

PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting to be held in Committee Room 2 on Wednesday, 17th April, 2013 at 5.30 p.m.

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1.	Receipt of Declarations of Interest (if any)	
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Telephone 0191 561 1044

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Head of Law and Governance,
Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND

9th April 2013

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2013 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Tye in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Copeland, Curran, Davison, E. Gibson, Howe, Padgett, D. Richardson, Scaplehorn, Scott, Thompson, Turton and Wood.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Blackburn, Dixon, Ellis, Essl, Francis, Lauchlan, T. Martin, F. Miller, Price, P. Watson and D. Wilson.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 20th February, 2013.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 20th February, 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 27th February, 2013

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 27th February, 2013 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the Meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 31st January and 27th February, 2013

The report of the meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 31st January and 27th February, 2013 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 26th February, 2013

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 26th February, 2013 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Reference from Cabinet – 13 March 2013

Sunderland City Council Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek the advice and consideration of the Committee on a report considered by Cabinet on 13 March 2013. The report sought approval of the Sunderland Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options for public consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Neil Cole, Lead Policy Officer for Planning presented the report and was on hand to answer Members' queries.

In response to Councillor Wood's enquiry as to timescales for the final document to be agreed, Mr Cole advised that consultation with non statutory bodies (something which did not have to be done, but he felt was good practice) would take place over a minimum of six weeks, looking to extend to eight weeks to give people the opportunity to fully engage. Advanced notification would be given to an extensive list of consultees and work with the Sunderland Echo would take place to raise the profile of the strategy.

In terms of timescales, the draft publication would go out for public consultation, and then the document would go to the Secretary of State, and

at that stage timescales would be out of our hands. Due to the unknown nature of any objections received, there was no way to gauge timescales precisely, but it was hoped the plan would be adopted by November next year, or sooner if possible.

In response to Councillor Wood's follow up query, Mr Cole advised that the document would come back to Planning and Highways as well as Cabinet.

Councillor Davison queried who would be consulted on matters relating to Nissan, which did not have immediate neighbours.

Mr Cole advised that there were a number of properties in the surrounding area, as well as the museum, and they would also consult with the farm owners in the surrounding area.

In response to Councillor Davison's query in relation to the consultation, and if it would only be done online, Mr Cole advised that various forms of consultation would be carried out but responses would have to be in a written form of some kind.

Councillor Howe enquired if there had been any interest shown in the Vaux site by the private sector.

Mr Cole informed the Committee that he could not advise if there had been any informal interest in the site but would certainly bring forward details should any formal interest be received.

Councillor Thompson requested that the Evening Chronicle be included in any publicity of the strategy so that the Washington area was also catered for.

Councillor Scaplehorn referred to the allocation of employment land beside Nissan and queried if Nissan wanted to expand in the future, would a limit be imposed as to how much they could use.

Mr Cole advised that as the land was not in Council ownership, should Nissan come forward with a scheme it would be considered in the normal course.

Councillor Davison expressed confusion over the Council's policy on Green Belt retention as this strategy appeared to show the loss of Green Belt Land.

Mr Cole agreed that this would be one of the problems the Council would face with the strategy.

Councillor Wood enquired that if Green Belt land should be lost, was there any scope to find additional Green Belt land as compensation.

Mr Cole advised that it was possible, but in his experience this did not come without risks. It required special circumstances to take Green Belt land, it also required special circumstances to put Green Belt land back. Mr Cole also

advised that they still wanted to focus on Brownfield land as a main priority but that this was in limited supply.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) P. TYE
(Chairman)

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (NORTH SUNDERLAND) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 28TH MARCH, 2013 at 4.45 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Copeland in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Curran, Davison, Francis, Jackson and Thompson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors E. Gibson, Tye and D. Wilson.

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report and a supplementary report (copies circulated) relating to the North Sunderland area, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Council upon applications made thereunder.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

12/00135/FUL – Demolition of existing social club and erection of apartment block of 12no. two bedroom dwellings and associated access and parking (Amended Plan Received 02.11.2012)

1. RESOLVED that approval be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive subject to conditions and the signing of an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

12/03357/VAR – Variation of conditions 2 (plans) and 9 (unit-use class restrictions) attached to planning application 11/00288/FUL (Proposed new local centre development comprising foodstore (class A1), RETAIL UNITS (CLASS a1), commercial units (class A1-A5), offices/ non residential institutions (class B1a/D1) and restaurant (class A3/A5) : associated parking,

landscaping, servicing and access arrangements.) to revise condition 2 plans and elevations of the mixed use class buildings units B-L Condition 9 (iv) to revise the limit on aggregate net sales area of units B to G and 9 (vi) to remove office units N and P – Land Bounded by North Hylton Road, Castletown Way, Riverbank Road, Southwick Industrial Estate, Sunderland.

2. RESOLVED that the item be deferred

12/00219/LAP – Provision of three mobile ‘Cannonball’ pods to be used for retail, educational and social/cultural operations. (Amended Site Address) – Land at Marine Walk and Roker Park, Sunderland, SR6 0PL

3. RESOLVED that the item be deferred

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Appeals

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) concerning the appeals determined for the period 1st February, 2013 to 28th February, 2013.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. COPELAND,
Chairman.

**REFERENCE FROM CABINET – 17 APRIL 2013
SUNDERLAND'S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE BASE :
THE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT, STRATEGIC HOUSING
LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT SETTLEMENT BREAK
REVIEW**

Report of the Head of Law and Governance

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the advice and consideration of this Committee on a report considered by Cabinet on 17 April 2013. The report sought approval to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (2013) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) for its use in developing the Local Development Framework and to assist in the determination of day to day planning applications. The Cabinet was further requested to approve the Draft Settlement Break Review for public consultation.
- 1.2 Members' views will contribute to the consultation process.

