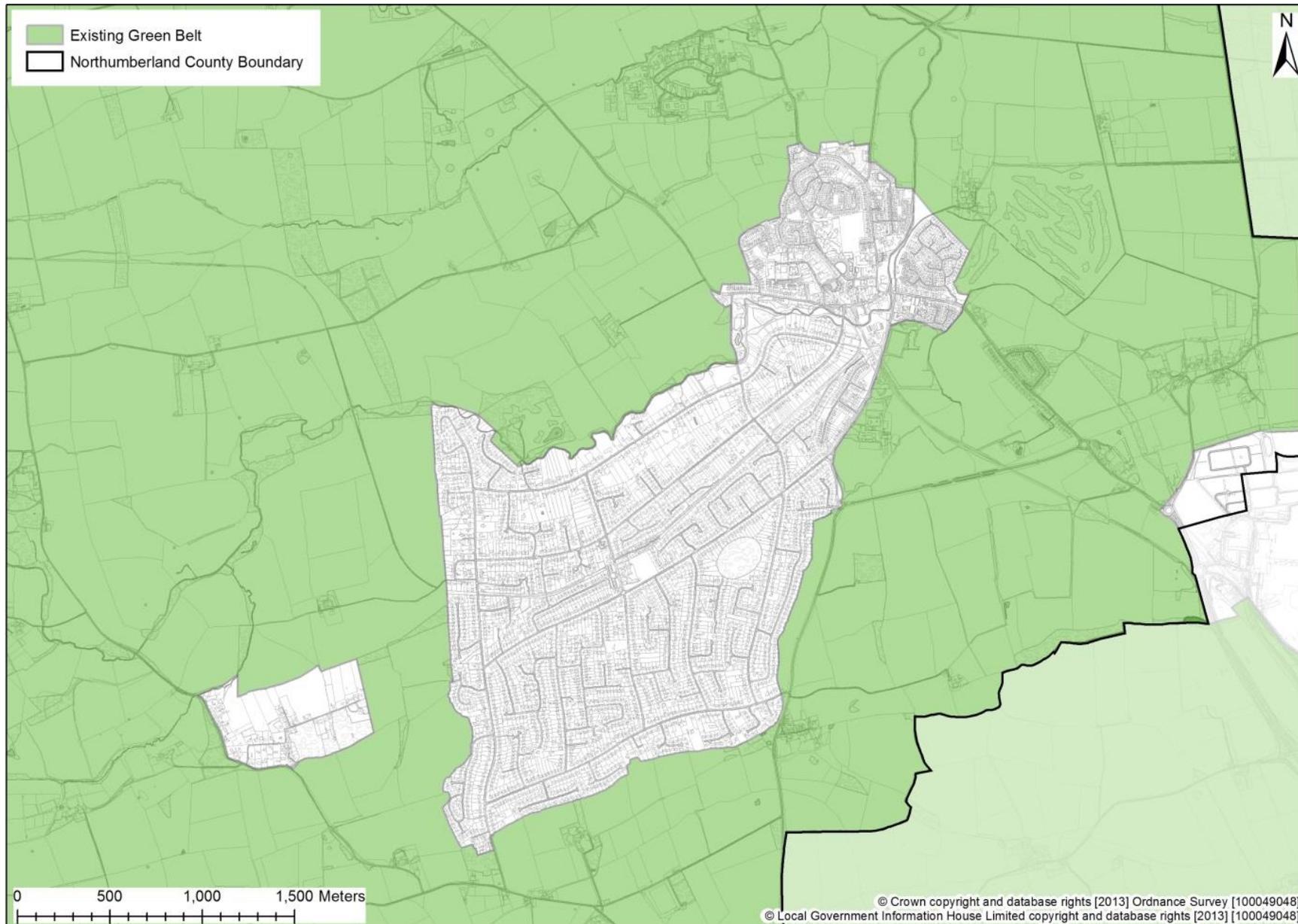
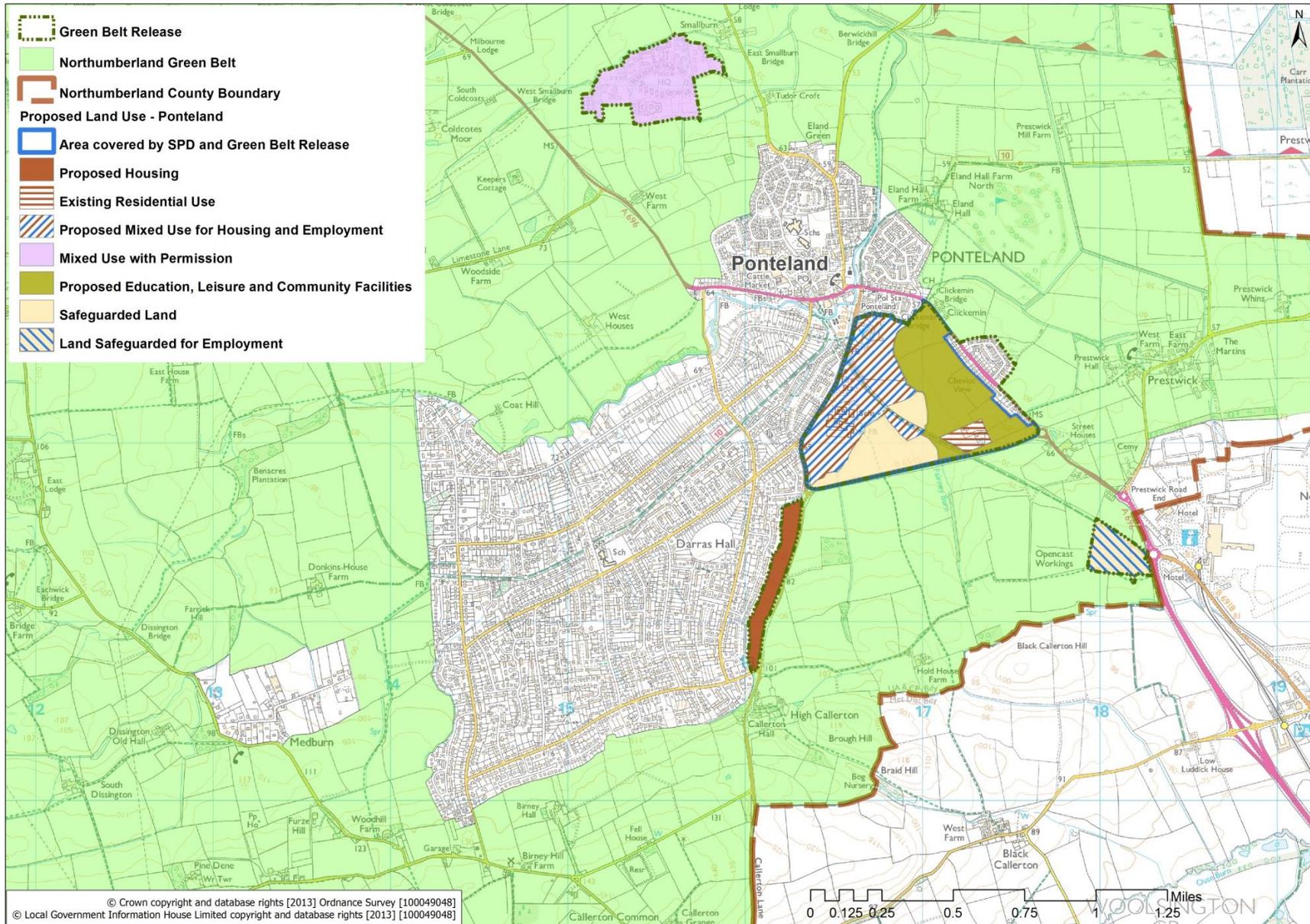


Figure 1.3 Proposed Green Belt release and allocation of land in Ponteland



Purpose and objectives of the SPD

1.10 This draft SPD has been prepared alongside the pre-submission version of the Northumberland Core Strategy. It relates to the proposed Green Belt release and allocation of land to the south east of Ponteland. This SPD expands on Policy 17 of the Pre-Submission document (October 2015).

1.11 The purpose of this SPD is to:

- Provide a masterplan framework to ensure that development of the site reflects the objectives as set out within the Core Strategy;
- Identify key requirements for supporting social, physical and environmental infrastructure to ensure sustainable development;
- Set out best practice and appropriate standards to be achieved in respect of sustainable design and construction;
- Set out a framework for delivery, including the planning application requirements.

1.12 The level of development proposed within the emerging Core Strategy and the need to safeguard land for future development beyond the plan period requires Green Belt release around Ponteland. The analysis that informed both the Preferred Options Stage 2 document (October 2013) and the Full Draft Plan (December 2014) identified that, along with the former Police Headquarters, land to the south east of Ponteland - incorporating the previously developed sites of the Ponteland Leisure Centre and the Ponteland High and Middle Schools - would have the fewest obstacles to development in terms of constraints, both physical and environmental, and the contribution of the site to Green Belt purposes.

1.13 The key principles for the development of the site include the delivery of:

- Improved leisure and education facilities;
- A mix of types of housing to meet needs and support sustainable communities;
- New build development that protects the most sensitive parts of the site from development and minimises impact of the development on the wider Green Belt and that of key views;
- Improved accessibility to education provision, reducing congestion in the town;
- New office development, with good links to the town centre;
- Improved pedestrian and cycling links to education and leisure provision;
- Strategic open space/green wedge;
- An appropriate mix and location of development that addresses flood risk issues; and
- Safeguarded land for future development beyond the plan period.

How to get involved

1.14 The emerging Northumberland Local Plan has been informed by significant community engagement. The Statement of Community Involvement emphasises that the Council is committed to engage with as many residents, local groups and interested parties as possible. Consultation on this SPD is taking place alongside consultation on the Core Strategy Pre-Submission document from 14 October to 25 November 2015.

1.15 A number of sessions have been arranged to allow people to come and find out more about the Local Plan. Details of these sessions are available on the Council's website

at www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy. The Council will be holding a drop in session in Ponteland to find out more about the Northumberland Local Plan and this SPD on 7 November 2015. The session will be held at Ponteland Memorial Hall between 10am and 3pm.

1.16 Responses can be made online or by post or e-mail and should be directed to:

Planning and Housing Policy Team
Northumberland County Council
County Hall, Morpeth
Northumberland NE61 2EF
E-mail: PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk

Next steps

1.17 Appropriate amendments will be made to the SPD following feedback from this consultation. Following the consultation the Council will consider if there is a need for any further consultation prior to the adoption of the SPD alongside the Core Strategy in Autumn 2016.

