

Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## City-wide Landscape and Townscape Character Guidance

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### 1 Introduction

Newcastle has always been one of England's main towns (indeed it also enjoyed a short period as a Scottish town), playing a key role as a port, trading and market centre, and as a border town, located on the main bridging point across the River Tyne and astride the main road route from London to Edinburgh. It remains a border city, but is also the north-east regional capital, an historic city, an international sea-port and airport, and is a business centre and tourist venue with a strong culture and character, and a very distinctive landscape and townscape. The main Tyne bridges provide an internationally recognisable image of Newcastle.

### 2 Where: location and extent, number of character areas

Newcastle has a distinctive landscape setting, particularly the southern waterfront along the River Tyne. The City of Newcastle upon Tyne extends over an area of 112 square kilometres. The land use is predominantly urban, but Newcastle has a substantial area of urban fringe countryside to the north and west, much of this designated as statutory Green Belt, and covering 39% of the city's total land area. This character assessment has defined and assessed 184 urban and 61 rural character areas within Newcastle. These are grouped into 13 broader character zones, of which 6 are wholly urban, 6 are predominantly rural, and 1 is evenly divided. Each zone and each individual area has its own specific character guidance to protect and enhance local sense of place, identity and distinctiveness, and to identify places where character could be recreated or strengthened.

### 3 What is there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.

Geologically, the region surrounding and including Newcastle is underlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures: thick beds of sandstone, with layers of softer rock, mainly shales with coal seams. There are occasional ridges of sandstone and these give rise to the hills which occur in parts of in Newcastle, the hilly landform being particularly strongly seen when approaching Newcastle from the west. The local sandstones were also the predominant building material historically and was used in many prominent older buildings and structures in Newcastle like the cathedral, city walls, castle, Central Station, much of the Georgian and Victorian architecture and many nineteenth century

bridges, churches and other buildings. Local sandstone was also used for the humbler farm steadings and cottages which are significant in the local landscape, and also for building components such as sills, lintels, wall copings, gate piers and other architectural decorative features in the more modest Victorian, Edwardian and later brick-built terraced houses. At a much lower depth, below the sandstones and shales, lies Millstone Grit.

Newcastle is underlain by the Upper Carboniferous or Silesian Coal Measures: which comprise the middle and lower coal measures (Westphalian) with well known and much worked coal seams such as the High Main, the Five Quarter, the Durham Low Main, the Top and Bottom Busty and so on.

All of the Newcastle area was covered by boulder clay as a result of glaciation during the Ice Age and this varies enormously in depth, usually containing sand and stones. Clay pits were common on the old maps indicating the value of the clays for brick manufacture and other products: indeed there is still a local brick factory at Throckley. Deposits in the drift-filled valleys of glacial times are very variable containing clays, silt, sand, gravel, grit, stones and large boulders.

Along the Tyne, there are alluvial deposits of glacial sands and gravels and a lot of man-made ground, using industrial wastes, ballast from shipping and other materials. In places the depths of made ground can be many metres, for example in former stream valleys filled in the nineteenth century.

Newcastle soils are predominantly stiff clays of very variable depths. They can be extremely thin or non-existent where the sandstone outcrops close to the surface. Local soils are fertile and the land was cleared and farmed early by Neolithic peoples. Most local agricultural soils are now classed as Grade 3A or 3B in the Agricultural Land Classification.

Northumberland has wild remote uplands toward the Pennines, the Cheviot hills and the Scottish border, but to the south and east and around Tyneside the landscape is gentler with undulating plateaux and frequent sandstone ridges, which become fewer toward Newcastle where much of the land is lower lying and flatter. The plateau landscape with hills or "laws", is drained by rivers in characteristic narrow, deeply incised dales and tributary valleys, known as "cleughs" in Northumberland and "denes" in Tyneside.

The River Tyne has formed a broader valley but it is typically steep-sided in many places, including the centre of Newcastle. Some of its tributaries are classic "denes", Jesmond Dene being perhaps the best known. There were originally several denes within what is now the city centre which have been filled, culverted and built over, concealing what must have been an unusual hill and dale landscape within the old town of Newcastle, two or three centuries ago. Out to the west toward

Scotswood the River Tyne, which remains tidal throughout the Newcastle area, broadens significantly, and it has large expanses of mud at low tide and follows a meandering course at Newburn toward the western boundary.

Newcastle is still fairly hilly especially to the west of the city. There is a broad ridge of higher ground between Fenham and Arthur's Hill in the west of the City and stretching north to Blakelaw and Kenton, and west to Westerhope and West Denton. Some of the outer edges of the built up area occupy prominent high ground particularly at Kenton, Newbiggin Hall, and West Denton which are all above 300 feet (90 metres) above sea level. The highest point in Newcastle is 434 feet (132 metres) AOD at Denton Hill Head (Hillhead Road), with another knoll at Coley Hill, Chapel Park. There is also high ground to the north and north-west, where the airport occupies a prominent ridge, and there are prominent hills between Newcastle and Ponteland notably Black Callerton Hill and Braid Hill.

Land on the northern and north-western flanks of Newcastle slopes down to the broad shallow valley of the upper Ouseburn. The Ouseburn emerges at Callerton Pond and arcs around the city in an easterly direction, before turning south. The valley form changes abruptly at South Gosforth to become a steep sided dene. The Ouseburn itself, now a larger, faster and stony little river, then reaches the Tyne at Byker, although a part of these lower reaches has been culverted and infilled.

The southern boundary of the City of Newcastle is formed by the River Tyne and its northern bank, steepest in the west end of the city where many streets have gradients of 1 in 8. There are more distinctive denes further west at Benwell Dene, Denton Dene, Sugley Dene and Walbottle/Throckley Dene. The first two of these have been substantially altered along much of their length by development and infill. However small remnants still exist, usually within open space areas, which show or at least hint at their original landscape character and contours.

The parts of Newcastle east of the Ouseburn valley are lower and flatter. The banks of the Tyne are still steep and there is a noticeable gorge where the river is faster and narrower, channelled between the rocky banks at St. Anthony's (Walker Riverside) and Felling on the Gateshead side. The more easterly valley of the River does not rise up so steeply or as far as in the west. There is a tongue of higher ground running eastward from South Gosforth to Long Benton, and to the south and east of this the ground slopes toward the coast and the Borough of North Tyneside.