2. Background and Current Position

- 2.1 The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 17 April 2013 gave consideration to a report of the Deputy Chief Executive. The report sought approval to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (2013) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) for its use in developing the Local Development Framework and to assist in the determination of day to day planning applications. The Cabinet was further requested to approve the Draft Settlement Break Review for public consultation.
- 2.2 Copies of the 17 April 2013 Cabinet agenda were circulated to all Members of the Council. Members are requested to note that a copy of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (2013), the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) and the Draft Settlement Break Review for public consultation can be viewed on-line at:-

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/7655/Committee/1563/Default.aspx>

- 2.3 The Cabinet will consider:

- (a) Endorsing the 2013 updates to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment so that they can be used as:-
- (i) part of the evidence base to inform the emerging Local Development Framework

- (ii) a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing development.
- (b) Endorsing the Draft Settlement Break Review for consultation purposes.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The report is referred to this Committee for advice and consideration. The report is also referred to the Scrutiny Committee for advice and consideration. Comments from the Committees will be reported to back to Cabinet on 5 June 2013.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is invited to give advice and consideration to Cabinet on the attached report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Cabinet Agenda 17 April 2013.
- 5.2 A copy of the Agenda is available for inspection from the Head of Law and Governance or can be viewed on-line at:-

<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/7655/Committee/1563/Default.aspx>

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CABINET – 17 APRIL 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

SUNDERLAND'S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE BASE : THE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT, STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT SETTLEMENT BREAK REVIEW

Author:

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (2013) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) for its use in developing the Local Development Framework and to assist in the determination of day to day planning applications. Cabinet is further requested to approve the Draft Settlement Break Review for public consultation.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Endorse the 2013 updates to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment so that they can be used as :
 - a) Part of the evidence base to inform the emerging Local Development Framework
 - b) A material consideration in determining planning applications for housing development.

2. Endorse the Draft Settlement Break Review for consultation purposes.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/ Policy Framework?

Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/ Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The decision is required to provide essential evidence to inform corporate policy, and chiefly to support progression of the Core Strategy to proceed to its next stage (statutory consultation) in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Development Scheme.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

All local planning authorities are charged under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 with the preparation of a Local Development Framework (LDF), which must include a Core Strategy. They are also charged with preparing the LDF in accordance with the provisions of an approved Local Development Scheme.

The Core Strategy and its policies must be informed by a robust and up to date evidence base. The need for a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment are emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework. The emerging Core Strategy retains policies regarding the scale and purpose of Settlement Breaks which have not been reviewed in 15 years since the Unitary Development Plan was adopted. To not undertake such updates in the light of the changing circumstances in the city would undermine the planning policy framework and could jeopardise the Core Strategy at Examination. Consequently, no alternatives can be recommended.

Impacts analysed:

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution?

Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?

Yes

Scrutiny Committee
Planning and Highways Committee

**SUNDERLAND'S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE BASE :
THE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT, STRATEGIC HOUSING
LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT SETTLEMENT BREAK
REVIEW.**

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (2013) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) for its use in developing the Local Development Framework and to assist in the determination of day to day planning applications. Cabinet is further requested to approve the Draft Settlement Break Review for public consultation.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

1. Endorse the 2013 updates to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment so that they can be used as :
 - a) Part of the evidence base to inform the emerging Local Development Framework
 - b) A material consideration in determining planning applications for housing development
2. Endorse the Draft Settlement Break Review for consultation purposes.

3.0 BACKGROUND TO MAINTAINING THE EVIDENCE BASE.

3.1 Local authorities are required to prepare a statutory development plan for their area that will provide the starting point to determine planning applications. In Sunderland's case, the emerging Core Strategy will provide the overarching suite of broad non-site specific policies to control the use of land and buildings. Taking its lead from the Core Strategy, a further planning document, the Allocations Plan, will provide detailed site specific policies and allocations for development.

3.2 As part of the process, national planning policy, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that these plans are based on adequate, up to date and relevant evidence.

3.3 This Council has developed a considerable body of evidence to inform the emerging Core Strategy to date. However, it is essential that this evidence base is kept up to date or new evidence is initiated to inform both the emerging Core Strategy and the Allocations Plan.

4.0 THE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The NPPF requires authorities to assess their full housing needs, where appropriate working with neighbouring authorities. Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) are required to identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period which :
- Meets the household and population projections, taking into account migration and demographic changes
 - Addresses the needs for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as families and older people)
 - Caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to supply this demand.
- 4.2 The SHMA therefore performs a dual role :
- It informs policies within the emerging development plan documents as to the scale and type of housing need
 - Provides information and evidence to inform housing related planning applications particularly in relation to seeking affordable housing contributions.
- 4.3 The City's last SHMA was adopted in February 2008 and to date, has been used effectively to develop housing policy and influence the type and tenure of new housing that has been permitted. However, the SHMA has a limited 'shelf life' of normally 5 years, after which the statistical data upon which it relies becomes out of date and open to challenge. Therefore, it was considered essential to update the SHMA.
- 4.4 The SHMA 2013 is a major piece of research which has been prepared in accordance with existing good practise. From its inception in 2012, it has gathered information from 'primary' sources such as a survey to 33,350 households and interviews with direct agencies such as estate agents, private landlords, developers and registered landlords. It also used the most up to date 'secondary' sources such as the Census 2001 and where available the Census 2011¹, housing price data and population projections.
- 4.5 Appendix A to this Report, sets out a summary of the SHMA 2013 in terms of the process that was followed and the key findings. The full document is available to view at :
<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/7655/Committee/1563/Default.aspx>
- 4.6 In short, the key findings of this new SHMA can be summarised as follows :
- Based on house price ratios (the figure which denotes how many times a households income needs to be multiplied to enable them to secure finance to buy an average property), Sunderland is relatively affordable by comparison to other parts of the North East.
 - Without factoring in potential new build, the overall net shortfall of affordable dwellings across Sunderland is 514 each year. It should be

¹ Only partial results from the Census 2011 have been released on a periodic basis by the ONS. Further information releases / datasets will continue to be rolled out through 2013.

noted that on average Registered Providers have completed 281 affordable homes annually. Assuming this rate of development continues, the net annual shortfall would reduce to 233.

