

Newton Aycliffe Masterplan Update



Durham County Council

November 2016

Context for Masterplan Update

Masterplan Updates are being developed for the majority of the largest towns in County Durham. This Masterplan Update for Newton Aycliffe is an update to the 2013 masterplan. It provides an update on what has been delivered across Council services in the recent past and sets out key activities for the future, including in the town centre, in employment, housing, in retail, in leisure and tourism, and in highway infrastructure.

Key Priorities:

Durham County Council has and will continue to support the development of Newton Aycliffe through:

- Supporting the Hitachi Rail development as a major employment opportunity. The aim is to double the number of jobs in the supply chain supporting Hitachi;
- Delivery of Forrest Park, a site with the potential to deliver a prestige employment development adjacent to the Hitachi Rail site;
- Using the new University Technical College South Durham as a catalyst to encourage the provision of the skills required for the modern employment market;
- Encouraging new business start-up along with supporting the growth of existing local businesses;
- Supporting private sector investment in the town;
- Working with the private sector to deliver successful and sustainable housing expansion; and,
- Responding to environmental improvements to the town centre by encouraging the adaption of the town centre to develop its function in a changing retail context.

Profile

Newton Aycliffe comprises of the 'New Town', School Aycliffe and Aycliffe Village. It is located at the southern end of County Durham, with Darlington to the south and Shildon and Bishop Auckland to the north-west. Newton Aycliffe has a population of 26,633 (ONS 2011), with about 16 thousand people of working age. The town is a key employment, commercial and residential centre in South Durham. It is an attractive place to live with an established employment location.

The New Town component of Newton Aycliffe was designated in 1947 under the New Town's Act of 1946, it is the oldest new town in the North of England. It is characterised by extensive areas of green spaces, nature and local wildlife areas. There are many walking routes within the town. Many of the main thoroughfares have tree lined avenues which enhance the semi-rural aspect of the town. Since the 1980s there has been substantial private housing development has taken place and is concentrated to the north at Woodham and Cobblers Hall. The new town contained substantial areas of social housing, which following the stock transfer from Sedgefield Borough Council in 2009 is now managed by Livin.

School Aycliffe is a housing area situated to the west of the main town comprising of large modern homes on spacious plots with a small number of Grade II listed buildings being used as traditional homes. To the east lies Aycliffe Village a historical settlement with a conservation area around the original village green and houses. Aycliffe Village contains a number of listed buildings including the Grade I listed St. Andrew's Church which dates back to the Saxon period.

Newton Aycliffe is home to Aycliffe Business Park which includes major employers such as Hitachi Rail Europe and Gestamp. It also has excellent education facilities including the new University Technical College South Durham. The location of Hitachi Rail in the town along with opportunities to feed into Nissan's supply chain, as well as the Tees Valley process and offshore industries, underpin an already strong and regionally significant employment base at Newton Aycliffe. The Council have secured funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver the Forest Park employment site, this site has the potential to provide a regionally significant employment offer, and due to its location potentially a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.



The business park covers a substantial area to the south of the town (over 400 hectares). It has a critical mass of over 250 businesses. As a result, Aycliffe Business Park is an employment location of regional significance and the largest in County Durham with over 50 years association with manufacturing and engineering. The business park lies on the southern periphery of the 'just in time' zone for supply to Nissan in Sunderland. It is also

well placed for specialist suppliers supporting process and off-shore industries in Tees Valley.

Businesses operating from the business park include:

- Hitachi Rail Europe;
- Gestamp;
- Compound Photonics, a Laser Components and 1080p HD Laser Light Engine manufacturer;
- Husqvarna horticultural machinery;
- The Ebac Group;
- Permoid Industries Ltd;
- The global chemical company INEOS; and,
- The Stiller and Lidl Distribution Centres.

The town has excellent connections to the strategic road network, with the A167 forming a short direct route to the A1(M) and the “A” road network that links through to Durham City to the north and Darlington to the south. In terms of rail, Newton Aycliffe benefits from train stations on the Bishop Line, a service designated by the Department for Transport as Community Rail, which runs between Darlington and Bishop Auckland. The Bishop Line also is supported by the Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership that helps promote use and awareness of the line.

What has been delivered?

Housing

- Chapter Homes is delivering 125 homes at Eden Field in Newton Aycliffe
- There is an ongoing scheme off Cobblers Hall Road which Keepmoat are developing for 175 units in total, with Miller Homes having completed a development nearby (Site J, Cobblers Hall for 125 houses)
- Gleeson Homes are also building (79 dwellings in total) on land to the north of Travellers Green in the east of the town
- Planning permission exists at Woodham golf course for 50 houses of an executive nature. These are linked to improvements to the golf course
- Planning permission was granted to Livin in March 2016 for 23 units (11 bungalows and 12 apartments) and the scheme will involve the demolition of some of their existing stock.