There are three other distinctive lower-lying and generally flat areas in the city. The Tyne at Newburn Haugh in the west, meanders through a large flat flood plain area much of which has been in varied industrial use for centuries. As with most other stretches of the Tyne, the curve of the river at Newburn Haugh was altered, narrowed and deepened to allow shipping access and does not regain its natural form and profile until just

beyond the western city boundary. The Gosforth basin is to the north east, around the Ouseburn and Gosforth Park, including Gosforth Lake. Gosforth Park has substantial stands of woodland and despite its low elevation is often visible in the Newcastle landscape. The other low-lying area is Prestwick Carr, west of Dinnington and north of the airport. The carr is an unusual fenland landscape of flat fields and ditches, some tree cover and the distinctive sounds of birds like the lapwing and curlew.

#### **4 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The River Tyne is the most obvious and well known landscape feature in Newcastle, and has influenced the landscape, the settlement and the historical development of the city and the region to a very great extent. The Tyne gap provided a natural route for early man and successive invaders to travel between the east and west coasts. There were certainly prehistoric settlements within Tyneside although there are few actual remains visible today.

The Romans utilised the Tyne valley together with the outcrops of the Great Whin Sill to accommodate Hadrian's Wall, which crosses Newcastle, from Wallsend to Throckley.

The river was always a well-used waterway for trade and transport from early times when the little burns joining the Tyne offered good beaching places for small boats. The river is now much altered from its original shallow condition with large islands; it has been deepened and straightened, its shallows and edges built upon to serve the requirements of Newcastle's developing trade and industry, and present day navigation. The river is tidal throughout Newcastle and upstream as far as Wylam.

Newcastle was an important stronghold for the Romans. Known as Pons Aelius, the fortifications commanded both that section of Hadrian's Wall and the river crossing. The first bridge over the Tyne, at the lowest possible bridging point, was built by the Romans probably on the site of what is now the swing bridge. The township became Monkchester in Saxon times and was eventually renamed Newcastle after the Norman Conquest, on account of the new castle and fortifications built for protection against attacks from the Scots. The castle was founded in 1080 with construction extending into the 13th Century. The first stone bridge was commenced toward the end of the 12th century and lasted until a storm in 1771 destroyed it. The mediaeval town continued to develop as a commercial centre and over the years the waterfront was reclaimed and upraised by the tipping of quantities of debris. The Mediaeval town was enclosed by the town wall by the 15th century, but there were outlying agricultural settlements and villages outside the walls and bell pits for the extraction of coal were being sunk.

The town even in the eighteenth century was still more or less confined to the area within the wall. The denes and Tyne valley beyond were described by contemporary writers and artists as being pleasantly

wooded landscapes. The real growth period for Newcastle came in the nineteenth century with the dramatic development of the engineering, shipbuilding and chemical industries, the increasing level of coal mining, the expansion of the port facilities and the development of the railways to handle the goods and materials, along with the growth of the urban population who produced all these.

The effect of these sudden and massive changes in the shape, size and activities of the city were detrimental in many ways to the local landscape. There was and in a few places still is a long term legacy of dereliction and despoliation. The chemical industry in particular left toxic chemicals along the riverside, and the river itself became seriously polluted with industrial and human effluents. Only in very recent years has this situation started to be reversed. Coal mining has left scars over a very long period starting with the small bell pits, the spoil heaps of which are often to be seen as areas of rough or stony ground in the fields, or as small groups of trees, often birch or pine, on slight humps in the ground. Larger scale mining produced characteristic pithead buildings, most of which are now gone, but also waste heaps of assorted shapes and sizes. The City has made strenuous efforts under the government's Derelict Land initiatives, to clear the derelict mine workings above ground and to reshape and landscape the pit heaps. The mining legacy is still present in Newcastle, but in most cases it has been converted to public open space or redeveloped, and is not so easily recognisable. Similarly the numerous associated mineral railways and waggonways have either been removed or converted to form roads, footpaths and cycle ways.

In the nineteenth century the main railway line, Central Station and the High Level Bridge over the Tyne were constructed, soon followed by the Swing Bridge, the King Edward Bridge, the Scotswood Bridges, Newburn Bridge and the Tyne Road Bridge, early in the twentieth century. More modern road bridges have been added at Blaydon (A1) and Redheugh, along with the Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge and the most recent, the pedestrian Gateshead Millennium Bridge. This dramatic development in transportation carved great swathes through the older parts of the city centre, and created some of Tyneside's most well known man-made landmarks. The main built-up area of Tyneside was concentrated along both banks of the river. This is still true today although Newcastle has more than doubled its area since the turn of the century. Nevertheless it is still easy to get out of the city and its suburbs, with nowhere more than 4 miles from open countryside.

The Town Moor is still a major landscape feature in the city and its presence constrained development in the nineteenth century, leading to a "leap frogging" of suburban housing development to Gosforth, Jesmond and Fenham. The Town Moor is a unique feature, providing a huge expanse of grazing land, accessible open space and tree-lined roads on some of the most important routes into and out of the City (See Zone M for details).

## 5 Current role

Newcastle is the regional capital city for the north-east of England and is a vibrant place with an attractive city centre popular with tourists, shoppers and fun-seekers. With two universities and a range of popular suburbs to the north of the city centre, Newcastle is often viewed as a good place to live: indeed in the area extending north from the city centre and quayside the residential areas are high value and very popular. However the city faces challenges in generating employment and bringing about regeneration in the less popular areas to the east and west of the city centre.

## 6 Strengths: special character, local gems, successes: to protect and enhance.

The long River Tyne waterfront, shipping, boats and bridges  
 The river Ouseburn and other small rivers and streams  
 Conservation Areas  
 Hadrian's Way National Trail  
 Line of Hadrian's Wall and vallum  
 Landmark buildings and structures  
 Historic city centre

## 7 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.

Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment  
 Poor maintenance and loss of character in housing estates  
 Neglect in public realm including open spaces  
 Loss of mature trees and failure to replant  
 Decline of traditional shopping streets  
 Decline in activity on the River Tyne  
 "Sameness" over large areas  
 Contamination

## 8 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.

Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall and vallum  
 The River Tyne and its waterfront  
 The River Ouseburn and other smaller rivers and streams  
 Riverside Parks and Hadrian's Way  
 Parks and open spaces  
 Main streets and thoroughfares  
 Tree cover  
 Off road routes

## 9 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.

Comprehensive redevelopment  
 Housing improvement that erodes intrinsic, suburban and domestic scale and character and loses identity

New development that takes no account of local character or identity and “could be anywhere”  
 Loss of traditional shopping streets, small shops, corner shops  
 Paving over front gardens for parking  
 Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
 Demolition  
 Tree removal  
 Building on green spaces  
 Loss of grass verges  
 Loss of hedges  
 Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership  
 Loss of river views and access