- Sunderland's housing market is relatively self contained with 84.4% of households that moved within the previous 5 years having moved from within Sunderland itself.
- The private rented sector in Sunderland has continued to become more diverse and grow in response to current market conditions, as people struggle to access mortgage finance potential purchasers turn to renting, whilst many potential vendors unable to sell, find themselves reluctant landlords.
- Migration data (collated by the ONS) indicates that between 2008 and 2011, there has been a consistent net out-flow of residents from Sunderland which has averaged around 1,000 each year primarily to County Durham and other parts of Tyne and Wear.
- Households considering leaving Sunderland tend to be higher-income households, single households, and couples with and without children.
- The primary reasons for wanting to leave are: the desire to move to a better / more pleasant neighbourhood; to be closer to work or because they had a new job; and wanting a property which is larger or better in some way.
- Despite the trends of net out-migration, this evidence indicates that people are moving to Sunderland for a variety of reasons. The reason most commonly cited is personal circumstances, which indicates that family and friends are the reasons people are moving back. Sunderland continues to attract economically active households relocating to the North East, including those working outside Sunderland which is an encouraging indicator of the city's regional role.
- There is a need to provide larger, better quality, more aspirational properties in higher quality environments within Sunderland in order to help stem out-flows to other locations.

5.0 THE STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY STUDY

5.1 The Government remains committed to significantly increasing the supply of housing land. Accordingly, the NPPF requires councils to annually undertake a review of their long term housing land supply looking over a 15 year period that identifies :

- Specific and deliverable² sites that are sufficient to provide 5 years worth of housing with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market. Where councils have persistently under delivered against their housing requirements, they should increase the buffer to 20%. In the event that the 5 year supply cannot be met, the Council would be required to consider housing applications on unallocated sites. The SHLAA therefore forms an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

² To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

- Developable³ sites or broad locations for growth for years 6 to 10 and where possible for years 11 to 15.
- 5.2 This housing land supply information is captured through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which assesses sites for their housing potential and when they could be delivered.
- 5.3 The SHLAA is not a policy document in its own right. It does not for example set the City's overall housing requirements, neither does it allocate sites. These functions remain solely remit of the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan.
- 5.4 The SHLAA is an essential piece of evidence that will inform the Council in two key areas :
1. It provides a position statement on whether the Council has a 5 year supply of housing land which would essentially inform the development management process
 2. It provides the Council with evidence of the scale, location and availability and the potential timing of when housing sites could come forward. This would inform the City's emerging development plan making process.
- 5.5 This is the fourth SHLAA that this Council has prepared to satisfy the national planning policy requirements and looks at the potential housing land supply for the period 2013 to 2028.
- 5.6 Appendix B sets out a high level summary to the SHLAA 2013 in terms of both the process to prepare it and the key findings. The full document is available to view at :
<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/7655/Committee/1563/Default.aspx> Main conclusions arising from the SHLAA are:
- Over the full 15 year period there is capacity for some 16,174 dwellings.
 - In the 1 to 5 year period (2013/14 to 2017/18) there is a potential supply of some 6,471 dwellings
 - When considered against the emerging Core Strategy (which presently has limited weight), the 5 year target is 3,895 dwellings. The city has a sufficient supply of housing land over this period
 - By contrast, the RSS (which is the adopted development plan), the 5 year target is 7,217 and there is a shortfall of some 607 dwellings.
- 5.7 Given the unpredictability of the current housing market, it is proposed to review the SHLAA every 6 months to recognise new sites that come forward during the financial year and any changes to the status of known sites. With the potential implications of not having a 5 year land supply, it is further proposed to take a proactive approach to encouraging development by :
- Considering whether constraints can be overcome for those sites identified as being developable in the 6 to 10 year period
 - Investigating the potential to release sites for housing development as part of the forthcoming Green Belt Review.

³ To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

6.0 THE DRAFT SETTLEMENT BREAK REVIEW

- 6.1 Settlement Breaks (sometimes referred to as Green Wedges or Municipal Open Areas) have been used by a number of councils nationally as an informal form of Green Belt. Since 1965, 'Settlement Breaks' have been used as a longstanding planning tool to shape the future growth of Sunderland. Settlement Breaks have played a very important role in focusing development in built-up areas, whilst protecting corridors of greenspace across the city. They have also helped to limit development 'sprawl' which in turn has enabled towns and villages to retain their local character. Policy CN6 of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 1998, sets out the specific Settlement Break policy stating that "*Important open breaks and wedges within and between settlements will be retained and enhanced*". The UDP has allocated some 530 hectares as Settlement Break in South Sunderland and the Coalfield.
- 6.2 A clear distinction must be drawn between the status of Settlement Breaks and the Green Belt. Green Belt is a national designation and afforded specific reference within the NPPF in terms of its purpose and the strict controls that govern the forms of appropriate development within it. Settlement Breaks by contrast are a locally based designation and are not attributed with any specific reference within the NPPF. Hence, they cannot be afforded the same level of protection as land designated within the Green Belt.
- 6.3 Monitoring of other Core Strategies and Local Plans being prepared elsewhere (reaching the formal Examination stages) has shown that Planning Inspectors are making it clear that the 'settlement break' designation should not be regarded as a sacrosanct constraint from development (that is given the same protection as Green Belt sites) where there are objectively assessed development needs that should be met.
- 6.4 Given that the adopted Settlement Break policy and allocations (contained in the UDP) are now 15 years old, it is essential that as part of the emerging Core Strategy and Allocations Plan that this planning tool and the precise designations are reviewed in order to determine :
- Whether the Settlement Breaks still have an effective planning role
 - What justification there is for the retention of each Settlement Break
 - What contribution each Settlement Break has made in terms of providing corridors of greenspace
 - Whether any new development would be appropriate within each of the Settlement Breaks.
- 6.5 A detailed Settlement Break Review has been undertaken and the draft Report is available to view at :
<http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/committees/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/7655/Committee/1563/Default.aspx>. Appendix C sets out a summary of the Settlement Break Review and the key findings. In short, the Review has concluded that :
- The majority of the Settlement Breaks have performed well to focus development primarily to the urban areas and brownfield land