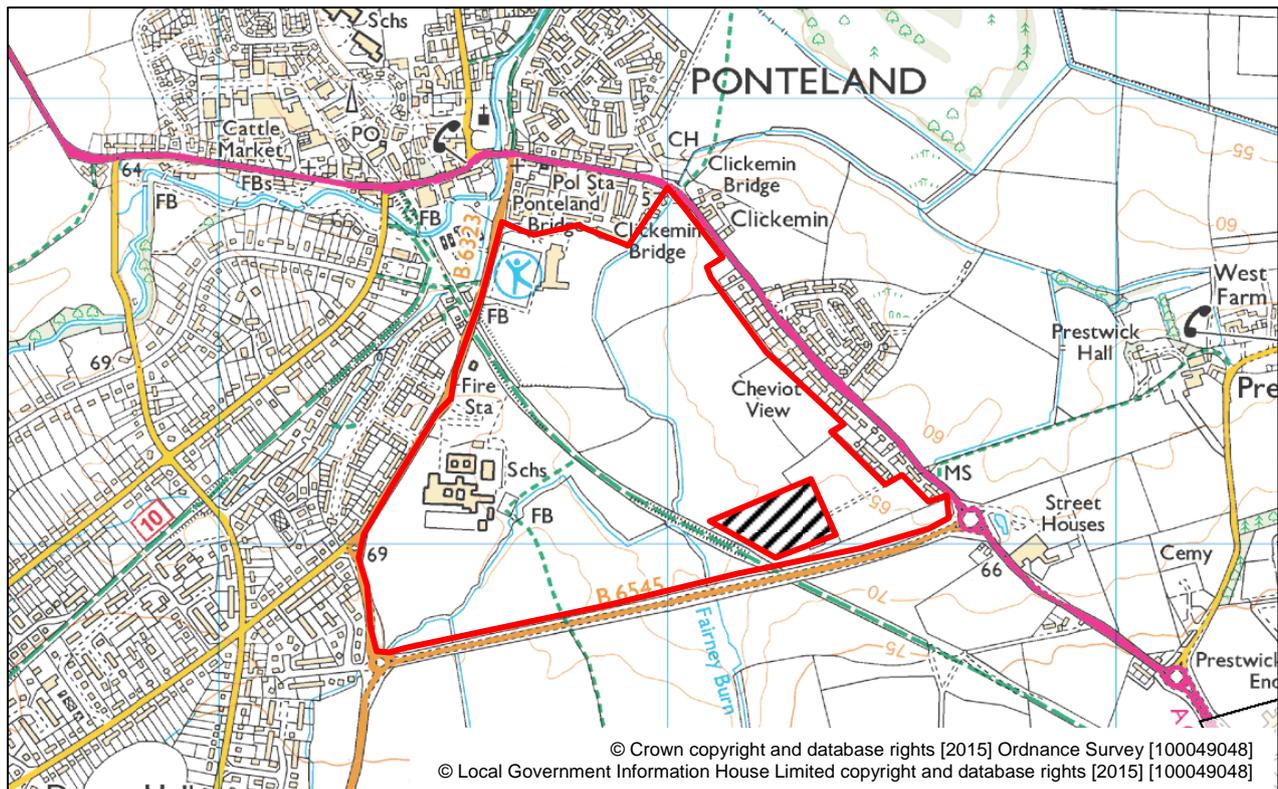
Consultation Question 1

Do you have any comments on the background and purposes of the SPD?

2. Site and Context

2.1 Figure 2.1 shows the boundary of the South East Ponteland site, which is outlined in red. The area hatched in black (in the following map and in all of the maps throughout this document) does not form part of the site covered by this SPD.

Figure 2.1 Site boundary plan



Site and its development

Historic development of Ponteland

2.2 Ponteland was historically a small settlement surrounded by agricultural land and centred on St Mary's Church, which has stood in its current position since the 12th century.

2.3 Ponteland grew around the crossing point of the River Pont, having evolved from a rural community of around 350 people in the 1800s to a bustling, attractive town on the periphery of the Tyneside conurbation today. Around the time of the arrival of the railway in 1905, a thousand acres farmland south of Ponteland was bought and the whole area divided into small plots, enabling plans for a "Garden City" at Darras Hall to be realised. With roads marked and services supplied, plots were auctioned off in 1911 for buyers to build their own homes and grow their own flowers and vegetables to supply markets in Newcastle.

2.4 However, this and the arrival of the railway in 1905 did little to increase the overall resident population, which stood at around 1,000 in the 1940s. It was in the 1960s that a

growing need for housing led to a surge in development, with Ponteland offering an attractive alternative to city living. The building of the Merton Way shopping centre along with housing on Thornhill Road was a major departure from the confined ribbon development of the 1930s. Further development to the north and east of Ponteland and in Darras Hall followed, and the construction of the Rotary Way link road to the new Woosington Bypass has led to the area taking on its current form today.

2.5 Figure 2.2 illustrates the extent of Ponteland's growth since 1900. From a small grouping of buildings along the historic road to Scotland, significant housing development at Darras Hall along with gradual extensions of the settlement to the north and west and the creation of new infrastructure is responsible for Ponteland's current urban form.

The site

2.6 The site covered by this SPD occupies approximately 70 hectares of land to the south east of Ponteland centre and north east of Darras Hall. The site is bounded by:

- Housing at Mayfair Gardens and Fairney Edge to the north, beyond which lies Ponteland centre;
- A696 Ponteland Road and housing at Cheviot View to the east;
- B6545 Rotary Way to the south, beyond which lies arable farmland; and
- Callerton Lane to the west, beyond which lies the Darras Hall estate.

2.7 The site is a short walk from Ponteland centre, with supermarkets, restaurants, public houses and other services easily accessible. Newcastle Airport is located 1 mile away to the south east.

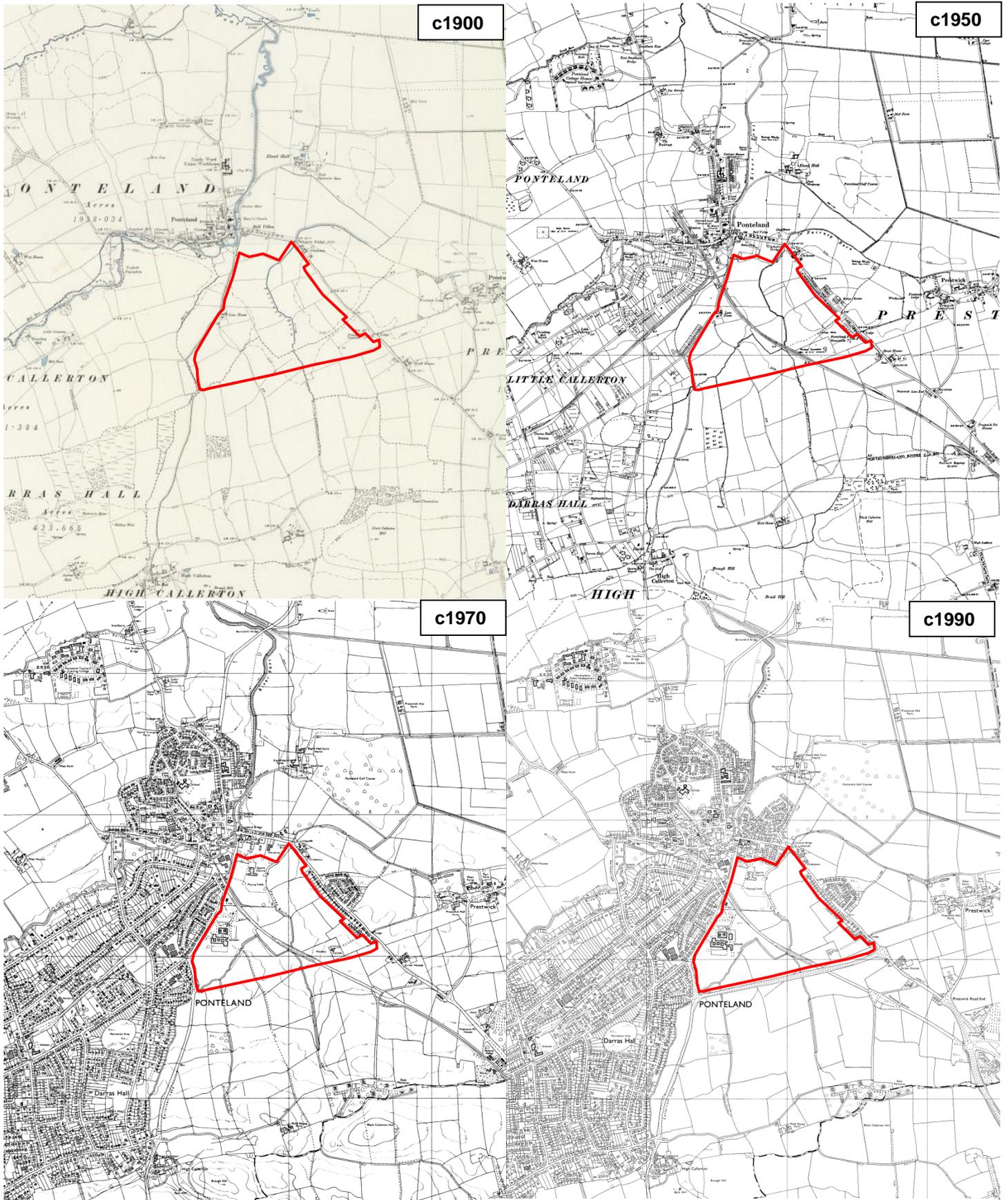
2.8 The site comprises several agricultural smallholdings that have, over time, been divided up by the railway, the construction of Ponteland's Middle and High Schools, Ponteland Leisure Centre and, most recently, Rotary Way. In particular, the construction of the latter has led to the formation of a natural boundary to the settlement and helps define the boundary of the site itself.

2.9 A residential property, Coruisk, lies within the site boundary. This SPD or the emerging Core Strategy does not propose development on the site of Coruisk, and the master planning work has taken this into account.

Land use

2.10 The site's historical use has been agriculture. The Historic Landscape Character assessment prepared by English Heritage and Northumberland County Council (February 2008) indicates that the agricultural land within and around the site was likely improved following the Second World War and reorganised into its current format of piecemeal enclosures.

Figure 2.2 Evolution of Ponteland since c1900



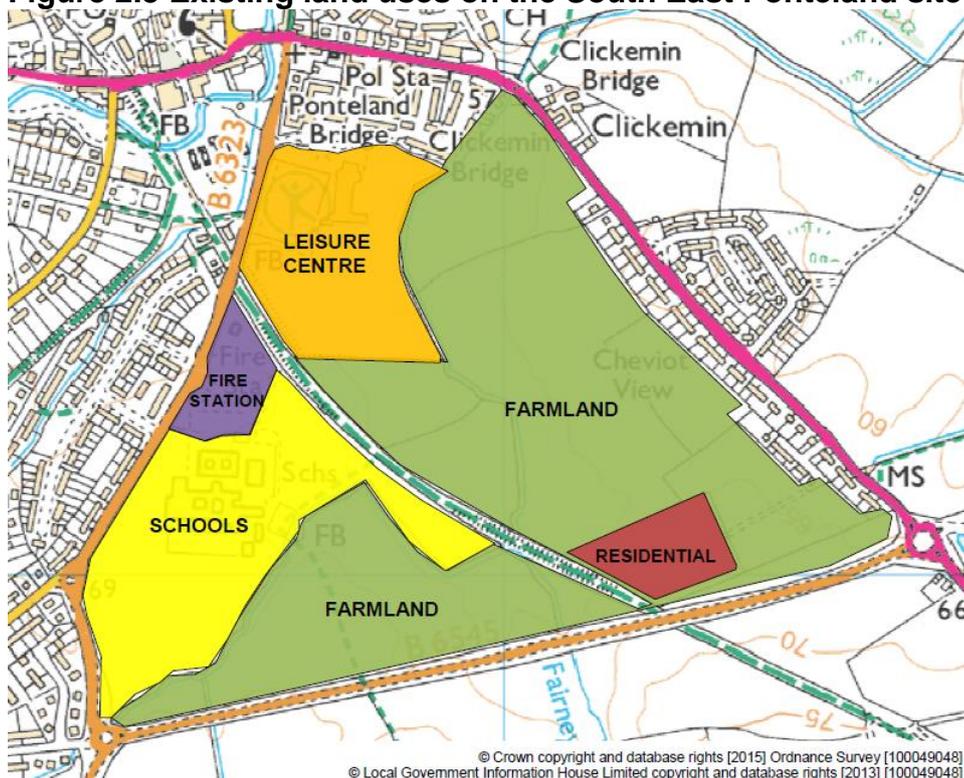
© Ordnance Survey. These images are extracted from the Millennium Map™, which is © Getmapping Plc.

- 2.11** A combination of land uses can be found on the site today:
- Agricultural uses occupy most of the eastern half of the site;
 - Ponteland Community Middle and High School occupies a significant proportion of the site's footprint. Playing fields can also be found to the rear of the school site;
 - A nursery and children's centre, Henry's Hut, is also located within the school site;
 - Ponteland Leisure Centre is located to the north west of the site;
 - A large recreational field can be found to the rear of the leisure centre along with a small playground, accessible from Callerton Lane;
 - A community fire station is situated between the leisure centre and combined school, accessible from Callerton Lane; and
 - An existing residential property, Coruisk, is also located on part of the south east of the site.