**10 References**

- Unitary Development Plan
- Local Development Framework draft core strategy
- Conservation Area Character Statements and Management Plans
- Hadrian’s Wall: The Wall Walk Volume 1
- Sustrans Coast to Coast Cycle Route Guide
- ‘Tyne Landscape’
- ‘Colour on the Tyne’
- Tyne Gorge Study

**Strengths and opportunities**

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do’s	Don’ts	Notes/ Comments
CW1+	Distinctive regional capital city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect local character and distinctiveness by taking into account this character assessment and its guidance, and that of related guidance documents (Tyne Gorge Study, Conservation Area Management Plans, Developer Guidance Notes, CABE/Urban Design guidance and Design Codes).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore local character and distinctiveness</li> </ul>	

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<b>CW2+</b>	The long River Tyne waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and open up for public view and access.</li> <li>• Enhance river and river edge wildlife habitats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block access or key viewpoints with buildings, barriers or fences</li> </ul>	
<b>CW3+</b>	The river Ouseburn (lower tidal reaches and valley)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect water and wildlife habitat-quality,</li> <li>• retain river walks and boating activity, public access and views.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over gentrify.</li> </ul>	Proposed barrage will be a significant change
<b>CW4+</b>	Riverside parks and spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain, manage &amp; protect wildlife habitats and trees</li> <li>• Prepare management and improvement plans to achieve and sustain the city's quality targets</li> <li>• Create views and access to the river for people and wildlife, securing additional access and links wherever opportunities arise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow building or rebuilding close to the river that prevents views and access to the river</li> </ul>	Consider a policy discouraging any except essential built development within 20 metres of the river. (High Water)



<b>CW5+</b>	Parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain, manage &amp; protect wildlife habitats, landscape features, hedges and trees.</li> <li>• Prepare management and improvement plans.</li> <li>• Achieve Green Flag and/or City Quality Standards</li> <li>• Restrict vehicular access</li> <li>• Encourage good visibility and natural surveillance, without wholesale clearance of trees and shrubs</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of small, featureless grassed spaces of low recreational value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow houses and other buildings that back on to the park or private gardens with perimeter fencing over 1.2 metres height.</li> <li>• Introduce car parking on open space</li> </ul>	
<b>CW6+</b>	Hadrian's Way National Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote. Ensure security and signage for users. Prepare and implement management plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow maintenance standards to slip</li> </ul>	
<b>CW7+</b>	Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall and vallum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance</li> <li>• Interpretation and signage</li> </ul>		Consider a Hadrian's Wall Management Plan for the wall route within Newcastle

<b>CW8+</b>	Landmark buildings and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, retain, protect and enhance.</li> <li>• Provide interpretation and signage.</li> <li>• Protect viewpoints of these features.</li> <li>• Prepare management guidance for repainting and other works</li> <li>• Assess for listing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish or allow degradation of character. Encourage good upkeep of built fabric and setting</li> </ul>	
<b>CW9+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, promote and protect as key city viewpoints:</li> <li>• <b>Cow Hill</b></li> <li>• <b>Kenton Bar</b></li> <li>• <b>Tyne Gorge Study Quayside Views</b></li> <li>• <b>Great North Road adjacent to Blue House</b></li> <li>• <b>Grandstand Road</b></li> <li>• <b>Knop Law</b></li> <li>• <b>Tyne Bridges</b></li> <li>• <b>Monument, Grey Street</b></li> <li>• <b>Byker Hill</b></li> <li>• <b>Walker Riverside Park</b></li> <li>• <b>Three Hills, Havannah</b></li> <li>• <b>Black Callerton</b></li> <li>• (More to add?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	
<b>CW10+</b>	Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and enforce Design Codes and character guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow ad-hoc demolition leaving gap-sites</li> </ul>	

<b>CW11+</b>	Main and local roads, streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create more tree-lined suburban streets</li> <li>• Active street frontages</li> <li>• Consider “home zones” in preference to standard traffic calming treatment</li> <li>• Adopt an agreed palette of materials, standardising where appropriate and reflecting local identity</li> <li>• More frequent safe crossing points between spaces and residential areas</li> <li>• Retain and protect street trees, replacing those that are lost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove redundant barriers.</li> <li>• Street furniture to enhance local identity.</li> </ul>	
<b>CW12+</b>	Tree cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees, in streets on road verges, in open spaces, schools, around perimeters of sports grounds and at prominent junctions</li> <li>• Plant woodland belts in parks and green spaces</li> <li>• Engage the local community in tree planting and management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement.</li> <li>• Neglect management</li> </ul>	

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<b>CW13+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links</li> <li>• Implement Linked Open Space Plan. (Green Spaces Strategy)</li> <li>• Management Plans for strategic routes</li> <li>• Interpretation and maps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over design.</li> <li>• Excessively wide tarmac paths that invite vehicular use</li> </ul>	Used at a slower pace than roads, these routes must be attractively landscaped with good visibility
<b>CW14+</b>	“Garden village” building style and site layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and match render, brick &amp; tile colours, features, doors, windows, roof pitch, spacing of houses and gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piecemeal refurbishment or redevelopment.</li> <li>• Flat roofs</li> </ul>	Typical of much mid-twentieth century Newcastle Council housing.
<b>CW15+</b>	Roadside verges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and retain grass and shrub verges</li> <li>• Improve verges for wildlife and visual appeal</li> <li>• Identify grass verges for management as wildflower meadow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tarmac over for parking</li> </ul>	
<b>CW16+</b>	Hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, retain, and encourage more hedging particularly in gardens, parks and road verges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglect hedge management</li> </ul>	

<b>CW17+</b>	Countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote countryside landscape features</li> <li>• Identify historic landscapes and provide signage and interpretation</li> <li>• Protect and improve the designed parkland landscapes at Woolsington Hall and High Gosforth Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen and urbanise country roads, lanes and rights of way</li> </ul>	
<b>CW18+</b>	Wildlife and habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote significant habitats.</li> </ul>		

## 11 Weaknesses & threats.

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/ Comments</b>
<b>CW1-</b>	Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment. Decline in activity on the River Tyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement regeneration plan</li> </ul>		
<b>CW2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character in "garden village" and other style homes, with increasing "sameness"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare management guidance for home owners.</li> <li>• Designate Conservation Areas and prepare Management Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish</li> </ul>	
<b>CW3-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>		

