

6 Planning Policies

The policies of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan are set within the context of the National Planning Policy Guidance and the Sedgfield Borough Local Plan as the County Durham Local Plan has been delayed.

They have been developed after extensive consultation, with residents and businesses in accordance with para 17 of the NPPF 'Core Planning Principles' to establish local priorities and achieve the overall vision of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan which is:

"To make Great Aycliffe a vibrant community the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to enhance the natural environment, support and encourage high quality housing, local jobs and improved retail and leisure facilities in a healthy, green and attractive town"

The policies of the GANP seek to address the objectives which were set following the issues residents highlighted during the consultation. Detailed information on the consultation can be found in the Consultation Statement.

Environment

Lord Beveridge's vision for the new town of Newton Aycliffe was of a 'Welfare State', where poverty, unemployment and squalor would be no more. Newton Aycliffe was to be 'a paradise for housewives' with houses grouped around greens, so children could play safely away from the roads. The vision for the GANP aims to reflect the Beveridge ethos.

As Beveridge's Vision is an important aspect to our heritage and defines the character of Newton Aycliffe, protecting the green and open spaces is vital.

Key issues for residents have led to the development of four objectives which have informed the development of the following neighbourhood development plan policies required in order to deliver the vision above:

- We need to keep the green spaces they allow our children to play safely
- Newton Aycliffe is attractive and known for its green space and trees
- Very important we stay a green town
- The trees are the lungs of the town and make people feel better
- Renewable energy keeps costs down, we need to help with climate change and it can help protect the environment
- Aycliffe Village needs to remain a village

Objective 1 To protect and retain the traditional green areas, open spaces and environment for the community.

Objective 2 To alleviate existing, overwhelming parking problems whilst allowing grass to be retained as the dominant finish.

- Objective 3** To retain and protect the green and leafy character of our area.
- Objective 4** To protect Aycliffe Village from urban sprawl and maintain the traditional village feel.

As Great Aycliffe is renowned for its semi-rural aspects and in order to protect and retain the traditional green areas, open spaces, green and leafy character of our area, all planning applications should seek to meet the following planning policies.

Policy GANP CH1 Landscape Character and Townscape

Developments must respect the landscape character of the parish and its settlements, as defined within the Great Aycliffe Character and Heritage Assessment (December 2015) and incorporate features which contribute to the conservation, enhancement or restoration of these features. In particular, new development should:

1. Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland and encourage the planting of new trees and hedgerows. Where new trees are proposed these should be appropriate to the site location and disease resistant species.
2. Accommodate and provide tree lined avenues to continue the existing character already in place across the parish.
3. Ensure green open space is set aside within the development site to maintain the Beveridge 'vision' for the new town of Aycliffe.

Justification:

New development must be appropriate to the character, natural and historic attributes of Great Aycliffe Parish's landscape and aim to protect, enhance or achieve the 'vision' of Lord Beveridge to have a town where houses are grouped around greens.

The County Durham Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment Area Profile sets out general guidance on the availability of open space within the Newton Aycliffe area. This shows that it is considered there is sufficient amenity open space in all areas but has a shortfall of other requirements such as, parks and gardens; outdoor sport space; play space; semi-natural green space and allotments.

The Great Aycliffe Character and Heritage Assessment shows that green spaces play an important role in retaining some of the original, semi-rural characteristics of the town and green corridors located between residential areas prevent the coalescence of developments and form a substantial network for pedestrians and cyclists. It references the mature trees and shrubs which line many primary and some minor routes to help distinguish them from local streets and enclose developed areas. The Plan's policies aim to protect and enhance our unique environment and to improve its biodiversity.

Meets Objectives 1 and 3

Policy GANP CH2 Protection of Accessible Local Green Space Designations

In order to protect the 'vision' of Lord Beveridge there will be a general presumption against development proposals on local green space in Newton Aycliffe, Aycliffe Village and School Aycliffe as defined in Appendix C and shown on a supporting map at Appendix D.

The areas set out in Appendix C have been identified by the residents and through the preparation of the plan as being of value to them and in need of protection.