2.12 Ponteland's schools and leisure centre were identified for redevelopment as part of the Council's major review of buildings and assets, published March 2015. Current proposals include the building of new high, middle and first schools and a leisure centre on a new site, allowing the existing sites to be released for future development.

2.13 Figure 2.3 indicates the location of existing land uses on the South East Ponteland site.

Figure 2.3 Existing land uses on the South East Ponteland site



Consultation Question 2

Do you have any comments on the site development and land uses section?

Access and movement

Highways

2.14 The eastern boundary of the site straddles the route of the A696 Ponteland Road, a designated National Primary Route in the Core Strategy and a key route into Ponteland from Tyneside. The A696 provides access to Newcastle Airport, Newcastle upon Tyne and the A1 to the south and several villages to the north. The A696 is an important route linking Tyneside with the Scottish Borders.

2.15 Bounding the site to the south, B6545 Rotary Way forms a route from Darras Hall to the A696, bypassing the centre of Ponteland.

2.16 Bounding the site to the west, Callerton Lane serves the east of the Darras Hall estate and is an important road leading to Throckley and the A69 transpennine route from Carlisle to Newcastle.

2.17 Traffic origin and destination surveys undertaken between October and November 2014 indicate that the majority of traffic enters and exits the town from the south via the A696 Ponteland Road. This survey highlights that a significant proportion of trips are locally generated, with the majority of vehicles entering Ponteland during weekday peak times and on a Saturday completing their journey within the town, as opposed to passing through to reach another destination. In addition, traffic surveys undertaken in June 2012 around the site perimeter demonstrate a visible impact on the road network during school drop off and pick up times.

Work is ongoing to determine the remaining capacity of the local road network and the impact of rebuilding or relocating the school site, as well as any mitigation required as a result of development at the site covered by this SPD.

Public transport

2.18 The site is well served by public transport. The X77, X78 and X79 stop outside the site on Ponteland Road, providing direct links to Newcastle city centre at a combined frequency of every 30 minutes during Monday-Saturday daytimes. In addition, the 74 and 74A stop within 400m of the site from stops on Callerton Lane. These provide further links to Newcastle and to Hexham at a daytime frequency of every two hours. The 131 and 808 also provide infrequent links between Newcastle, Otterburn and Jedburgh.

2.19 A Tyne and Wear Metro station offering park and ride facilities is located at Callerton Parkway, approximately 2km away. This provides links throughout the Tyne and Wear conurbation at a daytime frequency of every 12 minutes.

2.20 The site is also well placed to access Newcastle Airport, with the site located 1.5km away from the terminal building.

Walking and cycling

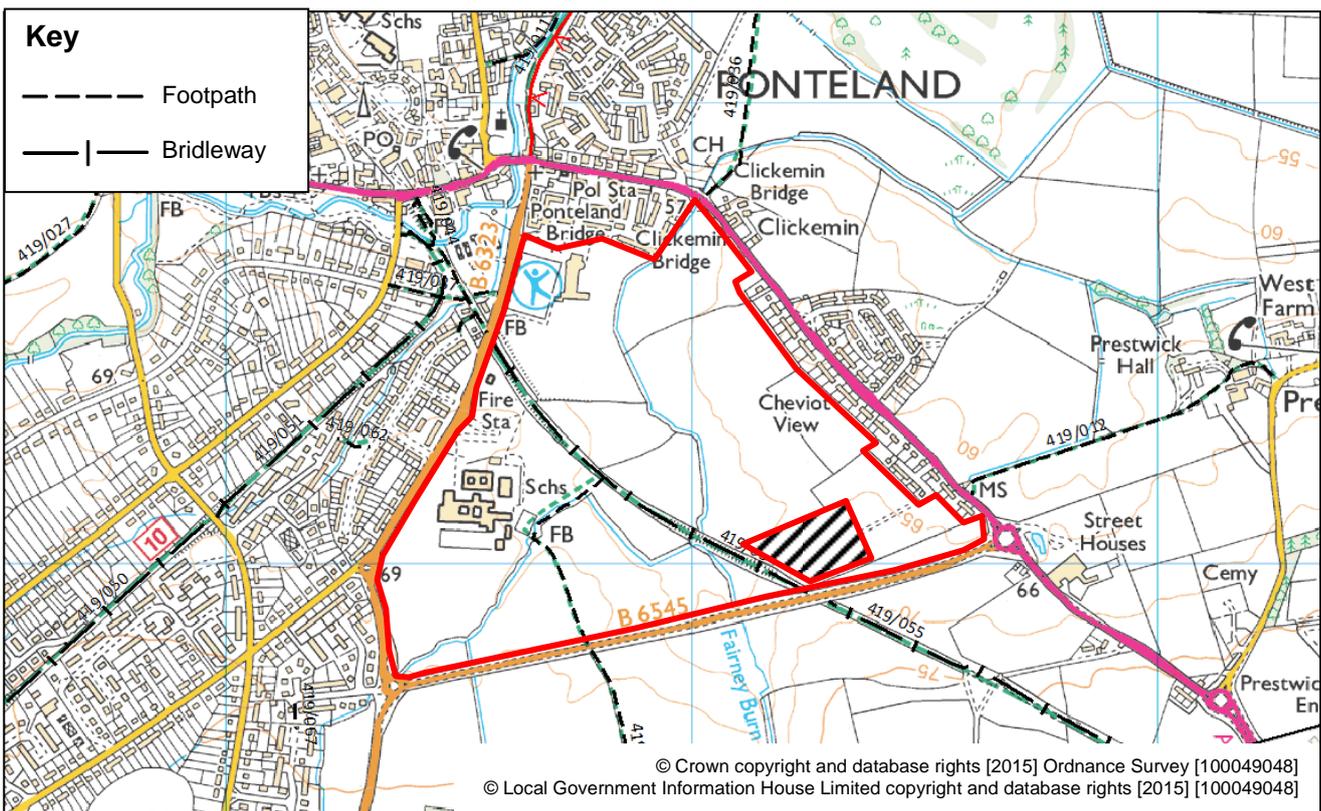
2.21 The site is crossed by a bridleway, formed from the dismantled railway. This route leads to the River Pont and Ponteland centre, crossing Rotary Way at an uncontrolled crossing point and forming part of the National Cycle Network Route 10 from North Shields to Cockermouth.

2.22 Ponteland Road and Callerton Lane both have footpaths along both sides of the road along most of the boundary. There are several informal pedestrian crossings at various points along these roads, but none are signal controlled. There are no footpaths along the route of Rotary Way, but an uncontrolled crossing can be found as the bridleway meets this road.

2.23 An additional public footpath crosses the south west of the site. This leads from High Hold Farm to the Ponteland Middle and High Schools and subsequently merges with the aforementioned bridleway.

2.24 Figure 2.4 shows the public rights of way that traverse the site.

Figure 2.4 Public rights of way in the site vicinity



Consultation Question 3

Do you have any comments on the access and movement section?

Site characteristics

Landscape character

2.25 The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment (August 2010)¹ identifies the site as an area of coalfield farmland that lies within the Stannington Landscape Character Area. Characteristics of this landscape type include well-settled agricultural land, extensive industrial land uses and an influential urban fringe. The landscape character type as a whole represents a heavily modified landscape which has lost much of its natural landscape structure as a result of historic mineral extraction and the intrusion of man-made elements.

2.26 The characteristics of the South East Ponteland site reflect many elements of the Stannington Landscape Character Area, with parts that have been significantly modified and influenced by adjoining urban areas and associated infrastructure. Housing is also a prominent element, and the presence of the schools and leisure centre within the site boundary all contribute to an urban fringe landscape. The presence of Rotary Way also emphasises this.

2.27 The Landscape Character Assessment, along with the Council's Key Land Use Impact Study (September 2010) and Strategic Land Review (October 2015), all identify the South East Ponteland site as an area of lower landscape sensitivity. Figure 2.6 is an extract from the Key Land Use Impact Study and identifies the A696 Ponteland Road corridor as an area of lower landscape sensitivity. The area of higher landscape sensitivity is identified as being south of Darras Hall, in the vicinity of Birney Hill and Black Callerton.

Landscape features

2.28 Large trees and hedgerows line Callerton Lane for the most part of the site's north western extent, partially screening the large buildings associated with the leisure centre. The school site is bounded by hedgerows and a combination of small and large trees on its western extent. There are several mature trees to the front of the school and on the grass verge at the site's south western extent. More sporadic hedgerows can be found to the school site's southern extent. Several mature trees can also be found particularly to the east of the existing leisure centre site which helps screen buildings from existing residential areas.

2.29 Clear boundaries between farmland are drawn by hedgerows and trees which is sporadic in most places. Some particularly mature conifers can be found to the south east of the site, screening the residential property, Coriusk, from view. None of the trees present on site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

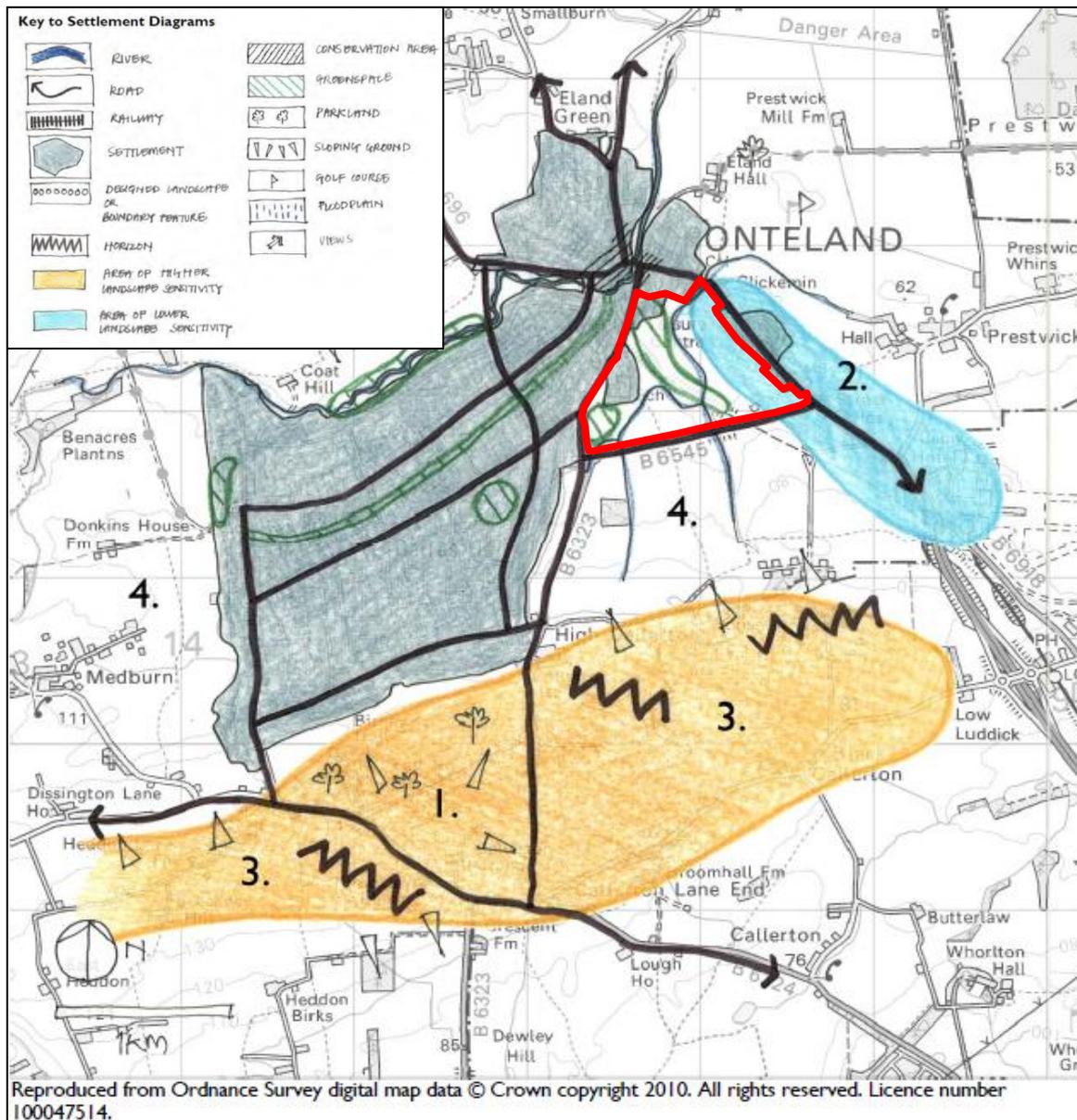
Topography

2.30 The site's topography generally falls from both the east and west towards the Fairney Burn, the watercourse running through the centre of the site, from around 57m

¹ Available on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=ce99fc57-0610-4498-afc2-c9ce03fadb03&version=-1>

AOD to around 54m AOD². Higher, flat ground can be found to the east and west of the site. The bridleway through the site is on raised terrain for some of its route.