<b>CW4-</b>	Comprehensive redevelopment and building on green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use planning powers and policy to protect valued and needed spaces. Define surplus spaces for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on spaces with features of interest and value, when other spaces of no particular significance or need can be utilised instead</li> </ul>	
<b>CW5-</b>	Paving over front gardens for parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce design guidance, apply climate change policies and Article 4 Directions</li> </ul>		
<b>CW6-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare design guidance and co-ordinated colour schemes.</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate.</li> <li>• Security fences abutting or close to footpaths.</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>CW7-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and use design guidance to accommodate cars</li> <li>• Protect streets from excessive parking, for example through charging</li> </ul>		
<b>CW8-</b>	Demolition sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep fenced and free of litter and debris</li> <li>• Mown grass to perimeter verges</li> <li>• Short term uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote public access unless there is a need</li> <li>• Topsoil and seed whole site</li> <li>• Ad-hoc demolition, gaps in urban fabric</li> </ul>	

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<b>CW9-</b>	Low tree cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve tree, hedge and woodland as part of regeneration plans</li> <li>• Street &amp; boulevard trees</li> <li>• Garden hedges and trees</li> <li>• More trees and good management along transport corridors</li> </ul>		Need to reinforce “garden village” character.
<b>CW10-</b>	Increasing security to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce reliance on steel palisade and similar security fences and gates.</li> <li>• Make school frontages and entrances more welcoming and part of the setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of traditional perimeter railings, walls, piers and gates</li> </ul>	

Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## Tyne Riverside and Western Villages: Landscape and Townscape Character Zone A

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### **1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

This zone is the south western portion of Newcastle, extending along the Tyne waterfront west from Scotswood to Newburn and the Tyne Riverside Country Park. The zone extends up the valley side as far as the A69(T). This is a highly distinctive area in landscape terms where the Newcastle Green Belt encloses the settlements very tightly indeed creating a mix of countryside and town. The zone covers the south-facing slopes of the Tyne Valley and the steep enclosed denes at Walbottle and Sugley and the hilly landform between.

The predominantly residential areas of Lemington and South west Denton are in this zone, at the western edge of Newcastle's built up area, plus the urbanised former villages of Throckley, Newburn, Walbottle and Blucher. The countryside in between gives this zone its strong urban-fringe character, becoming rural at its western extremity. The zone also includes the industrial and commercial area in the Tyne floodplain at Newburnhaugh. There are 25 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which 10 are rural (including 5 Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS) and 15 are urban (including 4 Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### **2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The zone has similar topography to the adjoining West End, with some flat and low-lying land next to the River Tyne, a number of steep-sided stream valleys or denes leading down to the Tyne and steeply rising land to the north. The landform is always interesting here with the little hills of Rye and Hallow Hill above Newburn and the magnificent viewpoint of Knop Law, just east of Blucher Village. The views almost everywhere within this zone are very good, becoming increasingly panoramic higher up the valley side.

Most of the western riverside is stony glacial clay over sandstone and coal measures, with alluvium lower down plus some very large areas of filled ground. The western riverside zone supports a rich diversity of wildlife, with many interesting habitats and key local species. The Tyne becomes more rural in character further west in this zone with seal, otter, and salmon to be seen, a multitude of bird species including heron, skylark, song thrush, barn owl, and aquatic species. There are ponds and woodlands supporting amphibians, red squirrel, bats and much



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botanical interest. Mudflats on the Tyne and at Lemington Gut are valued habitats for invertebrates, ducks and waders.

The Tyne itself has been greatly altered, straightened, deepened and narrowed to run in a new engineered channel to accommodate shipping serving the coal industry and the recently demolished former power station at Stella/Newburnhaugh in particular. The former sands and shoals and Dent's Meadows island were all dredged away in the 1860s and the whole Newburnhaugh channel has been eased to take out the tight loops at Lemington and Stella. The former railway along the north side of the Tyne shortcuts across the curve of the river and the flat, low lying land at Newburnhaugh to continue to Wylam. The former line is now a very popular and well used stretch of Hadrian's Way National Trail, an off road recreational route which has recently been augmented by a new loop of public promenade and path along the edge of the Tyne at Newburnhaugh.

The Western zone has diverse residential areas, principally low rise, low density brick terraces, link houses and semis with some medium rise apartment and maisonette blocks. The majority were built between or after the wars and most have front and rear gardens. These homes occur at Throckley, in south west Denton, Dumpling Hall and in northern and western Lemington. A large proportion are council-owned. However interspersed with these are older terraced houses at Lemington, Newburn, the Throckley "tree streets", Walbottle and Blayney Row, some traditional miners' cottages at Blucher, and a post war reconstruction of the older village houses around the village green at Walbottle.

Pockets of housing in Throckley and Lemington have become neglected and unpopular but the majority of homes are well cared for and have seen substantial and successful refurbishment as well as some new building.

There are no multi-storey tower blocks in this zone. The tallest buildings are at Newburnhaugh: new offices, the Lemington Glass Kiln and the numerous tall pylons in the area. There is one Conservation Area at Walbottle.

Main accesses to and through the western riverside zone are east-west and parallel to the Tyne, main roads being the A69 Trunk Road and the A6085 Scotswood Road / Lemington Road. North-south links are minor roads, often with steep gradients. There is one river crossing at Newburn Bridge which is a narrow single carriageway width.

Industry was predominantly coal mining with many pits in the area, the last to close being North Walbottle in 1968. Iron and steel working was also prominent in the Newburn and Lemington areas although this declined through the twentieth century finally closing in the 1960s. Power generation using local coal imported by ship via the Tyne continued at Stella Power Station until the 1990s. A huge graphite works occupied much of the Newburnhaugh site until about the same time. The

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two operations, the site contamination and the massive “dark satanic” structures have now gone and Newburnhaugh is being redeveloped as a modern and attractively landscaped industry and business park. The industrial riverside areas still support a mixture of small to medium commercial and industrial premises: some fairly run down. Most have no particular reason to occupy the waterfront which is still inaccessible to the public east of Newburn bridge, and again east of Lemington Gut.

Green spaces in the Western zone are abundant, well linked together and many originate from reclaimed mine workings and pit heaps, the most extensive being the former Percy Pit at Lemington and Tyne Riverside Country Park at the Former Isabella Pit, Newburn. The villages are interconnected by a wealth of public footpaths and former waggonways like Blucher and Walbottle Waggonways and Hadrian’s Way (Wylam Waggonway) that cross the pleasant farmland, protected as Green Belt, between the villages and settlements. The other key green space assets in this zone are the ancient woodland denes: Walbottle Dene and Sugley Dene (means ‘valley of birdsong’) are both council owned public open spaces. Given to the former Newburn Council by the Duke of Northumberland, they lead down to the Tyne riverside and link to Hadrian’s Way, Tyne Riverside Country Park and Percy Pit.