New development that would change the character of accessible green space will only be permitted if the applicant could demonstrate that very exceptional circumstances exist that would justify such an exception. The policy identifies the special circumstances that are recognised as being applicable.

New development proposals or the change of use of land within the areas defined as being local green space on the proposals map may be permitted where the following very exceptional circumstances apply:

1. the Applicant can demonstrate that such loss is related to essential infrastructure works required by a service utility which cannot be accommodated elsewhere; or
2. the proposals involve the provision of public off street parking provision in an area with recognised on street parking congestion. Where off street provision is proposed it will need to be designed in accordance with the principles set out in the GANP
3. the proposal will have a direct community benefit and this outweighs the harm that would otherwise result from the loss of the green space in question.

Any other special circumstances will have to be argued on their individual merits having regard to the general desirability of retaining public access and the openness of such areas.

Justification:

Under the NPPF, neighbourhood plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the local community. This affords protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF says that "*Local Green Spaces should only be designated:*

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land"*

Policy GANP CH2 will protect local green spaces included in Appendix C and shown on Appendix D from unsuitable development to protect the special character of the area in accordance with the founding principles established by Lord Beveridge and ensure the local community continues to have access to public green open spaces in their local area.

Meets objectives 1 and 3.

Policy GANP CH3 Existing Amenity Open Spaces & Recreational Areas

Existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and amenity open space not identified in GANP CH2, should not be built on except in very special circumstances unless:

1. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
2. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
3. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss; or
4. The development can help alleviate extensive, long-term on street parking problems for residents and delivery vehicles.
5. Any exceptions development undertaken must preserve and not detract from the character and appearance of the area and its surroundings.

Justification:

As set out in the GANP vision in order to maintain the green and semi-rural feel of the town with an abundance of play and recreational facilities. The Open Space Needs Assessment shows there is a shortage of supply of parks and gardens; outdoor sports and play space; semi-natural green space and allotments.

Meets objectives 1 and 3.

Policy GANP E1 Green Corridors

Development that ensures the continuation and enhancement of green corridors for wildlife, multi-functional green space and tree lined avenues will be favoured.

Planning permission will not be granted for developments which would destroy or impair the integrity of green corridors including roads, old railway lines, cycleways, pockets of open space and natural or semi-natural vegetation etc. including Demon's Beck at Aycliffe Village.

Justification:

Green corridors are essential to maintain the wildlife habitats and the green open feel of the parish. These green corridors will provide and enhance areas, not only for wildlife, but where possible, multi-functional green space, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities in order to continue and replicate the Beveridge vision.

Meets objective 1 and 3.

Policy GANP E2 Aycliffe Village Green Wedge

The separation between Aycliffe Village and Newton Aycliffe will be maintained through the protection and enhancement of the open areas and amenity value, green, undeveloped land around Aycliffe Village defined as green wedges on the proposals map E2, shown below, Aycliffe Village Green Wedge.

The green wedges comprise the open areas around and between parts of the settlement

1. from the rear/north of the houses in Millfields including Demon's Beck and two fields to the north of Demon's Beck and to the east of Durham Road in line with the junction of the B6443, and
2. the field to the rear of the houses in St. Andrew's Close and South Grove to the access road to John Wade's Quarry site in the south; the A167 to the west and the railway line to the east.

There will be a presumption against any built development within the Green Wedge.

Justification:

In order to maintain the distinction between the countryside and built up areas whilst preventing the coalescence (merging) of Newton Aycliffe and Aycliffe Village. Aycliffe Village is the historic area of the Parish with a unique village feel and Conservation Area around the traditional and protected village green

Meets objectives 1, 3 and 4.

Aycliffe Village Green Wedge Proposals Map E2



Policy GANP E3 Conservation Area

Any development in the conservation area of Aycliffe Village must demonstrate how the proposal protects, enhances, reinforces and retains the character and appearance of the conservation area in a design statement accompanying any planning applications.