Figure 2.6 Landscape assessment of the South East Ponteland site (extract from NCC Key Land Use Impact Study, September 2010)



Views of the site

2.31 The site is visible on the approach from several locations in the vicinity. Views onto the site can also be taken from several points along its perimeter.

2.32 Figure 2.7 shows the location of some views onto the South East Ponteland site on the approach from locations in the vicinity (identified alphabetically) and around the site perimeter (identified numerically).

² Assessed within the Northumberland Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (October 2015) prepared by AECOM.

2.33 Important views on the approach to the site are available from the following locations:

- A. The site is partially looking north east on the approach from B6323 Callerton Lane (section parallel with Willow Way) but is partially screened by vegetation;
- B. The site is not visible looking north west from the A696 Ponteland Road for the most part (between the Prestwick Road End roundabout and the Garden Centre) as houses and vegetation screen the view;
- C. The site comes into fuller view looking north west from A696 Ponteland Road before the roundabout with Rotary Way (standing opposite The Badger PH);
- D. The site is partially visible looking west from the road to Prestwick but is screened or filtered by vegetation;
- E. A very narrow view of the existing leisure centre is visible from the Pont Bridge, with houses blocking most of the view; and
- F. Only a narrow view onto the site is visible looking eastwards on the approach from Middle Drive (before the roundabout with Callerton Lane) and is screened by vegetation.

2.34 Figure 2.8 shows some views on the approach to the site.

Figure 2.8 Views on the approach to the site

A
Partial view
looking
north-
eastwards
from
Callerton
Lane



B
Imperceptible
view north-
westwards
from
Ponteland
Road



C
Fuller view of
the site
north-
westwards
from
Ponteland
Road
(opposite
The Badger
PH)



D
Imperceptible
view
westwards
from
Prestwick
Park



E
Partial view
looking
southwards
from Pont
Bridge



F
Partial view
looking
eastwards
from Middle
Drive



2.35 Important views onto the site can also be taken at several points along its perimeter on Callerton Lane, Rotary Way, Ponteland Road, Fairney Edge and Mayfair Gardens. These views exemplify the site's urban fringe qualities, with buildings and infrastructure associated with the adjacent settlement visible from multiple vantage points. Rotary Way (2b) is a link road that cuts through a predominantly agricultural landscape. The schools are visible from several points around the perimeter (1, 3b) and from the bridleway through the site (10b). Housing at Cheviot View (5, 6b, 10a, 11) and Fairney Edge (6a) is also visible from Rotary Way, Ponteland Road and from the bridleway.

2.36 Views outward from the site consist of semi-rural views south, with some small farm buildings visible across the landscape.

2.37 Figure 2.9 shows views onto the site taken from its perimeter and from the bridleway running through the site.

Figure 2.9 Views from within the site and around the perimeter

1
Looking
north
east
over
the
school
site



2a
View north-
eastwards
onto the
site



2b
View
eastwards
along
Rotary
Way



3a
View north-
westwards
towards
Darras Hall



3b
View
northwards
towards
Ponteland
centre



4
View north-
westwards
onto the
dismantled
railway, now
a public
bridleway,
which runs
through the
site



5
View
northwards
towards
Cheviot
View



6a
View
north-
westwards
towards
Fairney
Edge



6b
View
south-
eastwards
towards
Cheviot
View



7
View
southwards
onto the site
from
Fairney
Edge



8
View south-
eastwards
onto the
leisure
centre's
recreational
fields



9
View south-
eastwards
onto the
dismantled
railway, now
a public
bridleway,
which runs
through the
site



10a
View
eastwards
onto
agricultural
fields with
housing at
Cheviot
View in the
background



10b
View
westwards
onto the
rear of the
school site



11
View
eastwards
onto
agricultural
fields with
housing at
Cheviot
View in the
background



Built environment

2.38 There are several buildings within the site boundary. Ponteland Leisure Centre comprises of a multipurpose sports hall, originally built in the 1960s, and an extension containing a swimming pool and reception facilities built in 1991. The leisure centre is fronted by a hardstanding car park, whilst grass playing facilities can be found to the rear of the building. A playground can also be found within the part of the site occupied by the existing leisure centre.

2.39 Ponteland Fire Station comprises a main office, an attached garage and a separate small garage, all in brick and occupying only a small footprint.

2.40 Ponteland Community Middle and High Schools are on a combined campus to the south west of the site. The schools are comprised of several interlinked buildings constructed in the late 1960s/early 1970s and are surrounded by grass and hardstanding.

2.41 Figure 2.10 is a series of photographs of each building within the site boundary.

Figure 2.10 Existing buildings within the site boundary

Ponteland Leisure Centre



Ponteland Fire Station



Ponteland Community Middle School



Ponteland High School



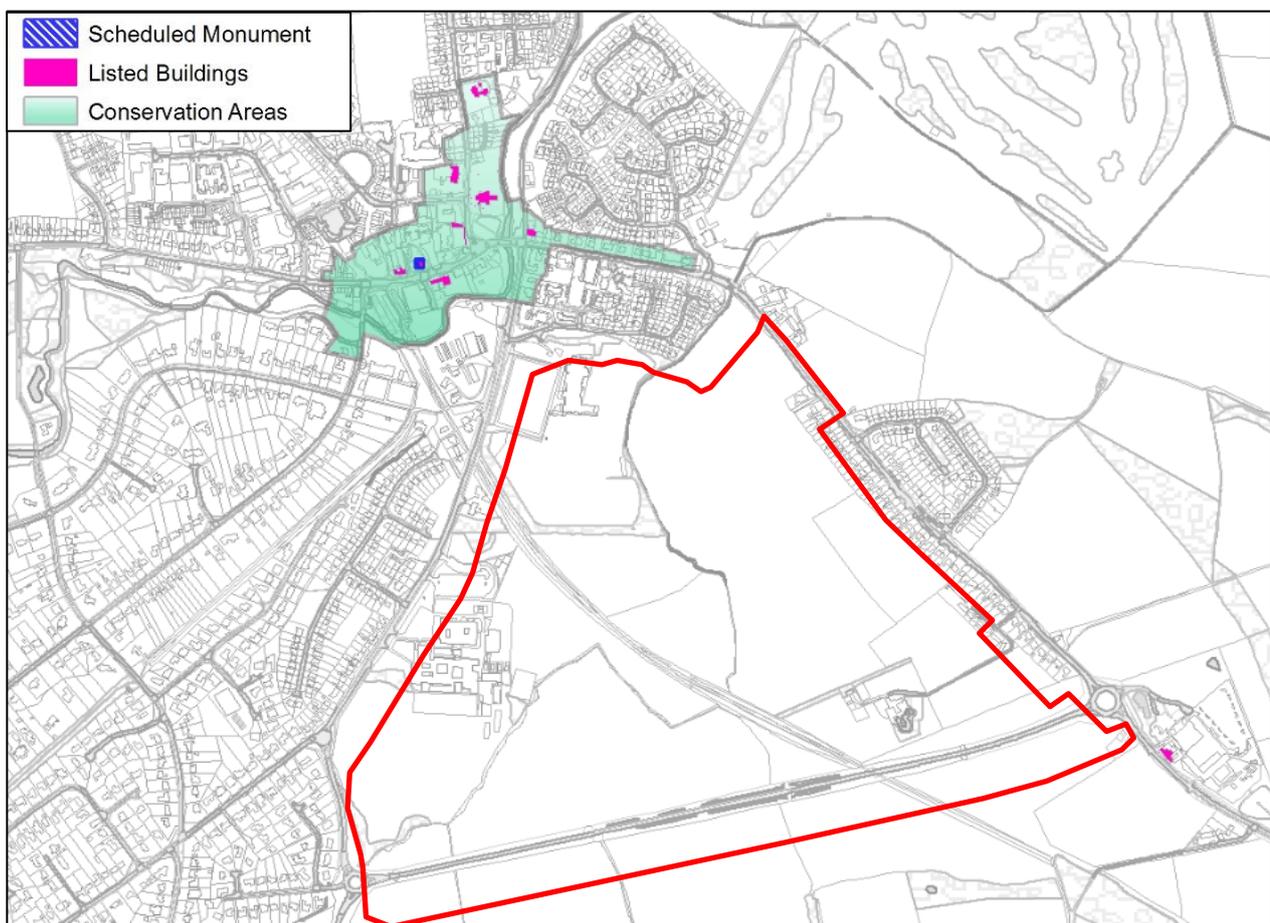
2.42 Residential properties about the site's northern and eastern perimeter. Houses at Mayfair Gardens and Fairney Edge comprise of bungalows and two storey dwellings and three storey flats. These are built in a contemporary style, and are partially screened from view by vegetation. Houses at Cheviot View comprise of a mixture of large semi-detached

and detached properties dating from the interwar period. They are highly visible when standing within the site looking outwards.

2.43 No buildings on site are recognised as examples of special architectural or historic merit through built heritage designations or otherwise. The nearest listed buildings to the site are located on Ponteland Road. Numbers 3 and 5 Bell Villas are listed at Grade II and lie approximately 200m from the north-western extent of the site boundary. However, these are obscured by buildings on Callerton Lane and any development of the site is unlikely to have an adverse effect upon the setting of these listed buildings.

2.44 Figure 2.11 illustrates the extent of the Ponteland Conservation Area and the location of protected buildings. This shows that the north-western extent of the site is located approximately 150m from the Ponteland Conservation Area. It will have to be demonstrated that development in close proximity to this would not have any adverse effects on this conservation area.

