

# The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan

## A Second Technical Report prepared by Pegswood Parish Council

March 2015

### Introduction

Pegswood Parish Council aspires to see Pegswood becoming a more sustainable and viable community. It wishes to see Pegswood develop in a way, supported by its residents, which improves the environment and enhances the services, businesses and community facilities within the village.

To ensure that Pegswood can develop in this way the parish council joined with Morpeth's town council and the nearby parish councils of Hebron, Hepscoth and Mitford to work on and produce a Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. This plan when adopted will determine how the village develops and grows in the period up until 2031 when a new plan will be required.

Residents in the neighbourhood plan area have been consulted twice and the second consultation finished this month. A large number of residents have responded. These responses are being analysed and taken into account in modifying the plan before it is presented for public and independent examination.

All five local councils are working to have an adopted plan in place before the end of this year. This will be a plan which can be used to influence and control future development. It will be a plan which must comply with the existing national planning policies. Eventually, hopefully without too many changes, it must also comply with the strategic Local Development Plan being prepared by Northumberland County Council. This is not expected to be adopted until at least late next year.

Pegswood Parish Council's vision of 2013 has informed neighbourhood plan process (see the first technical report). Their councillors have worked since that date in various 'topic groups' and with representation on the 'plan preparation group' and the executive 'plan steering group'. The parish council has had discussions during 2014 with local stakeholders, including land owners Welbeck Estates, ISOS and Northumbrian Water.



*'Fire' also known as 'Robin of Pegswood'*



*The attractive western entrance into the village*



*A view looking eastwards from the village centre*

## About Pegswood

The population of Pegswood Parish is 3,280 (considerably smaller than Morpeth which has a population of 14,000); there are 1,492 households in the parish.

Pegswood contrasts with the rest of the plan area in a number of respects. 19.3% of the population is 0-15 years (16% in Morpeth); 14.2% of the population is over 65 (25 % in Morpeth).

There are 1,747 economically active residents – 71.8 % when measured against all usual residents aged 16 -74 (comparable figure for the plan area as a whole is 66.8%)

There were 347 retired persons (14.3% when compared with 20.5% for the plan area as a whole)

A higher proportion of households rent their properties (40.4%) than in the plan area as a whole, with a correspondingly lower level of homeownership (all figures are from the Pegswood Parish 2011 Census Fact Sheet published by Northumberland Knowledge).

Five years ago Pegswood residents were consulted on a Parish Plan which has allowed the Parish Council to reflect community priorities in the actions they have taken and initiatives they have supported. The neighbourhood plan process was subsequently seen to provide the opportunity to deliver a vision positive about growth and the development of Pegswood as a more sustainable settlement with more housing choice, a better range of services and facilities and a more vibrant village centre.

Residents were informed of this vision for the future development of the village in autumn 2013 with a MNP Issues and Options consultation. As a result of the feedback received, and further discussions with local stakeholders during 2014 the development proposals for the village were further refined in a consultation draft plan published in January 2015.



*A view of Pegswood from the Longhirst Rd junction*



*Five shops recently opened at De Walden Terrace*



*St Margaret's Chapel on Longhirst Road*



*View from Colliers Hill of the countryside north of Pegswood*

## Housing Supply and Location and the Proposed Settlement Boundary

The overall scale of development for the Plan Area will eventually be set by Northumberland County Council's Core Strategy. Within the emerging Core Strategy Pegswood is included within the Morpeth hinterland but does not feature within the settlement hierarchy and is not specifically identified to accommodate growth. Neighbourhood planning however allows a local community such as Pegswood to promote and accommodate increased levels of development provided it does not adversely impact on planned growth patterns at the strategic level.

It was considered that Pegswood should provide 200 dwellings in the 20 year plan period from 2011; this is an average of 10 dwellings per annum and a 13.4% increase in the number of dwellings at the start of the plan period. The potential housing supply and environmental capacity has been informed by the latest County Council update of their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and discussions with local stakeholders such as Welbeck Estates, ISOS and Northumbrian Water.

In Pegswood 61 dwellings have already been provided within the early years of the plan period (2011-13) at Beaumont Court. These dwellings contribute to a net total of **103** that are expected to have been granted planning permission and be built in the MNP period on sites within the settlement boundary determined by the former Castle Morpeth Borough Council.

In the heart of the village there is a key development site behind and to one side of a new Co-op store currently being built (see photos alongside).