The design statement must address the following topics:

- Context and historic character
- Development quality and architectural details
- Suitability of materials

Justification:

The Town Council considers that new development, within the Aycliffe Village Conservation Area has suffered from poor design and build materials in the recent past which have diluted the historically important village centre and its buildings. The positive aspect of character around the village green should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced.

Meets objective 4.

Policy GANP E4 Tree - Retention and Removal

New development proposals will be expected to have regard to the local distinctive landscape character of Great Aycliffe and in particular to retain tree lined avenues where they exist.

The planting of additional trees and provision of tree lined avenues on main thoroughfares should be included in new developments, particularly species that are in keeping with the character of the area.

Where the removal of a tree(s) is proposed and essential to the delivery of the site, the developer is required to replace at least two of similar amenity value on site. Where a group of trees are removed a similar number must be replaced in a nearby suitable location. Any trees proposed for removal should be detailed, including the reason for removal, through the submission of a Design and Access Statement.

Planting that contributes to the biodiversity of the area and supports green corridors is particularly encouraged. Proposals should be accompanied by an indicative planting scheme to demonstrate an adequate level of sustainable planting can be achieved and maintained in the future.

New developments that propose the loss of existing trees will only be supported if there is a compensatory mitigation proposal which forms part of the submission.

Justification:

Great Aycliffe is renowned for its tree lined avenues and leafy green areas. To ensure existing trees are protected development proposals should seek to retain mature or important trees and groups of trees. To maintain the character of Great Aycliffe and ensure that replacement trees are planted and properly maintained which includes the tree lined avenues.

Meets objective 1 and 3

Policy GANP E5 Tree Protection

Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing trees where possible and integrate them fully into the design, having regard to their management requirements and growth potential.

Residential or commercial development proposals where trees are present should be accompanied by a tree survey and tree protection plan and where necessary an arboricultural impact assessment and a method statement. These should clearly identify the trees, the constraints and root protection areas, and state how the health of the trees on the site and those influencing from neighbouring sites, including the highway, will be protected during demolition and construction, including that of installing utilities, drainage and landscaping. All proposals under this policy must meet British Standards 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction'.

Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the need for, and benefits of, the proposal clearly outweigh the loss.

Justification:

Trees were cited as one of the many positive aspects of the character of the area and vitally important to the parish.

The Plan's policies aim to protect and enhance our unique environment and to improve its biodiversity.

Meets objective 1 and 3

Housing

The GANP should make sure opportunities to solve identified housing problems are positively supported through the planning process.

Key issues for residents have led to the development of objective 5 which has informed the development of the following neighbourhood development plan policies required to deliver the GANP vision:

- More bungalows are needed for the ageing population
- More suitable two bedroomed accommodation is needed, particularly for the elderly
- Suitable alternative housing for the elderly such as sheltered accommodation and retirement homes
- Any new development needs to be of a good design and provide adequate parking
- Different types and tenures of housing needed to suit all requirements
- Older persons' housing needs to be near services
- Energy efficiency should be built into all new developments

Objective 5

To ensure that all future developments should meet the needs of residents and be of good design by -

- a) Having sufficient suitable older persons' accommodation provided when developments are near to services.
- b) Supporting the development of more two bedroomed accommodation.
- c) Avoiding small one bedroomed accommodation. (through the use of a multifunctional room).
- d) Ensuring adequate parking and storage is provided.
- e) Ensuring the green and open feel is maintained, all new development should include sufficient green space to retain the garden city framework of the 'Beveridge vision'.
- f) Ensuring all new developments are built to the highest energy efficiency standard, incorporating renewable energy measures, such as solar panels, where possible.

The following six policies will apply to all applications for new developments.

Policy GANP H1 In-Fill Developments

Permission will be granted for suitable in-fill developments and small sites. These must be proportionate to the scale of the settlement and within the built up areas, respect the settlement and landscape character of the locality and not physically extend the settlement. It must clearly relate to part of an established settlement and not isolated dwellings.

Justification:

The Plan seeks to encourage infill in suitable locations for greater sustainability, whilst making sure that new developments are in keeping with existing townscapes within the Parish.