Formal urban parks are infrequent in the area as are sports pitches, since the topography is often too hilly. Newburn Sports centre is popular both for team and pitch sports and as a base for runners and cyclists. Elswick Harriers, the oldest athletics club in the North East, established 1889, now train at Newburn. Tyne Rowing Club established 1852 is one of the oldest sporting clubs in the UK, part of the Tyne’s industrial heritage, dating from a time when Tyne oarsmen were both local and world champions. Newcastle, Northumbria and Durham Universities have active rowing squads training on the Tyne at Newburn, as do some local schools. Allotment sites are available and generally well used, though some are run down and in this area the tenants often have livestock. Unauthorised grazing of horses and ponies is a problem on council-owned green space and much private pasture in the Green Belt farmland between the villages is for horses, indicating the strength of equestrian interest in this zone. The adjacent open land is attractive agricultural land in mixed use, with very high visual amenity, and a diversity of trees, woodlands and other vegetation. The zone thus provides a rich variety of recreational opportunities and very high quality ‘countryside character” green space close to the urban area. In fact the area includes 5 Areas of Local Landscape Significance (ALLS) and 4 Areas of Local Townscape Significance (ALTS) out of a total of only 25 areas.

There are relatively abundant street and garden trees in this zone: limes in particular were often planted as street or front garden trees in the inter-war estates in Lemington and Throckley to help create the “garden village” character, although some have been lost.

### **3 Why it’s there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

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The earliest definite route was adopted by the Romans for 'Hadrian's Wall', which crosses this zone east to west. There are wall remains on the A69 roadside in south west Denton at The Ramparts. An archaeological excavation below what is now the A1 found evidence of pre-Roman cultivation and the flat bottomed 'Vallum' (large ditch) which runs south of and parallel to the wall. The line of the wall leaves the A69 West Road at the hilltop viewpoint of Knop Law, site of Milecastle No 9. The wall's course is now marked by the old Hexham or "Military" Road, the B6528. Part of the ditch north of the wall is visible close to North Walbottle Street, Blucher. Milecastle 10 was just east of Walbottle Dene. Milecastle 11 was at the corner of Drove Road and Hexham Road, in Throckley.

Three settlements were established from mediaeval times at Bank Top Throckley, at Walbottle and on the riverside at Newburn. The place name Throckley (or Throklaw) means burial mound of Trocca. The settlement is first recorded in 1161 but was inhabited from much earlier. A hoard of Roman silver coins was found at the site of the Water Treatment works, Hexham Road. The name Walbottle refers to a Saxon farmstead, built on the wall, and the village is recorded in Mediaeval times. The villages all expanded with the development of collieries, together with the newer settlement at Blucher. The name Blucher commemorates a Russian general at the battle of Waterloo 1815.

Newburn's historic claim to fame is as the location of a Civil War battle, at Newburn Ford 1640, where Royalist English troops lost to a much larger Scottish Covenanter force.

The last pits to close in this zone were at Throckley in 1954, Blucher in 1956 and North Walbottle in 1968.

#### **4 Current role**

Much of this zone is now a dormitory residential suburb for Newcastle, since there is now little employment locally. The village communities are still strong and apart from a little localised demolition in lower Lemington, and central Throckley, most areas remain reasonably popular places to live and are stable. The ending of coal mining and redevelopment of heavy industry at Newburnhaugh were very significant changes but there has otherwise been relatively little change in recent years. The locality is however strengthening its role as a local beauty spot and sports and leisure location for walking, cycling, running, a range of team and water sports, horse-riding, and as a good area for wildlife. This is a zone with great charm and character as a local landscape but which is also vulnerable to pressure for a plethora of more urban-style land uses such as stabling and paddocks for horses, local recreation facilities and semi-rural homes and lifestyles.

#### **5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

The long curving River Tyne and its waterfront

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The streams and steep sided wooded valleys at Walbottle and Sugley Denes  
Lemington Gut (lower tidal mudflats)  
Lemington Glass Cone  
Tyne Riverside Park  
Tyne slipway and watersports  
Hadrian's Way National Trail  
Line of Hadrian's Wall  
Landmark buildings and structures  
Knop Law  
Newburnhaugh Business Park, waterfront open space and promenade  
Newburn Sports Centre  
Former waggonways and Public Rights of Way network  
Traditional miner's cottages and settlements  
Walbottle Village and Green

### **6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Low grade industrial and commercial operations  
Fly tipping  
Contamination in the rivers  
Electricity pylons  
Gas governor at Newburn  
Poor maintenance and loss of character in "garden village" style homes and former mining settlements.  
Unauthorised grazing and uncontrolled horses and other livestock  
Vandalism, dog fouling, graffiti, teen drinking and other anti-social behaviour  
Neglect in public realm including open spaces  
Major roads in close proximity to features of archaeological or wildlife value

### **7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall  
The River Tyne and its waterfront  
The River Tyne bridges  
Tyne Riverside Park and Hadrian's Way  
Waverley Park  
Valley View Sports Ground  
Sugley and Walbottle Denes  
Lemington Gut  
Old Lemington  
Main streets and thoroughfares  
Major roads and their roadsides and crossings  
Off road routes and linkage  
River Tyne crossing proposed at Blaydon  
Sandhill Centre

### **8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Comprehensive redevelopment

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Housing improvement that erodes intrinsic character  
 Paving over front gardens for parking  
 Loss of mature street trees and roadside grass verges  
 Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
 Demolition  
 Building on green spaces  
 Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership  
 Loss of river views

### 9 References

- Hadrian's Wall: The Wall Walk Volume 1
- Sustrans C to C guide
- BBC Tyne Sport website
- Durham Mining Museum website
- Newcastle City Libraries 'Bygone Throckley' etc series
- Battle of Newburn (Ranger Service and other websites)

### Strengths and opportunities.

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
<b>A1+</b>	Diverse villages and distinctive residential areas of architectural value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> <li>• Protect mining heritage.</li> <li>• Reinforce village core and identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to blur and remove subtle differences and separation between the villages.</li> <li>• Lose/erode rural features and setting.</li> </ul>	Refer to Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site and Management Plan.
<b>A2+</b>	Former and existing denes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and protect Throckley-Walbottle, Sugley, &amp; Denton Denes with</li> <li>• Management and interpretation.</li> </ul>		Refer to National guidance on ancient woodland