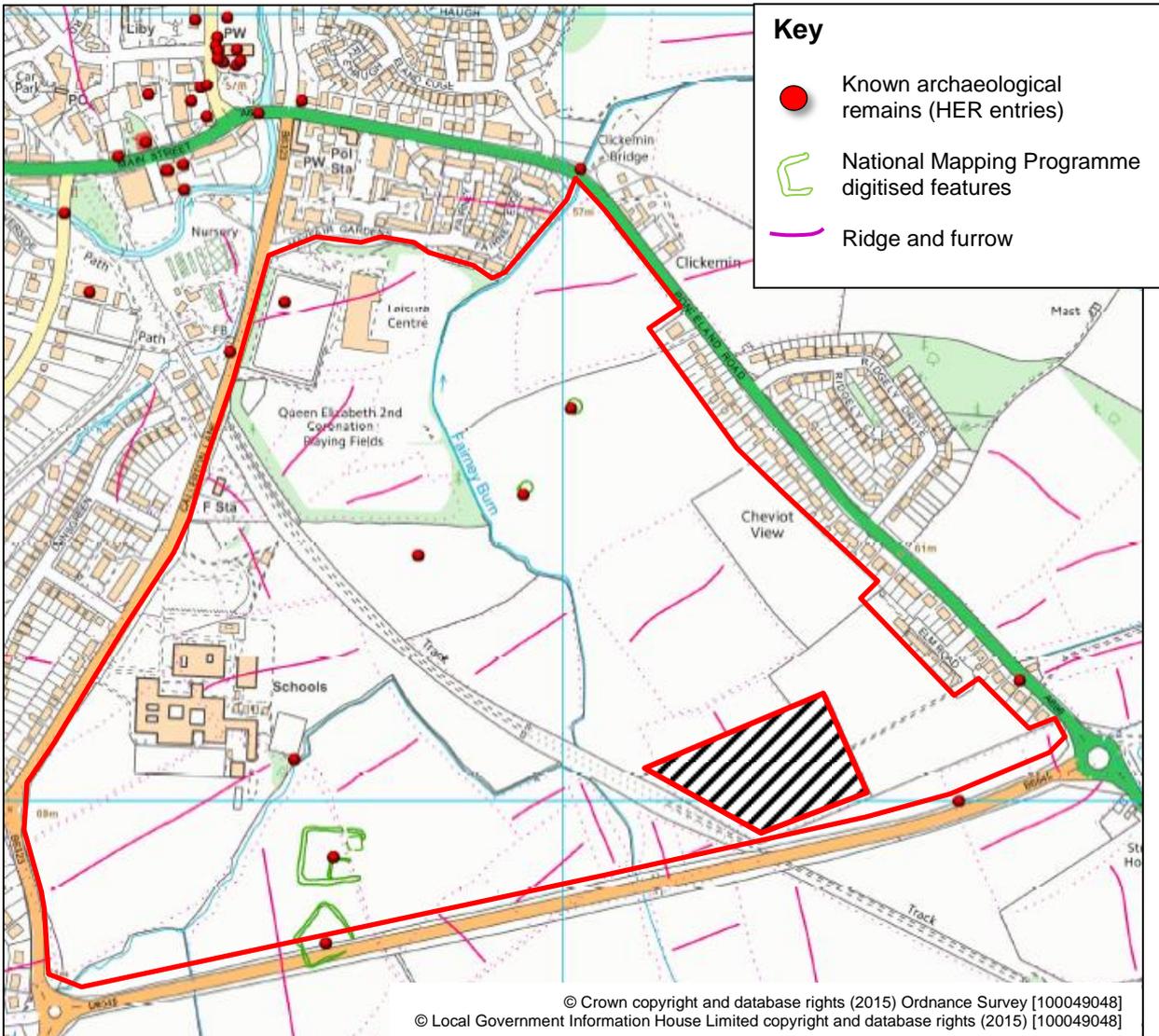
Figure 2.11 Built heritage designations in the site vicinity



Archaeology

2.45 An initial scoping assessment of the site's archaeological value has identified the presence of several archaeological features within the site boundary. Whilst not comprehensive or exhaustive, figure 2.12 shows the location of known archaeological remains that have been recorded on the Council's Historic Environment Register (shown as red dots).

Figure 2.12 Known archaeological remains in the site vicinity



2.46 Ridge and furrow (indicated by pink lines) can be found at various points around the site, particularly towards the south. Their presence is indicative of medieval and post-medieval agricultural activities on the site; they may also have served to conceal and preserve important archaeological features. Depending on their state of preservation, their presence may warrant their surveying and/or recording as part of a wider archaeological assessment.

2.47 The site contains evidence of prehistoric enclosures or divisions, with their locations digitised as part of English Heritage's National Mapping Programme and outlined in green.

Two circular cropmarks can also be found to the north east of the site, with one interpreted as a circular enclosure with an annexe of unknown date or function and another interpreted as a possible round barrow, suggesting the potential for additional unrecorded burials in this area.

2.48 An archaeological evaluation covering a small part of the site was also undertaken in 2014 and revealed a prehistoric/Romano-British ditch running north-east to south-west across the site. The site is located within a wider archaeological landscape containing a range of sites from the prehistoric period onwards. These remains are unlikely to sit in isolation.

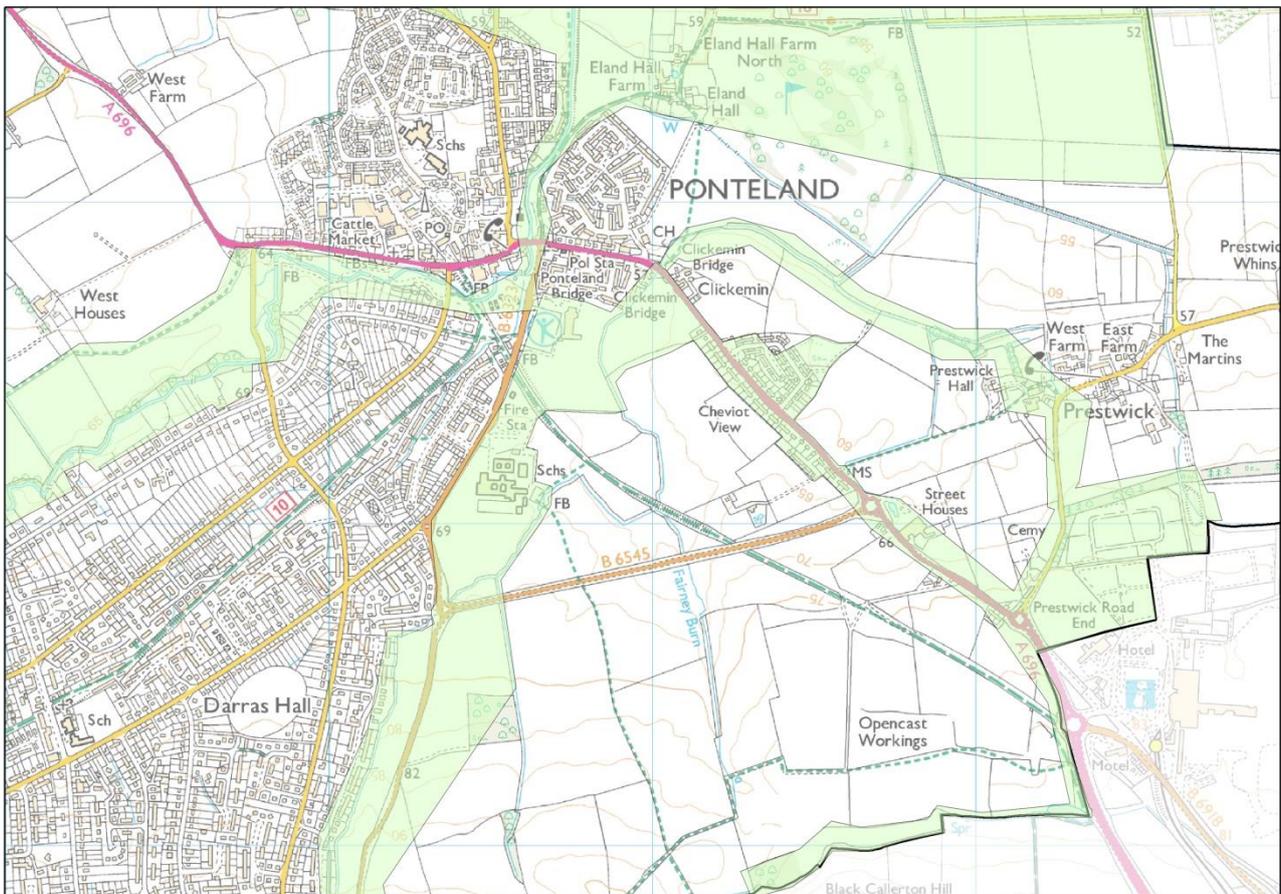
A detailed desk-based assessment to understand the full archaeological value of the site is underway.

Ecology

2.49 A watercourse (Fairney Burn) can be found within the site. Great crested newts have been recorded on site within the existing footprint of the leisure centre. Bats, red squirrel and badger have also been recorded locally. Prestwick Carr local wildlife site is located approximately 1km from the site's eastern extent. In addition, the south western extent of the site lies within 1km of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covering an oval area of grassland within the Darras Hall estate.

2.50 A green infrastructure corridor runs through the site, roughly following the route of Callerton Lane and Cheviot View and covering the northern part of the site and the current school and leisure centre footprints. The corridor extends from Newcastle's local authority area, running across the route of the River Pont north of Darras Hall and up towards Stannington. Policy 51 requires that development proposals protect and enhance green infrastructure assets and provide high quality links to existing assets in adjacent authority areas. Figure 2.13 shows the extent of this green infrastructure designation in the vicinity of the site.

Figure 2.13 Green infrastructure designation in the site vicinity



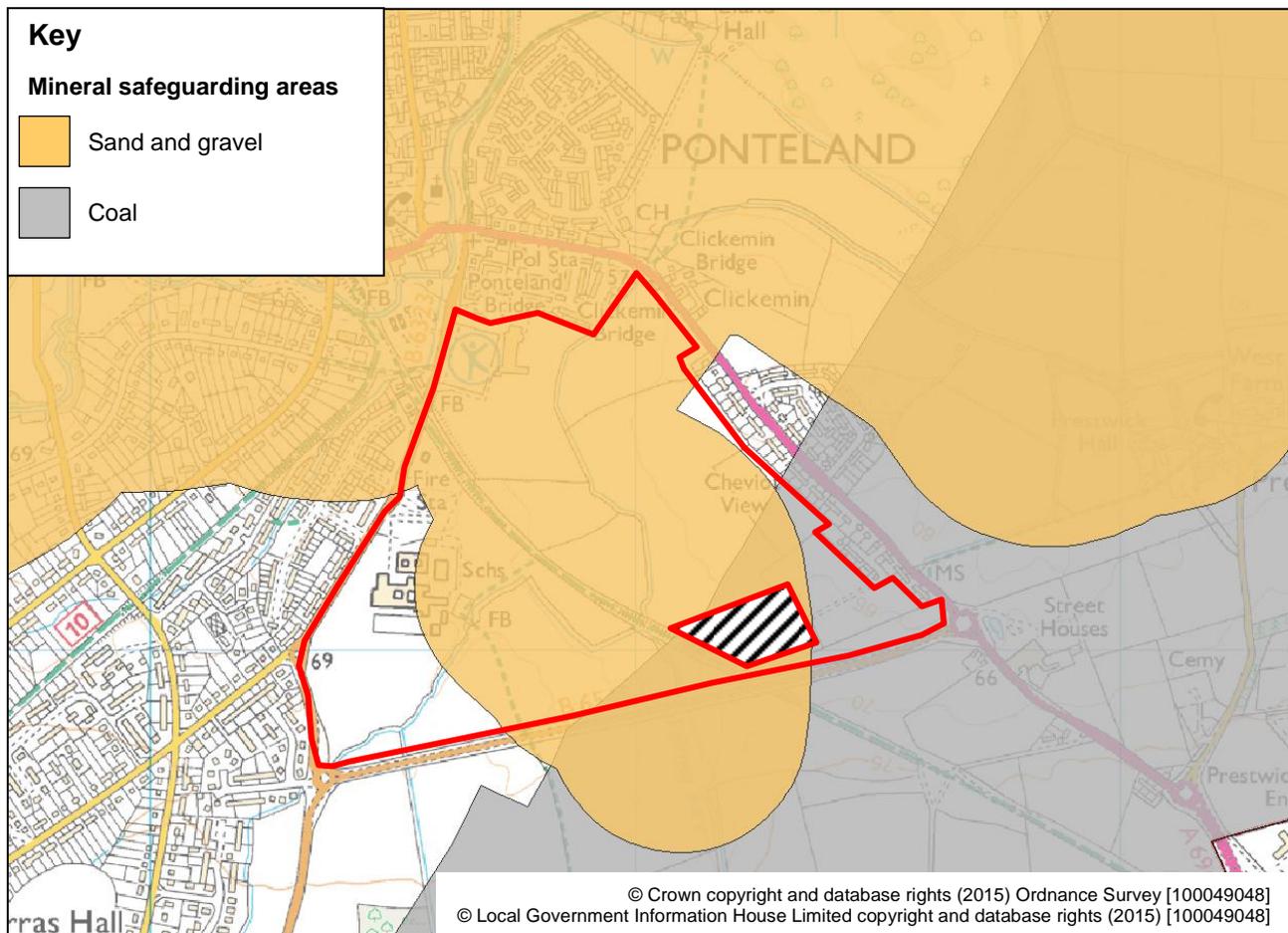
Detailed ecological assessment work is ongoing.