Meets objective 5

Policy GANP H2 Dwellings Appropriate to the Needs of Residents

In order to provide for the needs of residents in Great Aycliffe, developments of five or more dwellings must ensure that a minimum of 25% of the 1, 2 and 3-bed dwellings provided are delivered to the Lifetime Homes Standards

Justification:

A **lower housing number threshold** has been applied to this policy to ensure a suitable number of houses are built to meet the needs of the residents which also include the adequate provision of adaptable or suitable homes which will cater to all ages.

The lack of lifetime homes may lead to some residents with no option but to relocate away from the area. Whilst the Parish of Great Aycliffe has a higher than average, ageing population there is still a great need to provide suitable homes for the younger generation. The current County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) report was updated in 2013 and supplies the evidence base for housing needs.

Meets objective 5 b and c

Policy GANP H3 Parking Standards for new Residential Development

For all new residential developments the following minimum standards shall apply for the provision of off-road parking:

1-Bed house/flat	1 off-road car parking space
2-Bed house/flat	2 off-road car parking spaces
3-Bed house/flat	2 off-road car parking spaces
4-Bed house/flat	3 off-road car parking spaces
5+Bed house/flat	4 off-road car parking spaces

Justification:

To mitigate parking problems which exist elsewhere in the Parish and contribute toward a pleasant uncluttered environment and to maintain the free flow of traffic especially for buses and emergency vehicles is essential.

Meets objectives 1 and 5 d

Policy GANP H4 Parking Mitigation

Where a garage is included in the design of the house the garage must be built to a minimum size to ensure a medium sized car can adequately fit. A single garage should have minimum internal dimensions of 6m x 3m and a double garage minimum internal dimension of 6m x 5.5m.

Justification:

To mitigate parking problems which exist elsewhere in the Parish and contribute toward a pleasant uncluttered environment and to maintain the free flow of traffic especially for buses and emergency vehicles is essential.

Meets objective 1 and 5 d

Policy GANP H5 Provision of In-Curtilage Parking and Storage

On properties where no garage provision has been made there must be a parking area, in curtilage, and suitable provision for bicycle parking and/or storage must be made.

Justification:

Car ownership is increasing and cycling is becoming more popular. Adequate provision should be made at domestic properties for the safe storage of vehicles and cycles. This will also help mitigate parking problems which exist in other areas of the Parish and will only get worse if not addressed adequately.

To help maintain the free flow of traffic especially for buses and emergency vehicles is essential.

Meets objective 5 d

Policy GANP H6 Energy Standards

Developments that are designed to the highest energy standards as set out in the code for sustainable homes will be encouraged. This will be shown in a Design and Access Statement.

Conversely, development proposals that make little effort to incorporate good energy efficient designs will be refused.

Justification:

Having energy efficient homes was important to the residents as well as lowering energy bills and every effort should be made to lessen the impact of climate change. The NPPF section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change sets out how planning should be proactive and plan to help combat climate change.

Meets objective 5 f

Durham County Council's guidance for adopting Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which details how schemes should demonstrate their compliance with National Standards and local policy by setting out a number of requirements which designs should meet will be applied wherever applicable. The guidance is aimed at Developers of Major Development sites which meet any of the following criteria:

- For residential development, developments that contain 10 or more dwelling houses or where the site is 0.5 hectares or greater
- For non-residential development, developments of 1,000 square metres or greater of floor space or where the site is 1 hectare or more.

In addition to the previous housing policies and in order to protect the Beveridge 'vision' of houses grouped around greens, any planning application for housing developments of 10 or more houses must meet the following housing planning policies and must provide a design and access statement.

Policy GANP H7 Bungalow Provision

With a higher than average ageing population, to assist older people to downsize and improve the offer of smaller accommodation, the Council will seek 10% bungalow provision on all housing sites of 10 or more dwellings. Bungalows should normally be two bedroom, or one bedroomed with a multifunctional room to provide for adaptable uses.