- The potential for the South Sunderland Settlement Break (south of Doxford Park, Silksworth and Ryhope and north of the Burdon Lane) to meet long term development needs was acknowledged during the preparation of the UDP. Given the need to meet future housing needs to 2032, this Settlement Break should now be considered to provide for residential development in a comprehensive manner
- Around 90% of land in the remainder of the city's designated Settlement Breaks is recommended for retention and provides a key role to support green infrastructure. In many cases, these designations are affected by significant natural and physical constraints (for example, some Settlement Break sites are also functional floodplains) and continue to serve an important role in defining urban area boundaries, supporting urban regeneration and settlement character
- The remaining 10% of the Settlement Breaks (approximately 40 hectares) have less constraints, and may have the potential for development, subject to mitigation. These areas have less of a role to play in terms of settlement separation. There is also scope for appropriate constraints mitigation and damaging impacts to green infrastructure corridors.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 The SHMA and the SHLAA are effectively technical reports and there is no formal requirement to undertake any formal public consultation. However, both the demand and supply of housing will be monitored annually through the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 7.2 Given the current economic conditions and relative unpredictability of the current house building industry, it is proposed to undertake interim assessments of the SHLAA, to ensure the information regarding housing land availability remains robust and up to date.
- 7.3 Upon approval from Cabinet, the draft Settlement Break Review will be made available for public consultation (in line with Core Strategy consultation) scheduled for April and May 2013. The consultation will enable the Review's findings and recommendations to be considered by local residents, statutory consultees, developers and landowners, and reviewed in line with further emerging Council evidence such as the SHLAA and Employment Land Update. Post-consultation, comments received will be evaluated and reported back to Cabinet (including any recommended changes) for further consideration and adoption.
- 7.4 Aligned to the need to review the designated Settlement Breaks, a review of the adopted Green Belt boundaries is shortly to be undertaken to ensure that these boundaries remain fit for purpose. This Green Belt Review will be presented to Cabinet for consideration at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.5 Collectively, these studies will add to and update the Council's existing suite of evidence which is required to support taking forward the emerging Core Strategy and Allocations Plan as 'sound' development plan documents.

8.0 REASON FOR DECISION

- 8.1 The decision is required to provide essential evidence to inform corporate policy, and chiefly to support progression of the Core Strategy to proceed to its next stage (statutory consultation) in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Development Scheme.

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1 All local planning authorities are charged under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 with the preparation of a Local Development Framework (LDF), which must include a Core Strategy. They are also charged with preparing the LDF in accordance with the provisions of an approved Local Development Scheme.
- 9.2 The Core Strategy and its policies must be informed by a robust and up to date evidence base. The need for a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment are emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework. The emerging Core Strategy retains policies regarding the scale and purpose of Settlement Breaks which have not been reviewed in 15 years since the Unitary Development Plan was adopted. To not undertake such updates in the light of the changing circumstances in the city would undermine the planning policy framework and could jeopardise the Core Strategy at Examination. Consequently, no alternatives can be recommended.

10.0 IMPACT ANALYSIS

10.1 Equalities

The SHMA, SHLAA and Draft Settlement Break Review form part of the family of supporting evidence documents to the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is 'equalities' neutral by focussing on land use matters. However, an Impact Needs Requirement Assessment (INRA) has been completed.

10.2 Sustainability

By law, planning must promote sustainable development and is the underlying objective of the LDF which itself is subject to a separate and mandatory Sustainability Appraisal.

11.0 OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 Financial Implications

Costs have arisen from developing the evidence base and will arise from the proposed consultation. Funding will be met from contingencies allocated to the LDF.

APPENDIX A

THE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (SHMA) 2013 : SUMMARY

Introduction

A1. The 2012 Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Assessment is a major research study which will help to shape the future planning and housing policies of the area. The research will help inform the production of planning documents and housing strategies. This research provides an up-to-date analysis of the social, economic, housing and demographic situation across the District.

The study has been carried out by arc⁴ Ltd and has included:

- A sample survey of households across the Sunderland area. A total of 33,350 households were contacted and 4,104 questionnaires were returned and used in data analysis. This represents a 12.3% response rate overall and total number of questionnaires returned was well in excess of the 1,500 specified in Government guidance;
- Interviews with key stakeholders including Local Housing and Planning Authority representatives, Registered Providers (RPs), Estate Agents, Lettings Agents, Developers, Supporting People representatives;
- A review of recently released 2011 census data which has been used to ensure that the research is up to date and fully reflects recent trends in the housing market;
- A review of other relevant secondary data including house price trends, CORE lettings data and CLG Statistics.

A.2 The findings from the study provide a robust and defensible evidence base for future policy development which conforms to the Government's Strategic Housing Market Assessment guidance.

Housing market context

House prices

A.3 Median house prices across Sunderland have increased from £45,125 in 2000 to £112,250 in 2012, an increase of 148.7%. Higher priced areas include the Northern Coastal area of the City, Washington and the Southern Suburbs of the City. Compared with other Districts in the North East, Sunderland remains relatively affordable and is the most affordable District in Tyne and Wear.

Dwelling stock

A.4 There are currently a total of 123,304 residential dwellings across Sunderland and a total of 119,758 households. In terms of dwelling stock, 2011 Valuation Offices Agency reports that:

- 69.4% of properties are houses (7.5% detached, 34% semi-detached and 28% terraced), 14.1% are flats, 16.1% are bungalows and for 0.4% are other types/not known;
- 11% have one bedroom, 34.8% have two bedrooms, 47.1% have three bedrooms, 6.6% have four or more bedrooms and for 0.4% of properties the number of bedrooms are not known;
- 59.8% of occupied dwellings are owner occupied, 27.3% are affordable (social/affordable rented and intermediate tenure) and 12.9% are private rented⁴
- According to the 2011 Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix there were 4,761 vacant dwelling representing around 3.8% of total dwelling stock.