Ground conditions

2.51 A desk-based assessment of the site confirms the presence of superficial sand and gravel deposits close to the course of the Fairney Burn, as well as brick clay deposits and surface coal resources at the site's south western extent. These mineral deposits are safeguarded through a Mineral Safeguarding Area designation, defined in Policy 55 of the Core Strategy. Consideration will need to be given to this policy in formulating any development proposals in the areas of the site affected by the designation. The coverage of the Minerals Safeguarding Area designation in relation to the site boundary is shown in figure 2.14³.

³ Full maps of the Minerals Safeguarding Area are also included in Appendix E of the Core Strategy.

Figure 2.14 Mineral Safeguarding Area designations in the site vicinity



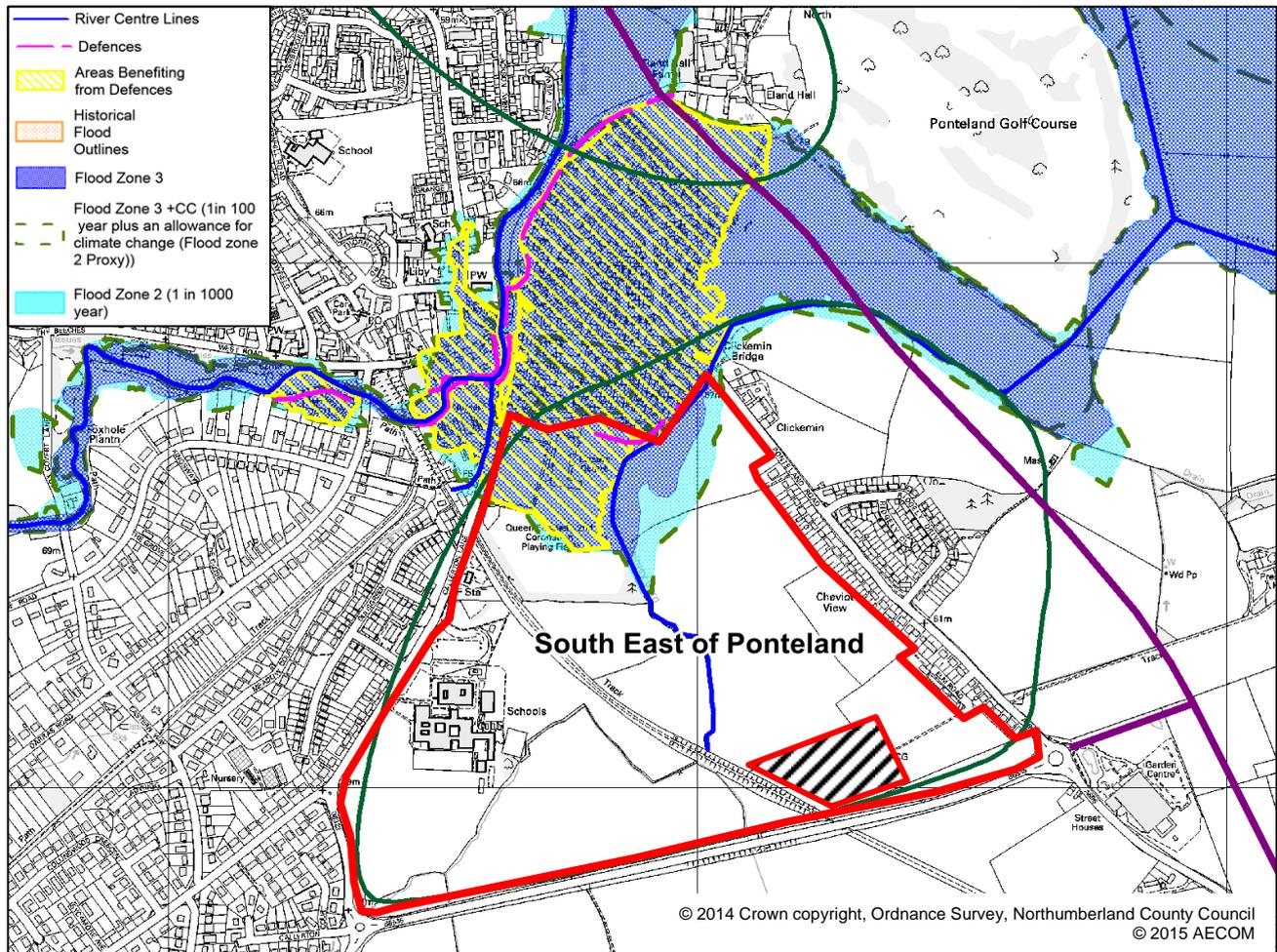
2.52 The site’s historic and current agricultural uses indicate that the potential for ground contamination is likely to be limited. However, this, along with the impact of the buildings to the west of the site, must be appropriately investigated and any mitigation proposed as necessary.

Flood risk and drainage

2.53 Parts of the site covered by this SPD are designated by the Environment Agency as Flood Zones 2 and 3. This means that these parts have a medium to high probability of flooding⁴. Figure 2.15 is an extract from the Northumberland Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (October 2015) and shows the parts of the site that are affected by these designations.

⁴ National Planning Practice Guidance states that land within Flood Zone 2 has between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding, whilst land within Flood Zone 3 has a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding

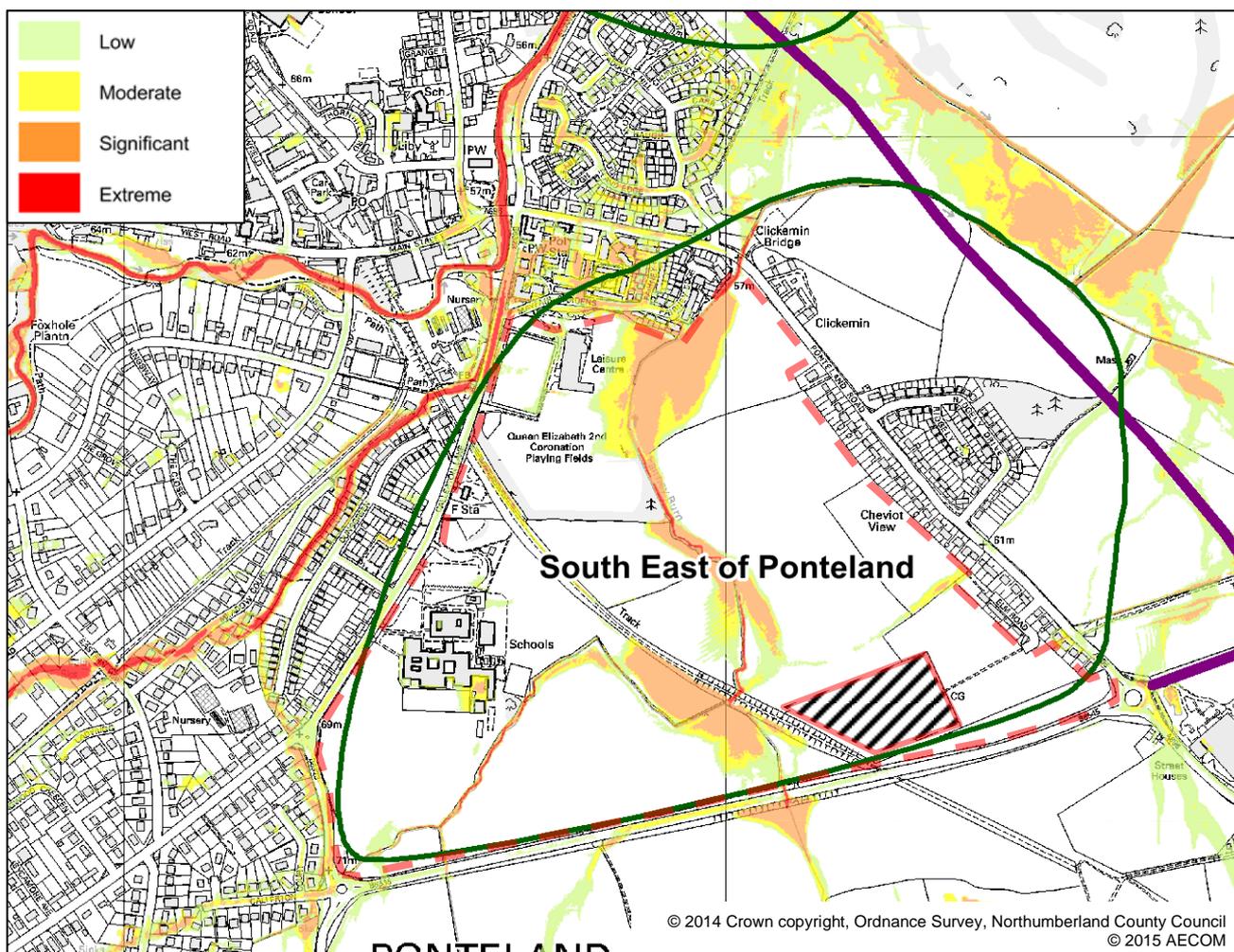
Figure 2.15 Risk of river flooding (extract from Northumberland County Council Level 2 SFRA, October 2015)



2.54 The SFRA finds that both the Fairney Burn and the River Pont (running close to the site boundary) pose a flood risk to the site. However, the majority of the site is not at risk of flooding. In addition, existing flood defences provide protection for parts of the site most at risk. The Council’s Water Cycle Study (October 2015) notes that additional investment in flood defence infrastructure may be required where development is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

2.55 Areas along the course of the Fairney Burn and adjacent to Ponteland Leisure Centre are also at risk of surface water flooding. However, the majority of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding. The areas affected are shown in figure 2.16. For clarity, the site boundary is indicated by a dashed line.

Figure 2.16 Risk of surface water flooding (extract from Northumberland County Council Level 2 SFRA, October 2015)



2.56 The likelihood of surface water flooding is likely to necessitate the implementation of suitable surface water management measures, such as the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), in accordance with Policy 38 of the Core Strategy. The limited headroom at Howdon Waste Water Treatment Works in North Tyneside, where new development in Ponteland currently drains, is also likely to require an appropriate surface water removal scheme to be implemented.

2.57 Policy 37 of the Core Strategy states that new development must be directed away from areas identified at most risk of flooding and development must not increase flood risk in vulnerable locations elsewhere. National Planning Practice Guidance supports this, requiring highly vulnerable development⁵ to be directed away from areas designated as Flood Zone 3 and more vulnerable development (including housing) to undergo an exception test. Policy 37 also requires surface water run-off rates on greenfield land to not exceed existing run-off rates. On previously developed land, surface run-off rates should be reduced to a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate.

⁵ Highly vulnerable, more vulnerable and less vulnerable development are all defined in Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification of National Planning Practice Guidance

2.58 The Council's Detailed Water Cycle Study (October 2015) indicates that a surface water sewer and a foul sewer cross the site, with the former discharging into the Fairney Burn and the latter connecting to a combined system serving the whole settlement. In accordance with Policy 37 of the Core Strategy, the impact of new development on existing sewerage and flood risk management infrastructure must be assessed to ascertain whether there is a need to reinforce or provide new infrastructure.

Utilities/infrastructure

2.59 There are no pylons, high voltage underground electricity cables or gas mains in close proximity to the site.

2.60 Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) has identified that a water main, a surface water sewer and foul sewer all cross the site. NWL would expect these to be diverted or placed within a suitable easement in the event of development close to these utilities.