Justification:

The Parish of Great Aycliffe has a higher than average, ageing population therefore in order to meet the needs of the residents there must be adequate provision of adaptable or suitable homes. There is a shortage of existing bungalows in the Parish and there is a need to assist an ageing population who want to downsize and remain close to their families. The lack of new build bungalows may lead to some residents with no option but to relocate away from the area. The current County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) report was updated in 2013 and supplies the evidence base for housing needs.

Meets objective 5 b and c

Policy GANP H8 Affordable Housing

Affordable housing on sites with 10 or more dwellings will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- It meets a defined local need;
- Proposals contribute to meeting the affordable and social rented needs of people with a local connection;
- It is on a suitable, previously-developed site or, if no previously developed sites are available, it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no other suitable sites available;
- Priority will be given to the use of previously developed land that is within the existing built-up or developed parts of the Parish;
- It has been designed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- It is in accordance with the character and green spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A viability report will be required, to justify why affordable housing would not be needed, if a developer considers that the provision of affordable dwellings will be too costly.

Justification:

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 states there is an overall net shortfall of 968 affordable dwellings across County Durham each year. Having this policy will help provide affordable homes for our residents.

There is a vital need for housing to support the provision of a mix of affordable housing which meets a proven local need, one that is of a scale that accords with the existing communities. There is a preference to achieve this on existing brownfield sites to minimise the impact on the landscape.

Provision for affordable homes should also be made on any large or strategic development in addition to that set out above.

Meets objective 5

Policy GANP H9 Provision of Facilities and Services

New development proposals must contribute towards the retention and formation of sustainable communities within the Plan. All proposals for new housing will be required to demonstrate provision of appropriate new facilities on-site and provision of, or contributions to, off-site facilities such as improved drainage, parks, play areas or footpaths as required by Great Aycliffe Town Council or Durham County Council.

Conversely, development proposals which limit the potential to enhance local facilities will not be permitted.

Justification:

The Ministerial foreword in the NPPF states *“Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment. Green Belt land that has been depleted of diversity can be refilled by nature – and opened to people to experience it, to the benefit of body and soul. Our historic environment – buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers. Our standards of design can be so much higher So sustainable development is about positive growth Development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay – a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision. ... Planning must be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives”*. This policy is part of the GANP commitment to sustainability.

Meets objectives 1, 3 and 5 e

Land adjacent to Woodham Community College

GANP AV1 Enhanced Bungalow Provision

20% of the proposed development should be set aside for bungalow provision to meet the needs and requirements of residents.

A flood risk assessment would need to be undertaken due to previously identified surface water flood risk on site. Advice should be sought on an appropriate development buffer from Woodham Burn to prevent any significant adverse effects on the local nature area.

GANP AV2 Garden Provision

Smaller gardens or community garden space will be acceptable on this site to allow for a larger number of bungalows to be provided and to accommodate older or less physically able residents who may not want to maintain large gardens.

Justification:

The GANP has identified this site as being suitable for a larger allocation of bungalows as it is nearer to town centre services and the policies within this site reflect this. With a higher than average ageing population and an overwhelming demand by residents for bungalows at 20% allocation is considered suitable for this site.

Development proposals will allow more flexibility at this site with the aim of increasing the numbers of bungalows within the Parish near to key facilities.

Meets objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5

Policy GANP DB1 Large Scale Development Requirements

Large Scale is considered to be 30 dwellings or more (of the total number of dwellings to be provided even if the development is to be built in phases).

Any development proposal must strive to achieve a village feel which characterises the remainder of the Parish. Houses grouped around green areas will be encouraged. The Council will resist development of a poor quality of design and will expect to see sufficient detail set out in the Design and Access Statements to ensure that large scale housing developments seamlessly blend in with existing housing thereby maintaining the unique character of the area which will enable planning applications to be properly determined.

Any development proposals which are implemented in phases should make adequate provision to provide green open spaces throughout all phases.

New domestic garages should have a genuine ability to be used for their intended purposes. A single width, up and over door should be a minimum of 6 metres long by 3 metres wide and sufficiently tall to accommodate modern cars a double garage should be 6 metres long by 5.5 metres wide.