Employment

- Hitachi Rail Europe have delivered an £82m vehicle manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe. Hitachi Rail Europe is part of the Agility Trains consortium which has been awarded a £4.5BN contract to construct, maintain and service the next generation of intercity trains to improve the UK's mainline rail services. The factory has been constructed and the facility is now fully operational. Around 950 trains (engines and carriages) are to be manufactured between 2015 and 2020. The facility will provide 730 jobs (a further 200 jobs were created for its construction). It is also anticipated that the number of jobs in the supply chain will double with Durham based businesses already winning business as suppliers e.g. Romag for glass and NSK for bearings.
- Gestamp, part of a global company which manufactures car parts, has had significant investment resulting in a new advanced manufacturing plant for car sub-frames. The new plant will provide an additional 15,000 sq metres of manufacturing capacity. With almost 1,400 employees, the site is one of the largest manufacturing facilities in the North East. The further development will add an additional 150 jobs. Some 70% of its products are exported from the UK.

Transport

- Durham County Council is delivering a sustainable transport bid working jointly with Darlington Borough Council and their Local Motion initiative. The South Durham Local Motion to Work project builds on the investment and success of Durham County Council current Local Motion project (delivered in partnership with Darlington Borough Council since 2011) that is encouraging the adoption of low-carbon travel habits through a

package of sustainable transport measures for businesses, schools and local communities in South Durham.

- The successful Local Motion to Work bid¹ for 2015/16 expands Local Motion towards Durham City, targeting three additional communities where connections between people, jobs and training are a significant issue. It focuses on improving sustainable travel between where people live and key employment growth sites (including Aycliffe Business Park, the second largest employment site in the North East and location for Hitachi Rail Europe) and reducing traffic congestion to keep people and goods moving. It will deliver complimentary package of measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport and encourage low-carbon travel behaviour to support the sustainable transport capital schemes being delivered through the Local Transport Plan as well European Structural Investment and Local Growth Fund managed by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP).

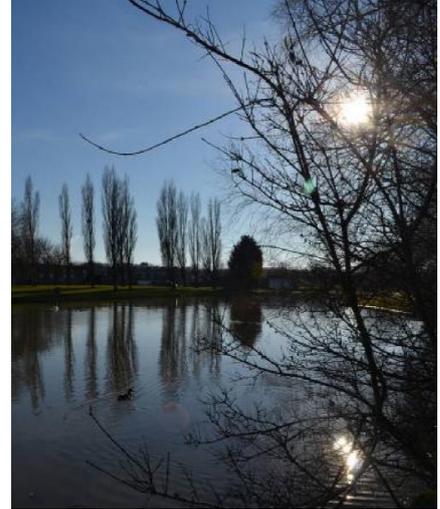
Town Centre and Retail

- The town centre (primarily comprising of Aycliffe Shopping Centre owned by Freshwater) is a locally important retail centre. It comprised of two storey blocks on the pedestrianised Beveridge Way acting as the town's 'high street'. The centre was a product of its time and it was realised that changes were needed. With this in mind an informal partnership between the town centre owners and the public sector including Great Aycliffe Town Council and Durham County Council was formed in order to plan for improvements and modernisation. As a result this centre has undergone significant environment improvements. These include major improvements to the public realm, shop frontages, canopies and removal of ramps and stairs. Churchill House which was the former office block at the south west corner of the town centre has now been demolished, and ongoing public realm improvements are taking place on land immediately to the north and directly in front of the leisure centre.
- Newton Aycliffe also benefits from smaller retail centres including Neville Parade, Woodham, Simpasture and Cobblers Hall.

Recreation and Leisure

- The Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre is located on the edge of the retail centre. Previously the facilities benefited from £2.5M investment from Competition Line and from Sedgefield Borough Council to redevelop its leisure offer. The 'Lifestyle Fitness' suite was been extended over three floors and comprises of a swimming pool, learner pool, sports hall, sauna and function room. The Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre swimming pool and sports hall have been refurbished. Furthermore the Library is being re-located to within the Leisure Centre together with the Customer Access Point, and is due to be completed in December 2016.
- Investment in 2013 has improved the facilities of Burn Lane Youth Centre, which is adjacent to the town centre, and the range of activities it provides for young residents.