Consultation Question 4

Do you have any comments on the site characteristics section?

3. Vision and objectives

3.1 The vision for the South East of Ponteland site covered by this SPD is set out below:

Site vision

As a sustainable expansion to Ponteland, a mix of development delivered in the plan period, incorporating a mix of housing, new employment development and improved leisure and education facilities, plus additional safeguarded land, will help to meet local needs and support sustainable communities as well as meeting long term development needs beyond the period of the Core Strategy.

3.2 In order to achieve this vision, development at this site should aim to meet the following strategic objectives:

- Enable new and improved community and leisure facilities to be delivered for the benefit of all residents in Ponteland;
- Deliver around 400 new homes, offering a range of options to meet local housing needs, along with new office development to create additional employment opportunities;
- Promote a high quality, sustainable design for the site that reflects current best practice and accords with Policy 2 of the Core Strategy;
- Address flood risk issues through the careful siting of development and the mitigation of flooding impacts through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
- Create enhanced opportunities for sustainable access to community and leisure facilities and to Ponteland centre by improving connections through the site and promoting sustainable travel options in accordance with Policy 41 of the Core Strategy; and
- Enhance the site's ecological value through the implementation of a robust landscape framework that protects and augments existing wildlife corridors through the site.

3.3 An indicative masterplan for the site has been prepared for the purposes of guiding development proposals on the site and is set out in the following section. This is accompanied by a development framework, a movement framework and a landscape framework.

Consultation Question 5

Do you have any comments on the vision and objectives for the site?

4. Development framework

Indicative masterplan concept

4.1 The indicative masterplan for the site covered by this SPD is set out in figure 4.1 overleaf.

4.2 The masterplan is intended to guide the scale and location of development proposals at the South East of Ponteland site. Indicative locations are suggested for new roads, access points, footpaths/cyclepaths and open space as well as new housing and a new “community campus” comprised of modern school and leisure facilities and a relocated fire station.

4.3 The development of the site seeks to maximise gains for the existing community of Ponteland and has regard to all of the site constraints outlined in the previous sections of this document.

4.4 A development scenario that is aligned with the masterplan will consist of several key elements:

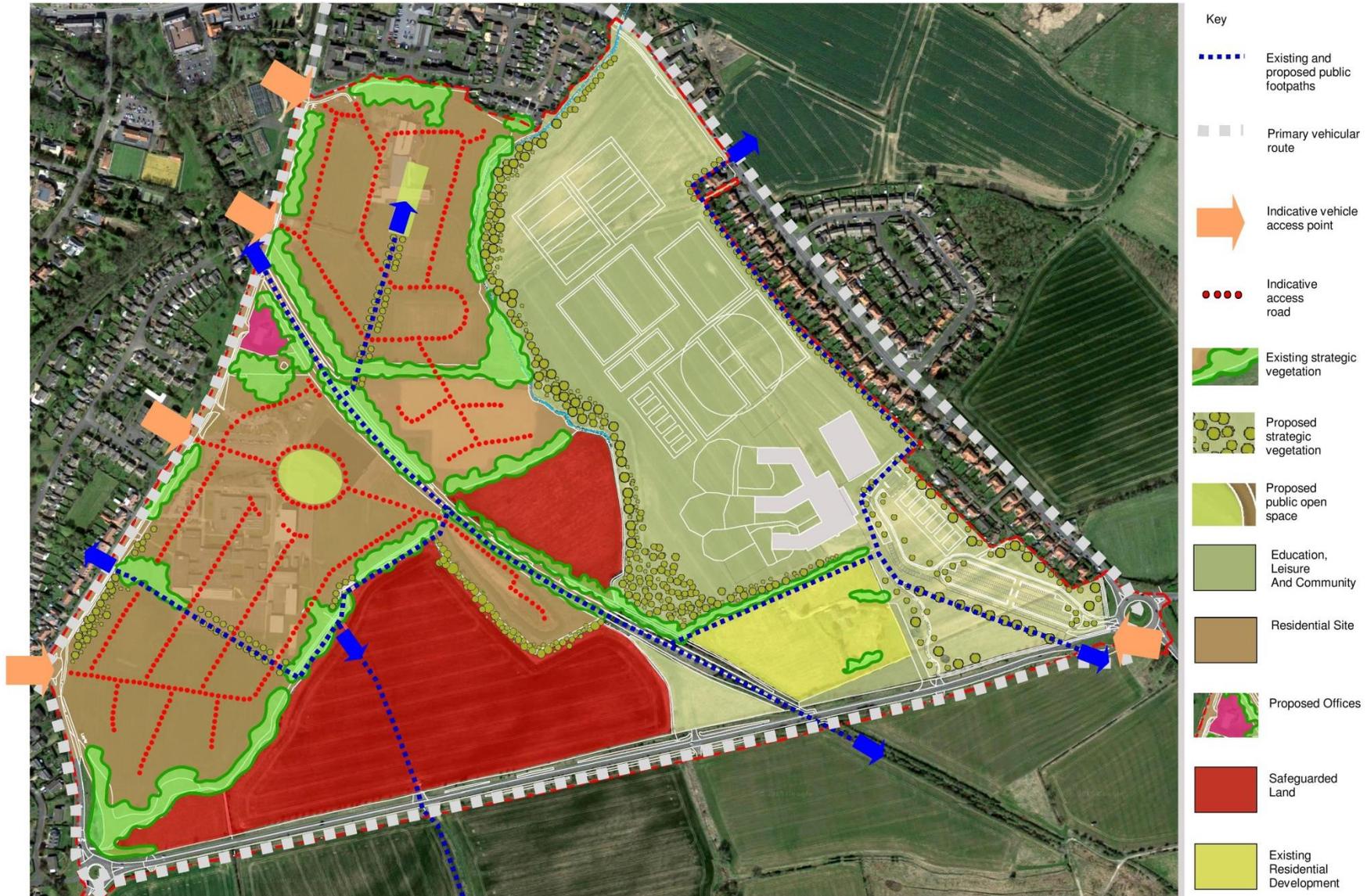
- The existing schools and leisure centre will relocate to a new “community campus” situated on the eastern part of the site. This campus will comprise new high, middle and first schools and indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, as well as a new fire station (relocated from its current site on Callerton Lane);
- Their relocation will free up the western part of the site for new housing development. The two separate housing plots would be divided by an existing bridleway and have separate access points, but would be linked by new footpaths;
- Approximately 1ha of new office development will be situated on the site of the relocated fire station;
- Additional land to the south and at the centre of the site will also be safeguarded for future development, which will help to fulfil long term development needs beyond the period of the Core Strategy;
- The existing bridleway running through the centre of the site will be enhanced as a pedestrian/cycle “spinal route”, providing access to all parts of the site to each other through a network of footpaths/cyclepaths, and would also continue to link the site to Ponteland centre and Newcastle Airport;
- New open space will be created and integrated with the development of new housing;
- The existing network of green infrastructure within the site boundary will be complemented by additional tree planting, providing strong buffers between land uses and serving as valuable wildlife corridors;
- The existing residential use on site will be retained.

4.5 The Council will expect a detailed masterplan to accompany any outline planning application(s) made on all or part of the site.

Consultation Question 6

Do you have any comments on the indicative masterplan for the site?

Figure 4.1 Indicative masterplan for the South East of Ponteland site



Development framework and indicative site delivery

4.6 The indicative development framework shows that the site can accommodate a mixed use development comprising of new housing, office development and a new “community campus” with education, community and leisure facilities. Land will also be safeguarded to help fulfil long term development needs beyond the period of the Core Strategy. Figure 4.2 shows this development framework that is proposed for the South East of Ponteland site.

Figure 4.2 Indicative development framework



Housing provision

4.7 The site has the capacity to deliver 400 homes in the plan period (up to 2031) and additional homes beyond the plan period.

4.8 As part of the Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (October 2015), several land parcels that make up the South East of Ponteland site were assessed for their deliverability and achievability as well as their potential housing yield⁶. The Council has assessed that the current leisure centre and school sites (SHLAA

⁶ The content of these assessments can be found within the Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), published October 2015

reference 6911, 3086 and 6912) can deliver an indicative yield of around 400 new homes within the plan period.

4.9 It is anticipated that the new school will open in 2019. Given that the leisure centre and the school are currently both operating and site disposal, demolition and clearance will be necessary, it is not envisaged that new housing development could be delivered before 2021. As a result, it has been identified that housing delivery will start in the 6 to 10 year period (2021-2025). It is uncertain at this stage whether the leisure centre or the school site will deliver housing first.

4.10 The development framework also makes a provision of safeguarded land for future development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifies that, where necessary, local planning authorities should identify safeguarded land in order to meet longer term development needs beyond the plan period. However, this land is not allocated for development during this plan period. Planning permission for the permanent development of this land will not be granted without it being allocated as part of a Local Plan review.

Density and mix

4.11 The delivery of a mix of housing types to meet identified needs will be required, in accordance with Policy 18 of the Core Strategy. In addition, a density appropriate for the area should be achieved. The provision of plots to enable self-build or custom build will also be encouraged.

4.12 A proportion of the dwellings across the site should be provided as affordable housing, in accordance with Policy 19 of the Core Strategy. Developers should have regard to the target of at least 15% of homes on new permissions to be affordable. A contribution in excess of 15%, up to the overall plan target of 30%, may be expected if the overall plan target is not being met or where there is an identified local need which justifies a higher contribution and viability permits.

4.13 In order to create mixed and balanced communities, there is a presumption that affordable housing will be provided on-site; off-site provision and/or financial contributions in lieu of affordable housing will only be deemed acceptable if robustly justified.

Community and leisure facilities

4.14 The development framework also envisages a new “community campus” that will deliver improved education, leisure and community facilities for the whole of Ponteland.

4.15 The Council recognises that Ponteland’s current schools and leisure centre were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and are struggling to meet modern standards and customer expectations. The campus will comprise modern high, middle and first schools and new indoor and outdoor leisure facilities. These facilities will replace existing buildings at Darras Hall First School, Ponteland Middle School, Ponteland High School and Ponteland Leisure Centre. The fire station, currently on Callerton Lane, will also be relocated to the community campus.

4.16 The development framework has been guided by the need to minimise disruption to the existing school and leisure centre operations. Building new schools and the leisure centre on another part of the site, as opposed to the current footprint, allows these existing facilities to remain operational for as long as possible during construction. It also ensures that the best possible facilities in line with modern standards can be delivered, as opposed to retrofitting existing buildings.

4.17 An existing playground and playing fields for community use can be found at the current leisure centre site. In accordance with Policy 50 of the Core Strategy, developments should protect, enhance and/or replace existing recreational facilities.

Office development

4.18 The indicative development framework makes a provision for approximately 1ha of new office development on the site of the existing fire station, which is set to be relocated to new facilities on the Education, Leisure and Community part of the South East of Ponteland site.

4.19 The Council's Employment Land Review and Employment Land and Premises Demand Study has identified that additional allocation of land for office use in Ponteland should be a priority as there is identified market demand but no suitable land available. To facilitate this, an allocation for a small office development will be made to provide for market need in the town within the plan period.

Sustainable design

4.20 The Council will expect a high quality, sustainable design to be delivered at this site in accordance with Policy 2 of the Core Strategy. Proposals will be expected to respond positively to context and local character, achieve a high standard of accessibility, permeability and legibility for all users and incorporate high quality materials and buildings.

Flood risk and drainage

4.21 The site analysis informing this SPD has identified that parts of the site are at risk of river and surface water flooding.

4.22 The indicative development framework has been guided by Policy 37 of the Core Strategy, which requires proposals to demonstrate that they minimise flood risk and do not increase flood risk elsewhere. Whilst the area designated for new housing in the development framework falls partially within a Flood Zone, the Council's Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (October 2015) has identified that flood defences protect this part of the site.