Demographic drivers

A.5 The population of the City of Sunderland in 2011 was 275,506⁵. The Office of National Statistics project that this will increase by 3.1% to 283,966 by 2021. During this time

⁴ ONS 2011 Census

period, the population will age slightly. The proportion of residents aged 60 or over is expected to increase from 23.7% in 2011 to 26.6% and the proportion of residents aged 75 and over is projected to increase from 8% to 9.2%. The number of residents aged 85+ is expected to increase from 5,250 in 2011 to 7,757 in 2021, an increase of 47.7%.

Economic drivers

A.6 Across Sunderland, lower quartile earnings⁶ are £17,295 (compared with £17,592 regionally) and median earnings are £22,048 (compared with £23,676 regionally) 65.4% of heads of household in employment work within Sunderland⁷. Of the 34.6% who work outside the Borough, 7.1% work in Newcastle, 6.4% in Gateshead, 9.1% in County Durham.

Market areas

A.7 The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) suggests that a housing market is self-contained if upwards of 70% of moves (migration and travel to work) take place within a defined area.

A.8 The 2012 household survey identified that 84.4% of households moving within the preceding 5 years had moved within Sunderland and can be described as a self-contained housing market area in terms of household mobility. However, survey evidence suggests that fewer than 70% of residents live and work in Sunderland and the City is part of a broader functional market area extending into County Durham and elsewhere in Tyne and Wear (Newcastle, Gateshead and South Tyneside in particular).

Housing need and affordable housing

A.9 Housing need is defined as 'the quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance'. A key element of the study is to explore the scale of housing need and the extent to which additional affordable housing is needed.

A.10 The accepted definition of affordable housing is, 'either social/affordable rented or intermediate housing which is provided and made available to eligible households (i.e. those who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing) who cannot afford to meet their needs through the market. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rents, but below market prices or rents.'

A.11 The scale of affordable requirements has been assessed by taking into account the annual need from existing and newly-forming households within Sunderland City drawing upon household survey data and comparing this with the supply of affordable (social/affordable rent and intermediate tenure dwellings). Without factoring in potential new build, the overall net shortfall is **514 affordable dwellings** across Sunderland each year over the next five years. It is important to regularly monitor overall housing need but it is not unreasonable to assume this level of shortfall over longer time periods. This figure is a measure of the extent to which the requirement for affordable housing is greater than the current supply. Table ES1 provides a summary of annual affordable shortfalls by Development Area and points to a particular shortfall in one and two bedroom general needs and 3+ bedroom general needs housing.

⁵ ONS 2011 Census

⁶ 2011 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings via NOMIS

⁷ 2012 household survey

Table ES1 : Annual affordable housing requirements by property size and designation (general needs/older person) 2013/14 to 2017/18

Dwelling size/designation	Development Area					
	Sunderland North	Sunderland South	Sunderland Central	Washington	Coalfield	Total
Smaller 1/2 General Needs	143	76	26	59	45	350
Larger 3+ General Needs	11	89	31	-35	67	163
Older 1/2 Bedroom	0	23	-2	9	-28	2
TOTAL	154	188	55	33	84	514

NB. There has been an annual average of 281 Registered Provider completions over the past 5 years. Assuming new build continues at this rate, the net annual shortfall would reduce to 233.

Market demand

A.12 The range of open market dwellings moved into over the past five years by existing, in-migrant and newly-forming households is summarised in Table ES2. Estate Agents comment that at present the housing market is generally weak, with sales activity limited and prices static or falling. Traditional family housing (three and four bedroom semi-detached, detached and terraced was seen to be in the most demand).

Table ES2 : Range of market dwellings moved into over the past 5 years.

Property Type	Local Housing Market Area (%)						
	Northern Suburbs	Northern Coastal	Inner Urban Area	Southern Suburbs	Coalfield Communities	Washington	Total
Detached	5.4	1.8	5.6	10.7	23.1	14.9	10.9
Semi-Detached	43.4	28.5	15.5	37.5	21.0	26.5	28.8
Terraced	23.5	23.2	23.8	14.3	42.2	32.1	24.7
Sunderland Cottage	19.9	23.0	15.1	6.2	0.0	0.0	8.8
Bungalow	0.0	0.0	16.0	7.0	9.2	8.0	8.0
Flat	7.9	23.5	24.0	23.6	4.6	18.6	18.6
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base (actual household survey responses)	1836	1693	3850	6255	2901	3068	19602
No. Bedrooms	Local Housing Market Area (%)						
	Northern Suburbs	Northern Coastal	Inner Urban Area	Southern Suburbs	Coalfield Communities	Washington	Total
One	10.6	12.0	10.7	7.5	1.6	5.1	7.6
Two	43.5	47.1	62.9	50.7	40.9	37.6	48.6
Three	40.0	37.4	23.7	32.4	42.8	41.4	34.8
Four+	5.9	3.5	2.7	9.3	14.8	15.9	9.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base (actual household survey responses)	1836	1596	3749	6223	2801	3036	19240

A.13 DCLG 2008-based household projection data indicates that the total number of households across Sunderland is projected to increase by around 720 each year over the period 2008 to 2033. Across Sunderland there is a ratio of 1.03 dwellings to households according to the 2011 census. Therefore, there is a need to deliver 742 dwellings each year to satisfy the housing requirements of an additional 720 households.

Older people and adaptations

A.14 Addressing the accommodation requirements of older people is going to become a major strategic challenge for the Council over the next few decades, with the number of residents aged 65 or over expected to increase.

A.15 The majority of older people in Sunderland want to remain in their current home with support when needed (65.6%). There is considerable interest in alternative forms of older persons' provision including sheltered housing (24.7%), extra care housing (17.4%) and co-housing (9.9%) in addition to buying on the open market (15.4%).

A.16 This suggests a need to continue to diversify the range of older persons' housing provision. Additionally, providing a wider range of older persons' accommodation has the potential to free-up larger family accommodation.

APPENDIX B

THE STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA) 2013: SUMMARY

Background and current position

B.1 A top priority for Government is to ensure that land availability is not a constraint on the delivery of new homes and that a more responsive approach is taken to land supply at a local level. As such the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20%.