A potential development of 60 dwellings with planning consent at De Walden Terrace is now not considered achievable and therefore does not form part of the housing supply. Consideration was given to the relocation of the Pegswood Industrial Estate to provide a site for housing. However after several discussions with Welbeck Estates and Northumberland County Council's development company Arch, it was deemed undeliverable for a number of reasons.

Northumbrian Water has a sewerage treatment plant located to the east of the main line railway just inside the parish boundary. It has no plans to upgrade the plant in the next five years but it sees no particular difficulty in developing brownfield sites within the existing settlement boundary or on green field sites to the north of the present settlement. It was less positive about development to the west of the existing settlement because of capacity problems within the existing estates on the western side of the village south of the main road through the village.

Development south of the east coast mainline railway is constrained by existing uses. A potential housing (SHLAA 6797) site west of the Welfare Park recreation area and south of the mainline railway is regarded as being too remote and detached from housing and facilities in the existing settlement.



*A former toilet block at the Longhirst Rd/Front St junction*



*Behind the toilet more derelict farm buildings in the heart of the village*

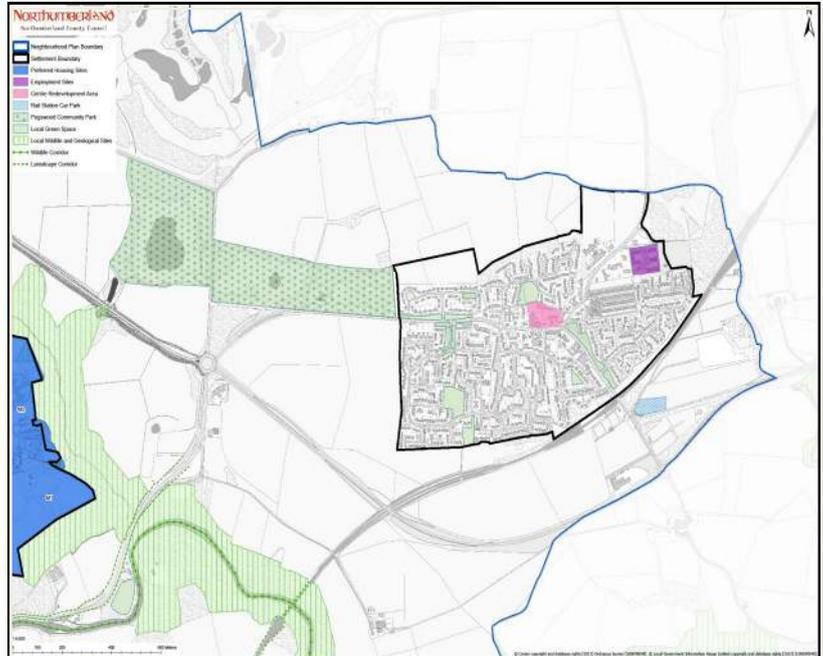


*The former factory building in the heart of the village*

Pegswood has a strong western boundary. Development into the open countryside and countryside parks beyond this boundary has been resisted on environmental grounds and because such development would be more distant from the heart of the village. Two green field sites to the north of the village (north of Longhirst Road, SHLAA 3019, and north of Hebron Avenue, SHLAA 6941) are preferred. They featured in both neighbourhood plan consultations. In respect of these sites infrastructure issues need to be satisfactorily addressed and better footpath connectivity with the rest of the village is required. Their design should contribute to the creation of a strong northern edge to the settlement through appropriate landscaping and creation of east–west green footpath linkages. These two green field sites provide a further **111** dwellings, thus contributing to a potential total of **214** dwellings in the plan period.

Two further sites (north of Burleigh Gardens, SHLAA 3018; and south of Stanton Drive, part of SHLAA 6796) were considered appropriate for further residential development after 2031 if considered necessary at that time.

The conclusions relating to housing provision in Pegswood, both within the plan period and in the medium to long term, has informed a new settlement boundary (see alongside) and in due course through the County Local Development Plan an inner Green Belt boundary around Pegswood.



*The proposals map for Pegswood*

## Education

Pegswood is located within the Ashington school partnership area for reasons which go back to its colliery village identity. However in more recent years many Pegswood parents have chosen to apply for the limited number of places available within the Morpeth catchment area. These places may not be readily available in the future due to housing growth in Morpeth.

This is a major local issue for those parents in Pegswood who wish to see their children educated at the KEVI high school, declared as 'outstanding' by Ofsted. Recently several parents have been unable to secure a place in a Morpeth school. This is however an issue outside the scope of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan to address.