- Newton Aycliffe benefits from the Great Aycliffe Town Council Oakleaf Centre and golf course as well as the private Aycliffe Sports Club. There is also the private Woodham Golf and Country Club which has now re-opened.
- The town centre and original town core has an important range of open spaces enclosed within the built-up area. It includes the more major provision of the well-used Town Park, Simpasture and Moore Lane sports areas. There are a total of 8no. parks, all maintained by the Great Aycliffe Town Council including West Park and its boating lake.
- There are many walking routes within the town including the Great Aycliffe Way, a circular route which maintains a countryside feel despite its close proximity to the built form of the settlement. A number of public rights of way directly access the neighbouring farmland and open countryside. There is a cycling link being developed to Shildon and its Locomotion Museum. The existing cycleways have more potential for further cross town links.
- The newer development to the north of the town has retained a consistent landscape area along the Woodham Burn and the plantations at Cobblers Hall and South Agnew. These are connected through the circular walk of the Great Aycliffe Way which also runs through the joint Town Council and County Council maintained Byerley Park local nature reserve. These areas link to the surrounding countryside supporting biodiversity and creating a strong and positive image for the town with greater potential for leisure use.



Heritage and Tourism

- Aycliffe Village is a historical settlement with a conservation area around the original village green and houses with listed buildings including the Grade I listed St. Andrew's Church which dates back to the Saxon period. The New Town development is a fine example of a post WWII town providing employment, housing, open space and avenues.
- The hinterland of Newton Aycliffe has a rich heritage based on a medieval or earlier range of villages and landscapes forming an attractive setting, offering a range of opportunities and leisure potential.
- The branch rail line connecting the town to the East Coast Main Line at Darlington is based on the route of the original Stockton and Darlington railway and there is the substantial nearby attraction of the Locomotion Museum in Shildon.
- Hallgarth (Coatham Mundeville), Walworth and Redworth Castles and the Eden Arms are listed buildings and in use as hotels.

Education

- In addition to primary school, the town is served by two secondary schools, Woodham Academy (formerly Community Technology College) and Greenfield Community and Arts College.
- The University Technical College South Durham (UTC) is a new technical school for 14-19 year olds which opened on Aycliffe Business Park in September 2016. The focus is to help young people get ready for the world of work and find meaningful careers. The facility is sponsored by leading employers in the fields of manufacturing and engineering, and from an academic perspective by the University of Sunderland. Alongside core GCSEs and A Levels in subjects such as English, maths and science, students of UTC South Durham can study Level 2 and Level 3 technical qualifications in advanced manufacturing and engineering.
- UTC South Durham's employer and university-led curriculum is innovative and engaging. It combines technical, practical and academic learning to provide a rounded education to students, ensuring they leave with the wide range of skills they need to progress to the university of their choice, onto an advanced apprenticeship or straight into full-time employment.
- In terms of adult education Newton Aycliffe is well served by both training providers and facilities on or near the Aycliffe Business Park. At least 3 providers have premises on the estate. They concentrate on provision of apprenticeships and work skills improvement but their offer also ranges to include high level business and leadership support. South West Durham Training is a long established company providing specialist skill and workshop training. Entry level potential work applicants are supported by DISC (County Durham Young People's Floating Support).
- Overall Durham County Council have supported 58 apprenticeships in Newton Aycliffe since 2014.
- There is a purpose built Further Education training centre called the Work Place and run by SCITT to train teachers through work placements. Adult education is available through the Newton Aycliffe Community Centre and also under a new initiative by the Residents Association.



Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership (i.e. GAMP AAP) Initiatives

- Each year AAPs get an allocation of £120,000 through its Area Budget to support projects and initiatives in the area. Projects and initiatives are developed through the work of the Task and Finish Groups and are approved by the AAP Board. The following projects and initiatives have been supported in the Newton Aycliffe area including:

- Activities for Young People such as supporting community based facilities, educational activities and youth workers. This activity has included the Scoot Park, a facility for scooters, skateboards, etc. at the rear of Hornplay Park.
- Employment, Enterprise, Education & Training such as educational provision, job creation, removing barriers to employment and supporting local businesses. Activity has involved support for local jobseekers into employment through the Employability Skills & Discretionary Fund Project.
- Support for the Community & Voluntary Sector such as supporting community groups, buildings, the voluntary sector, community activities, cultural facilities and relations between different communities.

Health

Within the town there is provision of:

- Healthy Living Pharmacies.
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centres.
- Trained volunteers through the Community Parenting programme volunteers.
- Contraception and Sexual Health Services.