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<b>A3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, promote and protect as key local viewpoints:</li> <li>• <b>Newburn Bridge</b></li> <li>• <b>Newburnhaugh promenade and walkway</b></li> <li>• <b>Blaydon Bridge</b></li> <li>• <b>Knop Law</b></li> <li>• <b>Hallow Hill</b></li> <li>• <b>Percy Pit</b></li> <li>• <b>Views from Military Road/Hexham Road</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar or block views</li> </ul>	
<b>A4+</b>	Main streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active street frontages</li> <li>• Consider “home zones”.</li> <li>• More safe crossings between spaces and residential areas.</li> <li>• Retain grass verges</li> </ul>		
<b>A5+</b>	Tree cover, street and garden trees, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets, and street corners.</li> <li>• Plant woodland belts in parks and spaces.</li> <li>• Manage dene and riverside woodlands for wildlife.</li> <li>• Introduce native black poplar at Tyne Riverside.</li> <li>• Engage the local community..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement.</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>A6+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly access to countryside.</li> </ul>		

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<b>A7+</b>	Parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, promote and improve Tyne Riverside Country Park.</li> <li>• Improve perimeter fencing of allotments and smallholdings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow high rear fences abutting spaces.</li> <li>• Create more low grade amenity space.</li> <li>• Allow more vehicle access</li> </ul>	
<b>A8</b>	River Tyne and waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and protect water quality, landscape and wildlife, river-related sports and activities.</li> <li>• Encourage industrial uses to relocate if they have no connection with the river.</li> <li>• Open up more public access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow buildings within 20 metres of the river without good reason.</li> </ul>	The Tyne Riverside Park is an increasingly significant tourist venue and gateway to Newcastle for Hadrian's Way users.

### Weaknesses & threats.

Guide Point Ref no	Weaknesses and threats	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
<b>A1-</b>	Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace new development at Newburnhaugh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow neglect of landscape setting</li> </ul>	
<b>A2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value in residential areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quality of paths and boundary treatments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art-stone/roughcast cladding to brick terraces</li> </ul>	
<b>A3-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	

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<b>A4-</b>	Large grassed amenity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationalisation, habitat creation and selective sites for upgrading.</li> <li>• Management plans and good quality workmanship &amp; repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow motor cycles on green spaces</li> <li>• Lose linkage between spaces</li> </ul>	
<b>A5-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes.</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate.</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths.</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>A6-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider “home zones”.</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking.</li> </ul>		



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**Newcastle Character Assessment**

**Callerton Basin:  
Landscape and Townscape Character Zone B**

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**1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

The Callerton Basin zone is in the north west of Newcastle. It lies between the A69(T) and the A696 Woolsington Bypass, with Stamfordham Road crossing the area in an approximate east-west alignment, dividing the area north from south. The zone extends from the edge of the built up area at North Walbottle, St John's and Newbiggin Hall northward to the Braid and Black Callerton Hills and north-west to Callerton Lane and Ponteland Road. There are 18 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which 17 are rural (including 2 Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS) and 1 is urban (and an Area of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

**2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The Callerton Basin is an area centred around the source of the Ouseburn at Callerton Pond. The upper valley of the Ouseburn gives the area its broad valley or basin form rising to the long prominent ridge of Black Callerton to the north. The individual hills on the ridge line are Braid Hill, Black Callerton Hill and Brough Hill which provide a very attractive rolling landscape which provides physical and visual separation from Ponteland and Darras Hall.

This zone is very strongly agricultural, a mix of arable and pasture, particularly as seen from the outer edge of the Newbiggin Hall and St. John's Estates, and also looking south east from Black Callerton Lane. The area lies over heavy glacial clay soils and coal measures. There are numerous small hillocks and undulations that indicate former mining activity, mostly small in scale. More recently in the 1990s there has been opencast mining (Whorlton Hall and Butterlaw) now completed and the landscape restored with new trees, hedges, wildlife habitats and Public Rights of Way.

As a landscape, the area has a strongly rural "countryside" character with relatively small patchwork fields and considerable charm. Access is by way of narrow roads and lanes. The built-up area is remarkably unobtrusive and has not encroached too far down into the valley of the Ouseburn.

This zone supports a good variety of farmland wildlife, with some key local species – lapwing, great crested newt, song thrush and bats present.

There are few buildings apart from a scatter of farmsteads and cottages, two public houses and the small mining village of Callerton, which has very strong nineteenth century character with its rows of brick terraced houses. The settlement of Black Callerton also has very strong rural character as a relatively unspoilt tight cluster of a stone built farm and associated cottages and outbuildings.

Main accesses to and through the Callerton zone are south east-north west with minor roads and a number of country lanes providing cross links. The airport just beyond the north east tip of the zone is a strong influence with aircraft often taking off and landing over the zone.

Green spaces in the zone are predominantly farmed countryside, but there is former colliery land at Callerton tip, now regenerating with heath and grassland vegetation and managed as a semi-natural public space. There is also the 18-hole golf course just west of Newbiggin Hall Estate

Tree cover is sparse in this zone though there are a number of hedgerow trees, mainly ash, and a scatter of small plantation woodlands and woodland belts. The most recent plantations are on the opencast restoration sites, at the former Callerton Pit and at Westerhope Golf Course. The woodlands and hedgerows tend to be neglected. There are very few hedgerow trees and hedgerow ash trees in particular are often dead or dying, presumably as a result of root damage from ploughing and environmental conditions. Towards the Airport and Black Callerton Hill aircraft noise can be intrusive and the ground is higher and thus more exposed, with very sparse tree and hedge cover.

### **3 Why its there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest definite routes in the zone were the main roads to the neighbouring settlements of Stamfordham and Ponteland and beyond. The roman wall ran just south of the zone. There are numerous small lanes linking the countryside and farms in the zone, generally post enclosure.

There is evidence of mediaeval and earlier settlement and farming in the area. Dewley Hill is small but prominent mound in a field north of Throckley. Originally thought to be a tumulus, there is little evidence available to support the theory and the mound may simply be a natural glacial feature.

Early coal mining is very much in evidence with many small humps and bumps in the fields in this zone, some tree covered. There was a concentration of workings in an area extending north from Throckley, almost to Black Callerton and another smaller cluster south of Woosington. Later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were larger active collieries in the zone notably at Callerton (1827-1948) and North Walbottle. (1800 – 1967) The collieries and individual pits

were linked by a waggonway network taking the coal to the Tyne at Newburn and Lemington.

Callerton Village was created by the colliery owners with Severs Terrace and Morton Crescent named after them. North Walbottle lost most of its colliery housing in the 1970s.