*Pegswood First School on Longhirst Road*

The powers of Northumberland County Council to intervene in the local management of schools are limited but the provision of extra school places to meet population growth is a subject that needs to be addressed and resolved.

Pegswood First School is to become a primary school educating children up to eleven years of age. The initiative for this came from the Ashington Learning Partnership. A consultation then facilitated by Northumberland County Council, the local education authority, resulted in a decision to approve which results in a two tier approach contrasting with the existing three tiers in Morpeth.

## Pegswood's Green Spaces and Open Countryside

There are several areas of green space within Pegswood. Some are sited within housing estates and provide local informal play and recreation space and add to the attractiveness of these estates. The east and west entrances into the village both have tree lined green spaces which are attractive features and are also highly valued by villagers.

Inside the Pegswood settlement boundary and alongside the East Coast Main Line there are footpaths with gardens, allotments and areas of open green space. These create an important continuous landscape corridor important for recreation and a habitat for wildlife.



*A view from Butterwell Drive towards the Cookswell housing estate*

To the north of the Pegswood settlement and within the existing settlement boundary there is an existing but isolated green corridor. It is proposed that this corridor be extended as the areas selected for future housing are developed to provide a landscaped footpath route inside the proposed northern settlement boundary.

Pegswood is a compact settlement surrounded by countryside. This countryside is a combination of woodland, farmland and parks. It is accessed by a good network of public rights of way and other footpaths. A local walking club has been formed which organises healthy walks every Friday morning in the countryside around Pegswood.

The former pit heap, known as Colliery Hill, is now a mature woodland area owned by the county council and maintained by local people.

The former opencast coal site at Pegswood Moor has been restored as countryside parks and landscaped to provide a continuous green corridor between Pegswood and Morpeth.

These areas provide excellent habitat for wildlife and are popular areas for recreation and relaxation.



*Healthy walking in Countryside Park Phase 1*



*A view across the lake in Countryside Park Phase 2*

## Sports and Leisure

Recent years have seen the Welfare Park, sited south of the mainline railway, put to greater use by the Pegswood community.

Pegswood Parish Council has developed an activity area at the Welfare Park for children of all ages and recently installed an outdoor gym for adults.

It recently conducted a temporary 'skate park' trial which proved extremely popular with young people in the village. As a result it has now put together the funding for a permanent skate park. It is expected that the skate park will be opened for use this summer.

Plans to transfer an existing five-a-side pitch located in the centre of the village to the Welfare Park are being discussed.

To meet further recreational needs in the future it is considered the playing field area could be extended to the west.



*The temporary skate park being enjoyed by local children*



*The outdoor gym and the pavilion with the playing fields and the Pegswood Community Fire Station in the background*



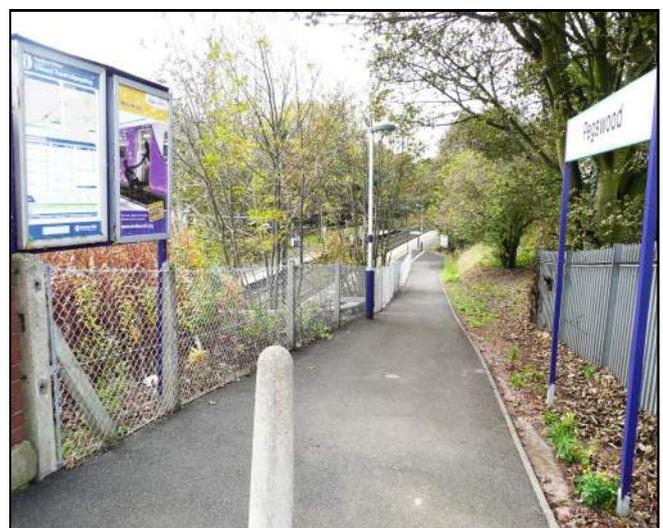
*Another view of the Juliet Oakley Activity Area*

## Transport

Arriva operates bus services which connect to Morpeth and Newcastle; also to Ashington and to Alnwick via the villages to the north such as Longhirst and Ulgham. These commercial services are well used and highly valued by residents. It is considered that additional housing in Pegswood would help to sustain and improve these services.

Pegswood has a rail station on the East Coast Main Line. It is underused because the present service is so poor and there is no car parking facility for rail station users. A space for a car park has been identified.

Pegswood Parish Council is supporting the efforts of the South East Northumberland Rail User Group, SENRUG, for a two hourly train service to be introduced by the new franchisee soon to be appointed.



*An entrance to the main line rail station platform*