The following countywide provision is also being delivered within the town:

- Wellbeing for Life, which targets the most deprived areas in County Durham and does work in some MSOAs in/around the town. This geographically targeted work is supported by the programme via outreach and work with particular groups of people such as the LGBT community.
- If U Care Share, based in Great Lumley provides support for people affected by suicide.

What will be delivered?

Employment

- The scale of Hitachi Rail's investment will have a strategic level impact on the local area. Hitachi Rail has expressed an intention to use suppliers from the region where possible and there is therefore potential for an increased interest in the Aycliffe Business Park and its available space as a location. There is the added potential of the rail freight facility adding to this impact.
- To realise the opportunities for growth, Business Durham has been actively working with businesses to see how the business park could be improved. The challenges will be to maximise positive impact on the industrial estate, the local economy and the skilled workforce and also to capture new supply chain development and growth.
- Durham County Council seeks to ensure that developments such as Hitachi are capitalised upon and that opportunities to attract further employment are realised through Business Durham in supporting subsequent developments and growth; overcoming barriers and supporting local businesses.



Forrest Park

- Durham County Council have secured £13 million funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership and is undertaking work to prepare the 52 hectare Forrest Park (at Aycliffe Business Park), on land adjacent to the Hitachi Rail site.
- This process, due to be completed by the end of Autumn 2017, will see construction of a new, signalised junction on the A167 - for better access to both the new site and Aycliffe Business Park - and an internal link road and the installation of a bespoke 23MW power supply into the site, and a newly constructed power substation. The site for new roads and substation is located to the South of Newton Aycliffe, adjacent to Junction 59 of the A1 (M).
- The improvements are designed to remove existing barriers to the continued success and further expansion of Aycliffe Business Park. By doing so it is hoped that it will unlock a potential investment of nearly £140 million from the private sector to develop the site including, due to its location, a possible Strategic Rail Freight Interchange. It's estimated the site could see the creation of 3,200 jobs and deliver a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £495 million over the next twenty years.

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

- The Forrest Park project will enable the construction and operation of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) on the Forrest Park site, on the southern end of Newton Aycliffe Business Park. The SRFI will follow the major investment by Hitachi to assemble trains at Newton Aycliffe.



- This would be the first SRFI within the North East of England, and will address a business need for better connected business infrastructure in the North East. This will stimulate further economic growth in the region, removing constraints to development, creating more and better jobs.
- The construction of an SRFI at Forrest Park aims to facilitate the location of high value skilled jobs in the County as well as consolidating both the North East's and County Durham's foothold in the manufacturing sector in line with the priorities of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The project seeks to utilise the site's favourable rail access enhancing Forrest Park's viability and marketability as a unique rail connected site in the North East.
- The Project has four overarching strategic objectives:
 - To stimulate economic growth in the North East;
 - To significantly improve the business site offer at Aycliffe Business Park;
 - To consolidate the North East as a hub of manufacturing; and,
 - To improve routes to market for businesses within the North East
- Once the terminal is established, it will generate its own market and catalyse further inward investment into the area. Ultimately, this project will improve routes to market for local and regional businesses. The rail terminal will also remove a significant number of road haulage miles off the highway network, with associated environmental benefits.

Further Town Centre Improvements

- Newton Aycliffe Library will move into newly refurbished premises at the local leisure centre later 2016. The scheme, which Durham County Council are carrying out, will see the transformation of a number of shop units adjoining the centre and the creation of a new shared entrance and reception for the library and leisure centre.
- The work is part of a wider project to regenerate the town centre, creating a new plaza area and bringing vacant properties back into use.
- Once work is complete, the new-look facility will also offer residents the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss revenue and benefits queries with customer service staff.

Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership Initiatives

- Seeking to deliver more projects e.g. at Cobbler's Hall Play Park which would include a play area for children aged 6-14 years of age. The current play facility is owned by Durham County Council with Great Aycliffe Town Council (GATC) seeking a 99-year lease on the site.

Great Aycliffe Town Council – Neighbourhood Plan

- The Town Council are well advanced in the preparation of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan (GANP). The GANP has now completed the two statutory consultations as required and an Examination is underway.
- A neighbourhood plan has a long term vision for the Great Aycliffe Town Council area which can become part of Statutory Development Plan helping to shape change at a local level. The GANPs Vision 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”

ⁱ Department of Transport Successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund 15/16 Revenue Bids Durham Local Motion to Work

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/329323/lstf-2015-2016-successful-bids.pdf