- To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.
- To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

B.2 The supply of land is demonstrated through the production of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which assesses sites for their housing potential and when they could be developed. This is the fourth SHLAA that the Council has prepared to satisfy national policy requirements and looks at the potential land supply for housing for the period 2013 to 2028.

B.3 It must be emphasised that the SHLAA is not a policy document that formally determines whether a site should be allocated or developed for housing purposes. The SHLAA is an integral part of the evidence base that will inform both the Core Strategy and the city's Local Development Framework (LDF). It is the role of the LDF to determine which specific sites are to be allocated for housing purposes to best meet the objectives of the Council. Without the SHLAA, the LDF could be proved to be unsound and as such it could be struck down at Examination.

B.4 In addition to considering the long term potential of housing land, local authorities are also required to demonstrate that they have a supply of deliverable land for housing for the next five years in line with the NPPF. This requirement is also in place for the provision of sites for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. In the event that a five year supply cannot be met, the local planning authority may have to favourably consider planning applications for housing on unallocated sites. The role of the SHLAA is therefore an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

B.5 Key requirements of a SHLAA are set out in NPPF and CLG Practice Guidance are:

- A list of sites, cross-referenced to maps showing locations and boundaries;
- Assessment of the deliverability and developability of each identified site to determine realistically when a site might be developed;
- The potential quantity of housing that could be delivered on each identified site;
- Constraints on the delivery of identified sites and recommendations on how these constraints could be overcome.

Main elements of the SHLAA 2013

Setting the city’s housing requirements

B.7 In setting housing requirements (especially the 5 year targets), the control figure has always been taken from the Regional Spatial Strategy as the most recently adopted Development Plan for the City. However, given that it will soon to be revoked (under the Localism Act 2011), work has been undertaken on producing more up to date housing requirements through the preparation of the Core Strategy which is based on more up to date evidence of the city’s housing needs.

B.8 There is no government advice as to how the housing target should be set in the absence of an up to date Regional Strategy. Advice through appeal decisions through out the country is mixed and gives no firm steer on setting the target.

B.9 As such, the SHLAA supply has also been set against two options

- The RSS as the current adopted development plan for the City
- The emerging Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Draft (April 2013)

B.10 The RSS baseline requirement is shown as follows :

Table 1 : Sunderland RSS housing requirements 2013/14- 2027/28

	2013/14- 2017/18	2018/19- 2022/23	2023/24- 2027/28	Total
Total Requirement	6225	6235	5665	18125

B.11 The emerging Core Strategy (Revised Preferred Options Draft 2013) proposes at this stage to provide some 15,000 new homes (net) over the 20 year period (between 2012 and 2032). Adjusting this for the 15 year SHLAA period results in the following:

Table 2: Core Strategy based housing requirements adjusted to the 15 year SHLAA period (2013/14- 2027/28)

	2013/14- 17/18 (Years 1-5)	2018/19 -22/23 (Years 6-10)	2023/24- 2027/28 (Years 11-15)	Total (Years 1-15)
Total	3290	3725	4050	11065

B.13 The Core Strategy Preferred Options Draft 2013 has limited weight in planning terms due to the stage of the process it is currently at. Whilst the housing numbers proposed are based on more up to date evidence, they have limited weight at this current time given they have not been subject to independent scrutiny at a Public Examination.

Identifying sites and determining their deliverability

B.15 To ensure a common framework for SHLAAs in the North East Region and to ensure a reasonable degree of consistency across the Region in the way data is collated and recorded, a SHLAA Regional Implementation Guide was published by the now abolished North East Assembly, which reflected the core outputs of Communities and Local Government (CLG) good practice guidance.

B.16 A sub-regional key stakeholder partnership for Tyne and Wear was established along with a key stakeholder panel to assist in the production of SHLAAs within Tyne and Wear. The panel comprises lead local authority officers, representatives from Registered Social Landlords, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, Home Builders Federation and a planning consultant. The panel allows for regular SHLAA discussions and consultations with Tyne and Wear authorities to take place.

B.17 The SHLAA process has assessed a range of sites including:

- those with planning permission
- those in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
- those in the Interim Strategy for Housing Land (ISHL)

- sites suggested through pre-application and other discussions
- sites forwarded by developers and landowners through the local authority's call for sites
- Sites that are allocated for other uses that have been identified as being potentially surplus such as through the Employment Land Review (2012), the Greenspace Audit (2012) and the draft Settlement Break Review (2013).

B.18 This year consideration has focussed on new sites suggested by developers or others and amendments due to changes in the status of the sites included in last year's schedule. The changes include deletion of completed sites or sites re-developed for other purposes; changes to site boundaries; and amendments to capacity estimates. The changes are described in the new schedule.

B.19 In accordance with the agreed SHLAA methodology certain sites with challenging development constraints have been excluded from the assessment at the outset, such as those within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or flood risk Zone 3B (functional floodplain) and Green Belt allocation.

B.20 To assess whether sites are deliverable or developable, consultations will take place with a range of experienced and expert participants from both within and outside the council to ensure that information gathered is accurate and a true perspective is gained. Information will also be placed on the City Council's website and members of the public will be given the opportunity to submit comments on the deliverability of sites. Any changes to the SHLAA following these exercises will be incorporated into the document and any significant changes will be reported back to the Cabinet.⁸

Main elements of the SHLAA 2013: Results

B.21 Table 3 sets out the main results from the 2013 SHLAA, giving an indication of the total number of potential deliverable and developable dwellings within the next 15 years. In line with the NPPF requirements with regards a record of persistent under delivery of housing, the 20% buffer has been applied to both the Core Strategy base line housing requirements and the RSS base line requirements for the first five years supply. The table also provides a comparison with the housing requirements from Tables 1 and 2.