On properties where no garage provision has been made, there must be a parking area, in curtilage, and suitable provision for bicycle parking or storage, must also be made.

Parking standards contained within Policy GANP H3 should be applied to all new developments.

The main thoroughfares should have sufficient trees planted to maintain the character of tree lined avenues that already exist elsewhere in the Parish.

Large scale developments must make adequate provision for local services such as a small shop to ensure sustainability of the area and contribute to the neighbourhood.

A flood risk assessment would need to be undertaken and Sustainable Urban Drainage incorporated, if appropriate, into the design of the development.

Justification:

The GANP needs to ensure that new development taking place on the site is of a suitable nature to enhance and maintain the existing location. Large green areas create a low density feel to housing areas.

The developer must ensure that suitable and adequate green space is provided throughout the site to maintain the historic 'Beveridge vision'.

Meets objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5

Retail

Retail in Newton Aycliffe is an on-going problem for residents. They feel that even though Newton Aycliffe is a very large town there is a perception that they have been overlooked by DCC and retailers alike despite on-going efforts to improve the Town Centre. Whilst there is an acceptance that retail is very fluid at this current time, anything which will make it easier for retailers to invest here would be welcome.

Any proposals which come forward to improve the retail provision on offer within the Parish will be approved, regardless of its location, as long as it has met the sequential testing required by the NPPF and any other relevant planning policy.

Proposals that offer support services, including retail and food, for the businesses and employees on Aycliffe Business Park will also be approved as long as any wider requirements have been met.

Key issues for residents have led to the development of two objectives which have informed the development of the following neighbourhood development plan policies required in order to deliver the GANP Vision:

- improved retail for Newton Aycliffe
- better choice of shops, including national brands

Objective 6 To facilitate and encourage improved retail provision for Newton Aycliffe.

Objective 7 To support and encourage local jobs for local people.

Policy GANP R1 Economic Retail Viability for Betting Offices

Proposals for betting offices in Newton Aycliffe Town Centre and local centres within the parish will only be permitted where:

1. The proposed use will not result in the proportion of commercial units in the Town Centre of betting offices exceeding 3 units, in local centres this shall not exceed 1 unit and
2. The proposed use will not result in more than two betting offices or pay day loan shops together

Justification:

It is important to maintain the appropriate balance of shops and uses in a centre to maintain their vitality and viability. There has been an increase in the number of betting offices in shopping centres in recent years which has been at the expense of a potentially more diverse range of shops.

Meets objective 6

Policy GANP R2 Economic Retail Viability for Pay Day Loan Shops

Proposals for pay day loan shops in Newton Aycliffe Town Centre and local centres within the parish will only be permitted where:

1. The proposed use will not result in the proportion of commercial units in the Town Centre of pay day loan shops exceeding 3 units, in local centres this shall not exceed 1 unit and
2. The proposed use will not result in more than two adjacent pay day loan shops or betting offices.

Justification:

It is important to maintain the appropriate balance of shops and uses in a centre to maintain their vitality and viability. There has been an increase in the number of pay day loan shops in shopping areas in recent years which has been at the expense of a potentially more diverse range of shops.

Meets objective 6

Policy GANP R3 Restrictions on Change of Use

Proposals for any change of use requiring planning permission for the local centres at Simpasture, Neville Parade, Woodham and Cobbler's Hall shall require the applicant to clearly demonstrate that:

1. The change of use application will not undermine the retail character of the local centre;
2. Any resultant increase in deliveries, especially by HGVs or large vehicles, will not adversely impact the traffic flow in the area or the safety of road users, or harm the amenity of neighbouring properties and local residents;
3. There will be no unacceptable increased pressure on parking availability in the immediate area; and
4. If the developer would be in contravention of policy GANP R1 or GANP R2 any change of use planning proposals would be refused.

Justification:

Whilst deliveries are essential to multiple businesses they can cause an obstruction to the free flow of traffic, especially for buses and emergency vehicles.