#### **4 Current role**

The zone is still strongly agricultural and relatively undisturbed, considering the urban fringe location. However the presence of the airport and trunk roads mean that it can never be a tranquil area. The zone has emerged from the temporary blight of opencast mining activity but there are other economically viable coal resources present which may yet be worked, and several areas around the urban fringe are proposed for housing within the Strategic Land release sites.

#### **5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

The river Ouseburn (upper reaches and source at Callerton Pond)  
Black Callerton Hills  
Black Callerton Farm settlement  
Callerton Village  
Former waggonways  
Public Rights of Way network  
Country lanes  
Pleasant and fairly traditional farmland

#### **6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Poor maintenance and loss of character in farm cottages and village terraces  
Neglect of hedgerows, trees and woodlands  
Loss of mature trees and failure to replant  
Airport and trunk road noise

#### **7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement**

The River Ouseburn and Callerton Pond  
Tree cover  
Off road routes

#### **8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Future opencast coal mining  
Development and building on green spaces  
Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
Tree and hedge removal  
Increasing numbers of cars and heavy goods vehicles on country lanes  
Increasing numbers of aircraft

## 9 References

“Bygone Blucher and North Walbottle”  
 Ouseburn Catchment Management Plan  
 Crescent Farm Environmental Impact Assessment

### Strengths and opportunities.

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
<b>B1+</b>	Diverse villages and distinctive residential areas of architectural value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> <li>• Protect mining heritage.</li> <li>• Reinforce village core and identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to blur and remove subtle differences and separation between the villages.</li> <li>• Lose/erode rural features and setting.</li> </ul>	Potential for future Conservation Area status at Callerton.
<b>B2+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, promote and protect as key local viewpoints</li> <li>• <b>Views from B6323 north of Throckley</b></li> <li>• <b>Views from B6324 Stamfordham Road</b></li> <li>• <b>Area around Black Callerton to Luddick</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar or block views</li> </ul>	
<b>B3+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly access to countryside.</li> </ul>		

### Weaknesses & threats.

Guide Point Ref no	Weaknesses and threats	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments

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<b>B1-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value in residential areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quality of paths and boundary treatments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art-stone/roughcast cladding to brick terraces</li> </ul>	
<b>B2-</b>	Unsightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location.</li> </ul>		
<b>B3-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes.</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate.</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths.</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>B4-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider “home zones”.</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking.</li> </ul>		

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# Newcastle Character Assessment

## Airport Corridor: Landscape and Townscape Character Zone C

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**1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas.**

The Airport Corridor zone lies north west of the built up area of Newcastle. This zone comprises the long angled stretch of land between Kenton Bank Foot and the Airport. This is a transport-dominated corridor bounded by the A696 Woolsington Bypass and the old Ponteland Road and containing the new Metro line and Newcastle International Airport. There are 6 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which 5 are rural (but no Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS) and 1 is urban (but no Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

**2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The airport corridor is an area where the ground is rising from the Ouseburn valley toward the long north eastward spur of the Callerton ridge that has been developed as Newcastle International Airport. Here the original landform has been changed to accommodate the runway and airport buildings, with much earth modelling during the twentieth century to cover and fill depressions and remove undulations, and to level and fill the remains of early mine working. Close to the Airport, on rising ground, the land at each side of the corridor is bleaker and dominated by the airport buildings and associated airport uses. The Airport is fairly prominent on the high ground, seen over much of Newcastle's urban fringe.

The lowest lying ground in this zone is at Woolsington Bridge (just under 70 metres above sea level) at the northern end of Woolsington village, where the Ouseburn river crosses flowing west to east. The higher ground is at the airport, reaching up to 75metres at the eastern end of the runway and 85 metres on the A696 west of the airport.

The Metro line is routed along a branch railway (North East Railway, Gosforth and Ponteland Branch) first constructed in the early years of the twentieth century.

The airport was first opened in 1935 with a grass runway, a hangar and workshop buildings. It expanded with the developing holiday industry from the 1950s and 60s, with significant development in the 1980s and a new terminal and metro line extension in the 1990s.

There has also been significant earth-working in the 1990s associated with both the Metro and the creation of the A696 Woolsington bypass. Construction of the Metro and bypass has left small fragmented parcels of land still in agricultural use, but their viability is obviously impaired. The transport routes have caused erosion of the area's original countryside character, through losses of trees and hedgerow, and through remodelling works. The Ouseburn was altered where it passes under the new Woolsington bypass, there is a highly visible grade-separated junction just west of the airport, plus a new Metro Station, and a long "Bund" has been created as a noise baffle for the Metro line, south west of Woolsington village. The routes themselves have created noise and visual intrusion in what were reasonably quiet agricultural areas, most of the traffic previously having been concentrated along Ponteland Road. The situation can of course be expected to improve as the new Metro and trunk road landscaping establishes and matures. The detrimental effects of the traffic routes are offset to some extent by the fact that the Woolsington Bypass is within a cutting for much of its length, and by the presence of reasonably attractive countryside on each side.

The highest ground in the zone is approximately 75 metres above sea level. Most of the zone is on stony glacial clay over sandstone.

This zone supports a surprising variety of wildlife in spite of the transport routes, with key local species – barn owl, bats, red squirrel, skylark and song thrush present and a good range of botanical, bird and invertebrate species of interest along the roadsides.

The zone has some houses, principally low rise, low density brick detached houses and semis built between the wars, most with front and rear gardens, located in the western portion of Woolsington Village between Ponteland Road and the metro. There are some former mining cottages at Prestwick Road End.

This pattern of development and agricultural land does change strikingly at the airport where there are larger and more modern buildings and several hotels. There are no tall buildings however, indeed the presence of the airport restricts the building heights in the zone.

Main accesses to and through the corridor are north south (metro and Ponteland Road, A696) with the airport runway aligned east – west. There are no public thoroughfares east-west - though a small road gives access from Woolsington village to Woolsington Hall, the road is private east of the hall. Green Lane is a public bridleway leading south from Woolsington to Newbiggin Hall Estate.

Green space in the zone is principally agricultural land, airport grassland and road verge. There are private sports pitches just north of Callerton Lane.

The view to the south and west was affected in the 1990s by a large

opencast coal operation at Whorlton Hall that has now been completed and the restored landscape is now improving as the replanting and habitat improvements establish and mature. The landscapes seen from the roads between Woolsington village and Kenton Bank Foot are very attractive even now and this is an important gateway to the City of Newcastle, where the views should be preserved and enhanced.