Table 3 : SHLAA results

	2013/14- 2017/18 Years 1-5	+ 20% buffer in Years 1-5	2018/19– 2022/23 Years 6-10	2023/24- 2027/28 Years 11-15	Total dwellings Years 1- 15
Core Strategy requirement	3290	3948	3725	4050	11065
RSS requirement	6225	7217	6235	5665	18125
SHLAA supply	6471 (Deliverable)	6471 (Deliverable)	7433 (Developable)	2270 (Developable)	16174

B.22 Overall the estimated capacity of identified deliverable and developable sites is more than the requirement for the 15 year period based on Core Strategy requirements, with a five year supply of sites also available.

B.23 This is quite the opposite when comparing the supply against the RSS requirements, with a considerable shortfall in both the overall 15 year period and in the 5 year supply.

⁸ This is currently being undertaken

B.24 In the first 5 years, the SHLAA has identified a deliverable housing capacity of 6,471 homes which is well in excess of the 3,948 5 year requirement for Core Strategy but is below the 7217 RSS requirement.

B.25 The implications for not being able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites is that when planning applications are received relevant policies for the supply of housing will not be considered up-to-date. This may result in sites which may have once been considered unacceptable to develop, for example due to being greenfield in nature or within Settlement Breaks which the Local Planning Authority have previously sought to protect, becoming vulnerable to development.

B.26 The lack of a five year housing supply makes many sites vulnerable to be challenged for housing development purposes. The SHLAA does identify a series of 'developable' sites in its latter periods. As such, further work must be undertaken for these sites to see how the Local Authority can assist in overcoming any identified constraints and making them more 'deliverable', resulting in an increased 5 year supply.

B.27 With regards where sites are available for development, Sunderland South and Coalfield can bring forward the majority of the first 5 year requirements, with Sunderland South continuing to supply high numbers of dwellings for the remainder of the SHLAA period. This is due to the plans within the South Sunderland growth area and the large expansion of the city onto these sites.

B.28 However North Sunderland and Washington continue to be constrained in the amount of housing they can bring forward due to their built up nature and restrictions to expansion, notably by the Green Belt.

B.30 The sites within years 1-5 are the most important, as these are the deliverable sites which have no major constraints to their early development and have been identified as being suitable for housing purposes. It is expected that over time sites within years 6-10 and 11-15 will overcome their constraints and come forward to ensure a continuous supply of deliverable and developable sites.

Next steps

B.31 The key issue with regards the SHLAA is the document on which the housing requirement is based upon. Presently it is the adopted RSS plan, however this is expected to be revoked within the next few months. The emerging Core Strategy has limited weight due to its position in the plan process. The position for several months still requires the reliance on RSS until it is revoked, however the position after this is unclear. To try and gain a clear understanding on what to rely on for housing requirement purposes post RSS the Planning Inspectorate has been contacted to seek further advice. On the basis of continuing to rely on RSS consideration will be given to the following measures in sequence.

- The supply of potential developable housing sites identified in the 6-10 year period are to be considered in more detail to determine if assistance can be given to overcome constraints and move sites forward to boost the 5 year supply. Once this exercise has been undertaken the supply of housing land will be monitored on a 6 monthly basis and managed to ensure that a continuous five years supply of deliverable sites is in place.
- Use the forthcoming Green Belt Review to identify whether there are sustainable development opportunities which could feed into the 6 month SHLAA update.
- New sites that have not been previously identified may well come forward in the meantime and will be taken into consideration in the monitoring process and subsequent revisions of the SHLAA. The monitoring of the supply of deliverable sites will be linked to the City Council's LDF Annual Monitoring Report review process.

B.32 Work will continue on identifying a five year supply of sites for Gypsy and Travellers, which will be incorporated into the autumn update of the SHLAA.

APPENDIX C

THE DRAFT SETTLEMENT BREAK REVIEW 2013 : SUMMARY

Introduction

C.1 This report provides a draft review of the city's Settlement Breaks (or 'green wedges'). The key role of this report is to provide supporting evidence to underpin the forthcoming new development plan for the city, the Local Development Framework (LDF).

C.2 All councils are required by law to prepare and maintain up-to-date development plans that set out a long-term blueprint for the future (normally over 15 to 20 years) of their area. The planning policies set out in these plans must be informed by robust evidence.

C.3 The current development plan for Sunderland, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), was adopted in 1998. The current Settlement Break policy (contained in the UDP) is therefore 15 years old, and in need of update.

National policy background

C.4 The UK Government has embarked on an ongoing reform of the planning system. Fundamentally, it has sought to remove centralised controls and give local communities and areas greater control over their own futures. *The Localism Act (2011)* provides the main legislation by which this transfer of power will come.

C.5 National planning policy was previously set out in 25 separate themed policy statements. In March 2012, the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* was published. This has consolidated and simplified all national policies into a single document. The objective underpinning the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development whereby plans must support sustainable growth.

C.6 There is no specific reference to Settlement Breaks or green wedges in the NPPF. However, the Framework emphasises that Local Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, and must reflect the vision and aspirations of local communities whilst aligning to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It also advocates the need to plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

The Local Development Framework (LDF)

C.7 A new Local Development Framework (LDF) is being prepared to replace the UDP. At the heart of this plan lies the Core Strategy, which says how the city will change by 2032 by setting out the spatial vision and aims and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. Most policies in the Core Strategy are not site specific. Taking its lead from the Core Strategy, a city wide Allocations Plan will provide the site specific detail. This may also be supplemented by Neighbourhood Plans which relate to small distinctive localities.

C.8 The new LDF will provide a clear and consistent approach that will direct sustainable sites across the city. Supporting evidence such as this Settlement Break Review is crucial to this approach, ensuring that policy is accurate, appropriate, realistic and up-to-date, enabling certainty for developers and communities as to how their proposals for development will be considered by the Council. By providing certainty, the Core Strategy will also enable the Council to attract more funding and attract more investment (from businesses, residents and visitors). This will naturally help to create more jobs, attract new residents and sustain and enhance essential services and facilities such as shops, schools, doctors.