The local retail centres are important to residents therefore it is important to protect the retail uses of these centres.

Meets objective 6

Policy GANP R4 Local Jobs

In order to develop and sustain the economy of Great Aycliffe, support will be given to the development of employment activities that diversify the current offer in Great Aycliffe and particularly those activities that will provide high quality jobs which can capitalise on and/or enhance the skills of the Great Aycliffe residents.

Justification:

This contributes towards the emergence of a sustainable economy due to shorter car trips and benefits the local economy. It also meets a local need to provide further employment.

Meets objectives 6 and 7

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Areas without a neighbourhood plan receive a standard 15% contribution from developers, capped at £100 per dwelling. Town and Parish Councils which have an approved neighbourhood plan in place receive a 25% contribution from developers.

The NPPF section on Ensuring Viability and Deliverability, paragraphs 173-177 provide information regarding sustainable developments. Paragraph 175 states *“where practical, Community Infrastructure Levy charges should be worked up and tested alongside the Local Plan. The Community Infrastructure Levy should support and incentivise new development, particular by placing control over a meaningful proportion of the funds raised with the neighbourhoods where development takes place”*.

The aim of having specific CIL / Section 106 Policies is to ensure the Town Council is consulted in advance at the pre-consultation development proposal stage and to set local priorities for investment of the said monies.

Residents highlighted their priorities for CIL during the original consultation undertaken for the GANP. In addition, residents were also asked about areas of the Parish that needed extra attention.

Key issues:

- That local matters and residents' needs are prioritised over the County
- To ensure that Great Aycliffe does not lose out on any CIL or Section 106 monies.

Policy GANP CIL 1 Contributions

All new development must provide necessary and appropriate new facilities on site, or contribute to off-site facilities, as required either by means of planning conditions, a Section.106 agreement or use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as appropriate. Any necessary facilities and/or infrastructure will be secured by negotiation on a case by case basis.

New development for 'appropriate uses' will be permitted where it seeks to maintain or improve access to the countryside, and where it is in accordance with the other policies of the Plan. In particular, the following improvements will be sought through the use of planning conditions, a Section.106 agreement, where appropriate and feasible, or through the neighbourhood element of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) adopted by Durham County Council:

1. Preference will be given to the provision of suitable off-street parking in an agreed location(s).
2. Improvements to footpaths and signage to ensure they are easily identified and accessible all year round.
3. Wherever possible, new development should ensure that access to existing permissive rights of way is maintained.
4. Wherever viable, provide linkages to existing footpaths, cycleways and rights of way or create new routes.
5. Where development is undertaken on Aycliffe Business Park the CIL contribution, or a percentage of that contribution, is to be used to improve signage in and around the Business Park.

Justification:

There is an overwhelming need to provide off-street parking in a number of areas to make them safe for residents and to help with the flow of traffic and access for emergency vehicles.

CIL or Section 106 contributions for all new housing will be required to demonstrate provision of appropriate new facilities on-site and provisions of, or contributions to, off-site facilities as per the pre-development consultation meeting with Great Aycliffe Town Council in the first instance to ensure local needs are met or Durham County Council agreements are met.

Parking and Traffic

Parking problems across Newton Aycliffe were highlighted again and again at various consultations and in particular the older parts of the town. In order to mitigate these issues whilst maintaining the Beveridge 'vision' and still maintaining the green feel across the town means striking an acceptable balance. Many green areas have been churned due to the parking of domestic cars where there is no other available space.

Consultation showed that participants are equally divided in the need to protect the green spaces essential to maintain the character of the area when considering if parking outside their own home was more important than the green space.

GANP T1 Parking Impacts on Existing Infrastructure

Development proposals that include a reliance on parking on existing streets shall not be permitted where:

1. the streets are narrow,
2. local roads are already heavily trafficked,
3. there are identified parking issues,
4. where on-street parking would impact on the safety of road users or adversely impact the character of the area
5. adequate provision has not been made for parking and access for deliveries, service vehicles, tradesmen working on-site, workers, social visitors and residents.