4.23 The remainder of the site falling within a Flood Zone is proposed as public open space and recreation, both of which are classified as water-compatible development in National Planning Practice Guidance and are recommended uses for land close to watercourses in the Council's SFRA. A new landscape buffer is also proposed for the east of the Fairney Burn.

4.24 In developing parts of the site at risk of surface water flooding, it will be necessary for developers to liaise with the Council and the Environment Agency regarding the implementation of an appropriate Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SuDS). With regards to the South East of Ponteland site, the Council's SFRA recommends that SuDS are considered at all stages of the planning and design of new development to reduce runoff rates and the resultant flood risk posed to adjacent/downstream areas. Policy 37 of the Core Strategy requires that surface water run-off rates on greenfield land do not exceed existing run-off rates, and on previously developed land that surface run-off rates are reduced to a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate.

Utilities

4.25 The site should be adequately serviced by utilities including gas, electricity and water supplies. The developer should consult the relevant utility companies to ensure that there is sufficient infrastructure capacity for the development(s) proposed.

4.26 A water main, surface water sewer and foul sewer all cross the site. Consequently, the Council and Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) would expect these to be diverted or placed within a suitable easement.

Consultation Question 7

Do you have any comments on the indicative development framework for the site?

Movement framework

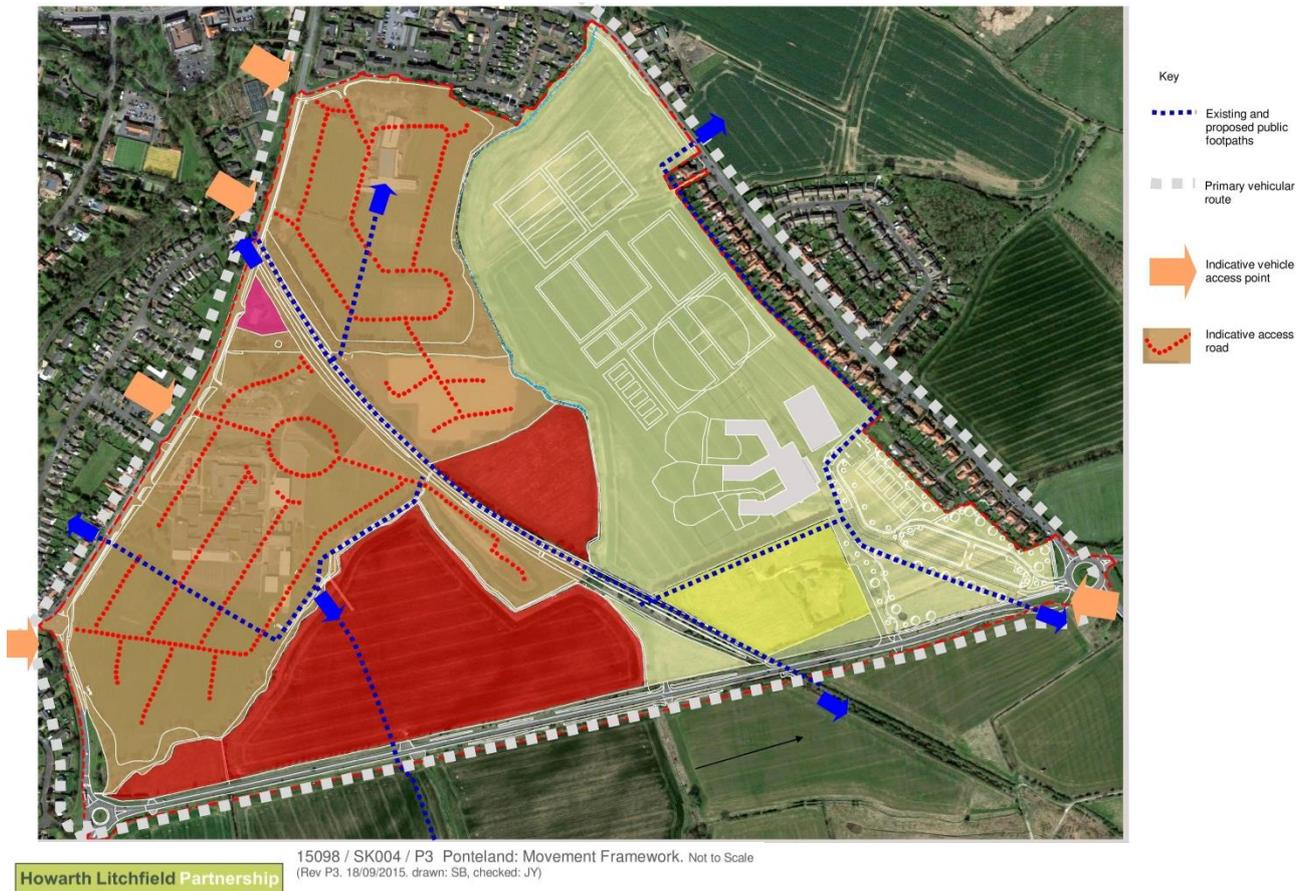
4.27 The indicative movement framework for the South East of Ponteland site is shown in figure 4.3 overleaf.

4.28 The indicative movement framework shows that that the boundary roads - B6323 Callerton Lane, A696 Ponteland Road and B6545 Rotary Way – will serve as the primary vehicular access route for the South East of Ponteland site. Vehicular access to the new housing would be taken from access points on Callerton Lane, whilst access to the school would be solely taken from a remodelled Ponteland Road/Rotary Way roundabout.

4.29 Whilst the access points shown on the movement framework are indicative and will require appropriate approval, it proposes for the northern part of the housing development to be served by two access points and the southern part of the housing development a further two. It is recognised that any retained access points for the leisure centre and for the school may have to be reconfigured to enable two-way traffic to access and egress the site safely.

4.30 Rotary Way would also be modified to enable the creation of a fifth arm on the Rotary Way/Ponteland Road roundabout, which would solely serve the community campus. This solution would enable traffic from the south and west to bypass Ponteland Road.

Figure 4.3 Indicative movement framework



4.31 Access to the housing will be provided by a network of access roads. These should include, at a minimum, footpaths that meet current standards.

4.32 In this movement framework, pedestrian access will be taken from several points around the perimeter and from a network of footpaths/cyclepaths linked together by the existing bridleway.

4.33 In accordance with Policy 41 of the Core Strategy, the development should promote sustainable travel choices by prioritising legible walking and cycling routes through the site. Existing rights of way should be enhanced and a multi-user network of footpaths/cyclepaths established that links the community campus with the new housing and facilitates connections to Ponteland centre.

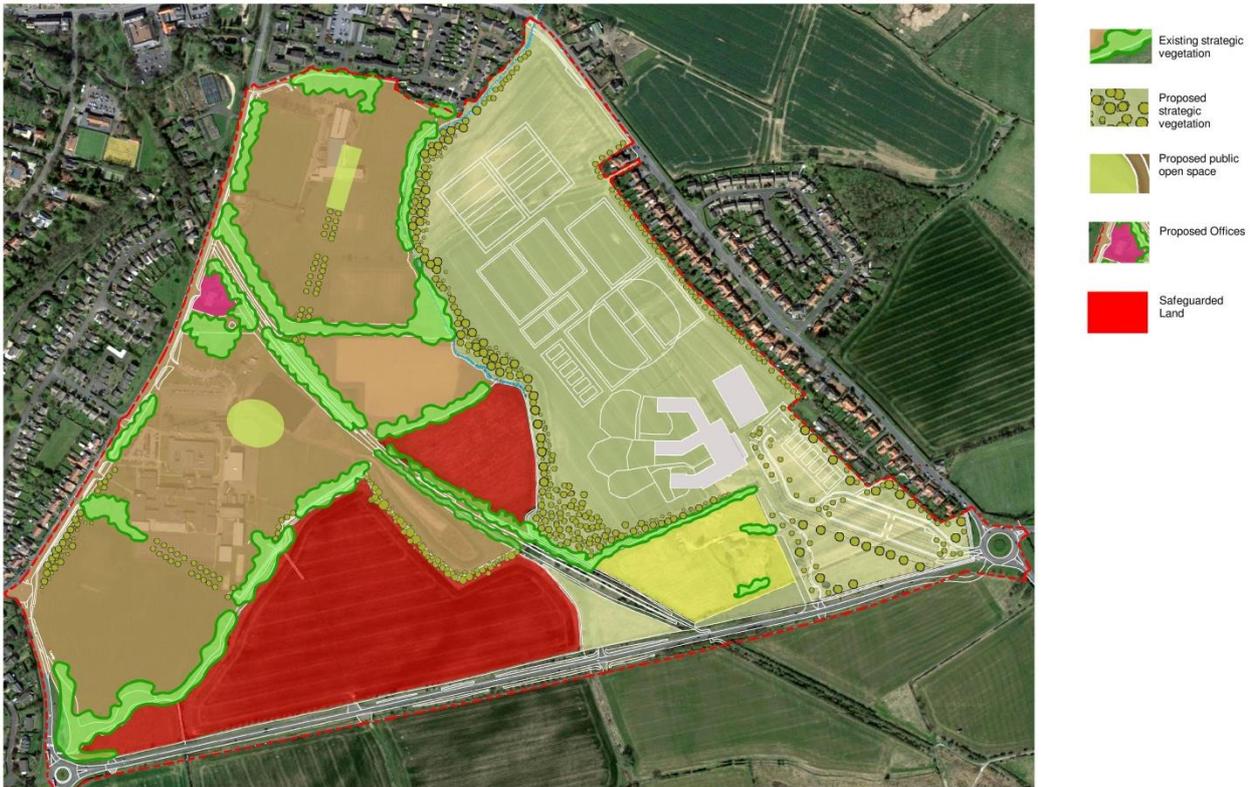
Consultation Question 8

Do you have any comments on the indicative movement framework for the site?

Landscape framework

4.34 A strong landscape-led framework will inform the site layout and help integrate the development within the existing landscape. The indicative landscape framework for the South East of Ponteland site is shown in figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4 Indicative landscape framework



Howarth Litchfield Partnership 15098 / SK005 / P3 Ponteland: Landscape Framework. Not to Scale
(Rev P3 18/09/2015, drawn: SB checked: JY)

4.35 In accordance with Policy 50 of the Core Strategy, the need for fully integrated, high quality and locally distinctive green infrastructure must be taken into consideration as part of development proposals.

4.36 The landscape framework consists of several principal elements. The development itself is set within a green, living environment with existing high quality green infrastructure running through the site. This must be recognised within new development proposals by retaining and, where possible, enhancing existing mature planting that divides up individual site plots. This planting will serve to act as strong landscape buffers between land uses.

4.37 Mature planting currently found along the course of the Fairney Burn will be enhanced by strategic planting, with a dense concentration of new planting to the south of the site. This will strengthen the Fairney Burn's role as a "green/blue" corridor for wildlife and complement the existing green infrastructure network found in the site vicinity. It will also help to create a buffer between the watercourse and new development, which is identified as a necessary element of the site's landscaping strategy in the Council's Level 2 SFRA. In accordance with Environment Agency by-laws, this buffer must be at least five metres.

4.38 Additional strategic planting is proposed to the rear of Cheviot View to help screen new development from view of existing properties. Additional planting is also proposed for the housing development's western boundary to create a continuous landscape buffer along Callerton Lane and screen development from view of existing properties.

4.39 New planting is proposed for the vehicular access point to the community campus. This will help to create an attractive frontage and screen this access point from view. Strategic planting will also line new footpaths/cyclepaths to create attractive walking and cycling routes through the site and link together existing green infrastructure corridors. This approach will also fulfil the requirements of Policy 50 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to widen access to green infrastructure networks.

4.40 In addition, new open space will be created as part of the housing development. This must be of an adequate size to serve the development and provided in accordance with Policy 50 of the Core Strategy.

Consultation Question 9

Do you have any comments on the indicative landscape framework for the site?

Appendix 1: Location plan