History and Purpose of Settlement Breaks in Sunderland

C.9 Settlement Break policy in Sunderland can be traced back almost 50 years. The Sunderland Periphery Town Map (1965) included policies to maintain the separate identity of Ryhope, Silksworth and Doxford Park by protecting the open land between. The Tyne and Wear Structure Plan also resisted intrusion into open countryside.

C.10 The 1998 UDP provides a specific Settlement Break policy, CN6:

CN6

IMPORTANT OPEN BREAKS AND WEDGES WITHIN AND BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS WILL BE RETAINED AND ENHANCED.

C.11 Settlement Breaks are identified in specific locations in South Sunderland and the Coalfield, relating to 'white land' countryside areas that are not afforded Green Belt protection.

C.12 The supporting text of the UDP also lists 3 key functions of Settlement Breaks, namely that they:-

- help to retain the distinct physical characteristics of the City's constituent communities
- assist in the regeneration of the older or poorer quality urban areas by focusing resources and investment into the built-up area
- provide open space lungs, sometimes incorporating leisure/recreational facilities which help to alleviate local deficiencies (e.g. the Ryhope-Silksworth crescent)

C.13 These functions are still broadly relevant. The use of Settlement Breaks to help ensure that new development is focused upon the existing built-up area is still of prime significance, and strongly relates to Spatial Objective 1 of the emerging Core Strategy. This in turn has helped to stem encroachment and retain the distinctiveness of many communities, if such distinction exists in the first place. The Settlement Breaks have also helped to preserve vital green infrastructure corridors across the city, although the necessity for these corridors to incorporate leisure and recreational facilities is not obvious.

Core Strategy Spatial Objectives
<p>1. Spatial Development and Growth</p> <p>Ensure an appropriate distribution and balance of employment, housing growth and other competing land uses in the context of maximising the reuse of previously developed land so as to minimise the urbanisation of greenfield land, whilst planning for sustainable growth of the city's population, including the retention of young economically active age groups.</p>

C.14 However, the need for Settlement Breaks has to be balanced against a number of other factors, including the need for the city to identify sufficient land to meet its development needs, and recognising that there is a finite resource of brownfield / vacant land in built-up areas. There is also growing pressure to allow development within Settlement Break land. These issues need to be considered in light of the NPPF advocating the need to increase economic and housing growth delivering sustainable patterns of development and recognition of the fact that Settlement Breaks cannot be given the same level of protection as Green Belt land.

C.15 The key purpose of this Settlement Break review is to consider:

- Whether the Settlement Breaks still have a role
- What justification there is for the retention of each Settlement Break
- What contribution each Settlement Break has in terms of providing Green Infrastructure
- Whether any parcels of land within each of the Settlement Breaks could be released to provide opportunities for sustainable development.

Objectives and Methodology

C.16 The report provides informed recommendations relating to the future way forward for each Settlement Break. These recommendations are based upon physical, natural and historic constraints affecting the area, the history of neighbouring settlements and the function of the Settlement Break itself. They are also guided by national and local policies, strategies and masterplans, including:

- The NPPF, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development
- The Sunderland Strategy and Economic Masterplan
- The vision and spatial objectives of the Core Strategy.

C.17 This review is the first known comprehensive assessment of each Settlement Break in the city, providing draft recommendations to be further considered in consultation. The assessment has involved site visits taking place using constraints maps and a proforma guide to gain an appreciation of each environment. Local publications, websites and historic maps were also used to depict the evolution of the settlements surrounding the Settlement Breaks. Concluding comments have considered the appropriateness and strength of each area in terms of their Settlement Break role and in supporting green infrastructure, and recommendations are also made as to whether the breaks should be retained, partially retained or deleted.

Key findings

C.18 Overall, the majority of the Settlement Breaks have performed well. It is clear in most cases that settlement distinction and identity has been supported, whilst at the same time new development has been focused primarily on the urban area and often on brownfield land. These breaks have played a key role in helping to preserve green infrastructure corridors within and on the fringes of our built-up areas.

C.19 The South Sunderland Settlement Break (south of Doxford Park, Silksworth and Ryhope and north of the Burdon Green Belt) is a separate entity to the rest of the Settlement Breaks in that it was earmarked for longer-term development beyond the lifetime of the UDP. There are significant constraint issues influencing the area, including the need to retain green infrastructure north-south, and to preserve landscape features and views afforded by the Magnesian Limestone plateau. Nevertheless, the area as a whole provides a unique opportunity for the city for large-scale residential development.

C.20 Beyond the South Sunderland Settlement Break, around 90% of land in the remainder of the city's designated Settlement Breaks is recommended for retention. Cumulatively, this land has a key green infrastructure role to play, and in many cases is affected by significant natural and physical constraints. They also continue to serve an important role in defining urban area boundaries, supporting urban regeneration and settlement character.

C.21 The remaining 10% of land (approximately 40 hectares) has less cumulative constraints, and may have the potential for development, subject to careful and sensitive mitigation. These areas have less of a role to play in terms of settlement separation. There is also scope for appropriate constraints mitigation and damaging impacts to green infrastructure corridors.

C.22 Figure 1 illustrates the findings of the Draft Settlement Break Review in terms of the development potential of the parcels of land comprising the Settlement Break designations.

C.23 These draft findings need to be further considered in line with public consultation responses, and emerging evidence such as the city's 2013 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and 2012 Employment Land Update.

Next Steps

C.24 Upon approval from Cabinet, the draft Settlement Break Review will be made available for public consultation (in line with Core Strategy consultation) in May. The consultation will enable the reports findings and recommendations to be considered and reviewed in line with further emerging Council evidence such as the SHLAA and Employment Land Update. In particular, it will provide opportunity for landowners and local residents to challenge the recommendations, put forward potential constraints mitigation or alternatively identify further constraints.

C.25 Post-consultation, the final revised report will be re-submitted to Cabinet for further consideration and adoption. The adopted report will provide key supporting evidence to the Core Strategy as well as informing site specific policies that will be set out in the forthcoming Allocations DPD, and inter-related reports and assessments, such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and (proposed) Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Figure 1 : Indicative Development Potential of the Settlement Break Sites.