Justification:

Restrictions on proposals will favour developments which have a limited impact on nearby residents, improving their quality of life.

Meets objective 1, 2 and 5 d

GANP T2 Design Finish, Off-Street Parking

Where an area has been identified with a significant parking problem and where there is only limited scope to provide off-street parking a geo-grid, or similar permeable design material, type approach must be used to allow grass to be the dominant final finish.

Justification:

A natural finish to car parks allows a more natural appearance with greater visual appeal and contributes to the overall green feel of the Parish

In order to provide a much needed solution to long-term, persistent parking problems whilst maintaining the character and green feel to the area and reduce the incidence of flooding.

Meets objective 1, 2 and 5 d

GANP T3 Cycle Provision and Walking Routes

Development proposals must provide safe well lit, accessible and attractive cycle routes or public footpaths through the site and wherever possible connecting the site to local schools and shops. This may include upgrading existing cycle routes and public footpaths.

Conversely, development proposals which limit the potential to enhance local cycle or public footpaths will not be permitted.

Justification:

There is a need for green infrastructure in the Parish to enhance and maintain the quality of life and provide exercise opportunities for both existing and future residents. Cycling is an important factor not only contributing to a healthy lifestyle and community but making the most of the green open spaces and new development should link up to existing routes where possible. Improved accessibility and joined up cycle and walking routes was highlighted by residents as something which could be improved.

Cycle routes and improved footpath provision will reduce the reliance on car journeys.

Meets objectives 1, 3 and 5 e

Renewable Energy

The GANP supports energy efficiency and renewable/low carbon energy generation projects which are local in nature and help existing residents and businesses make a transition to alternative technologies, where these are also in accordance with the wider design aspirations of the Plan.

Energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources to reduce energy bills was a key area that residents wanted to see improved and where ever possible included in the design of new developments.

Renewable energy and the transition to a low carbon economy are supported through the National Planning Policy Framework. Renewable energy can be defined as energy that comes from:

- Solar thermal (solar hot water systems);
- Active photovoltaic energy (PV);
- Geo-thermal water heating;
- Wind turbines;
- Energy crops and biomass;
- Energy from human sewage and agricultural plant and animal waste but not energy from domestic or industrial waste, except methane from existing landfill sites;
- Ground source heat pumps; or
- Combined heat and power plants.

Policy GANP EE1 Domestic Scale Renewables

New development for domestic-scale energy efficiency and/or energy production from renewable and low carbon sources will be supported where:

- They relate to an existing or proposed property in the Parish;
- They are subordinate in scale to the existing building; and
- They are in accordance with the Character and Heritage Assessment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Justification:

Encouraging energy efficiency and, where appropriate, energy production from renewable and low carbon sources was a priority for the residents of Great Aycliffe.

Meets objective 5 f

Policy GANP EE 2 Community-led Energy Efficiency Projects

Community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where:

- They meet local needs and provide a positive local benefit, and
- They are in accordance with the Character and Heritage Assessment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Justification:

The GANP supports community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy where they meet local needs and provide a positive local benefit.

The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (para 17) support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy where they provide positive local benefit. The Community Energy Strategy (para 2) discusses how communities could develop solutions to meet local needs by:

- Generating electricity
- Generating heat
- Reducing energy use
- Managing energy demand
- Purchasing energy

Meets objective 5 f

Policy GANP EE3 Business Energy Efficiency

Initiatives which would enable local businesses to develop renewable and low carbon energy will be accepted where:

- The primary function is to support their operations;
- They are subordinate to the primary business, and
- They are in accordance with the Character and Heritage Assessment and Green Spaces policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Justification:

The GANP supports efforts by local businesses to develop low carbon and renewable energy, where these are subordinate to the primary business and are also in accordance with the wider design aspirations of the Plan.

Local businesses may be required, by regulation or commercial pressures, to derive an increasing proportion of their energy use from renewable sources. As highlighted above, this requirement can be satisfied by a number of technologies, depending on the nature and situation of the business.

Meets objective 5