There are extensive woodlands to the north and east of Woolsington and pleasant views to the north-west. There are mature woodlands and individual veteran trees at Woolsington and newer plantations adjacent to the Metro line and at the airport. The Airport and the runway are not particularly well screened and the types and location of any new planting initiatives are constrained by the Civil Aviation Authority's safety requirements. However the airport company is a large landowner and significant progress has been made with new plantations over the last 10 years. These new areas will have increasing significance in future years. There are some attractive roadside trees in hedges along Ponteland Road and generally good tree cover in residential gardens.

There is an increasing amount of light industrial and often airport related development in this zone, mostly very recent, low rise but large scale and prominent in the local scene. Airport car parking also extends over a very significant area of land in the north of the zone. Commerce and shops are virtually absent, but there is a café and a garden centre in Woolsington Village.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

This zone was open farmed countryside until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, crossed by Ponteland Road. There were occasional agricultural cottages and the Wheatsheaf PH in existence by 1897.

Woolsington Village is a 20<sup>th</sup> century dormitory suburb. It has no traditional village-type distinctive features such as a central green with shop, public house and farms.

### **4 Current role**

The whole zone is dominated and characterised by transportation; even the settlement at Woolsington owes its existence to having a good transport connection to Newcastle coupled with opportunistic building development. Agriculture is still reducing as a land use and activity though it provides the context and surroundings for this zone. The zone does however have an ever increasingly important role to play as an entry and exit gateway for travellers to and from Newcastle. Part of the southern area has been allocated for housing within the Strategic Land Release programme, and the character will change as these areas are developed.



**5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

Pleasant geographical setting of hill ridge and the Ouseburn valley  
 The river Ouseburn - upper reach  
 Pleasant open green belt setting  
 Woodlands, hedges and plantations

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Weak village character and sense of place in Woolsington  
 Strident large scale buildings and structures at the airport  
 Loss of agricultural character  
 Loss of mature trees/woodland and failure to replant  
 Civil Aviation Authority Risk Management

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

The Ouseburn River  
 Main streets of Woolsington  
 Tree cover  
 Off road routes  
 Habitat creation  
 Wildlife friendly management of airport land

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Paving over front gardens for parking  
 Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
 Tree loss and removal  
 Building on green space and countryside  
 Increasing numbers of car, car parking requirements and higher car ownership  
 Pollution from increasing levels of aircraft operation and associated airport activities

**9 References**

Newcastle International Airport Master plan  
 Ouseburn Catchment Management Plan

**Strengths and opportunities.**

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
C1+	Diverse villages and distinctive residential areas of architectural value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce village core and identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lose/erode rural features and setting.</li> </ul>	

<b>C2+</b>	Tree cover, street and garden trees, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets, and street corners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement.</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>C3+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly access to countryside.</li> </ul>		

**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>C1-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location.</li> </ul>		
<b>C2-</b>	Large grassed amenity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationalisation, habitat creation and selective sites for upgrading.</li> <li>• Management plans and good quality workmanship &amp; repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow motor cycles on green spaces</li> <li>• Lose linkage between spaces</li> </ul>	
<b>C3-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes.</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate.</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths.</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>C4-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider "home zones"</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking.</li> </ul>		

Newcastle City Council  
**Newcastle Character Assessment**

**Dinnington and the Northern Villages:  
Landscape and Townscape Character Zone D**

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**1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

This zone is in the northern most part of Newcastle, jutting into the Northumberland coastal plain and thus having more in common with the more rural Northumberland countryside and coalfield landscape than the rest of Newcastle's urban fringe. The zone is the most distant from the city and extends from the airport runway and Brunswick Village/Hazlerigg out to the city boundary. It is bounded by the A1 trunk road to the east and adjoins Northumberland to the northern and western boundaries. There are 19 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which 15 are rural (including 3 Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS) and 4 are urban (including 1 Area of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

**2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The zone is varied in landscape terms, strongly agricultural and feels very distant from Newcastle. The built-up areas of the city are not prominent and often not visible at all. The zone is centred on Dinnington village. Soils are mainly heavy stony clay over coal measures. The topography is gently undulating with the ground rising toward the ridge of Berwick Hill just beyond the city boundary to the north west, to Toft Hill in the south east close to the airport runway, and reaching a high point of 83 metres above sea level in the north east close to Hoy's Wood. In the north of the zone the landscape had been rather bleak and open in places, mainly due to opencast activity in earlier years, but the restoration of more recent and current opencast workings in the area are introducing a much richer landscape with greatly increased tree cover, wildlife habitats and enhanced recreational routes.

The Prestwick Carr area west of Dinnington is a large flat marshy area just under 300 hectares in size, lying over about 0.3 metres of lake-floor gravel and then some 2-3 metres of peat. This is an unusual and very localised fenland landscape, in marked contrast to any other part of the Newcastle landscape. The carr developed as a basin mire on what was once a lake. The carr is now used as improved or unimproved damp pasture, the water being removed by a series of long straight engineered drains into the River Pont catchment. The lowest ground in this zone is at Prestwick Carr at 53metres. East of Dinnington there is a watershed, and the land beyond this drains to the Seaton Burn catchment, with a lake at Big Waters formed as a result of mining subsidence.

Mining has had a great influence on the area and there are still visible colliery remains south of Brenkley and around Dinnington. Dinnington village itself, although originally a rural village, has some of the character of a mining community, and since the closure of its colliery the surrounding area has seen a number of opencast mining operations and a landfill operation at Brenkley.

There is a small settlement at Brenkley, comprising stables and farm buildings. The small village of Prestwick is to the west, just outside the City boundary. The originally mining associated Brunswick Village lies on the southeast boundary of the zone, blending almost seamlessly into the adjoining mining communities of Hazlerigg and Wide Open. Outside the villages there are few buildings in the zone. Farmsteads are widely scattered and there are very few individual houses and cottages. Farming is a mix of pasture and arable with horses stabled at Brenkley.

The farmland around Dinnington is generally pleasant with scattered woodlands and some good hedgerows. The rural edges to Dinnington are attractive and relate well to the local topography, despite the "ribbon" development along the lane toward Prestwick.

The zone has some very good wildlife habitats. It is home to a number of the City's key species, protected species like otter, water vole, great crested newt, bats and many species of breeding bird are present and the area supports tree sparrow (a local BAP target species) many waders and waterfowl and winter farmland visitors like redwing and fieldfare. Big Waters Local Nature Reserve is an important habitat as well as being an attractive and distinctive local wetland and lake landscape. Prestwick Carr contains areas designated as a nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest and a regionally important Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

Main accesses to and through the zone are the main north-south A1 trunk road and a loose grid of minor roads linking north-south and east-west. Prestwick Carr has several narrow country lanes and there is an improving network of Public Rights Of Way. There are no railway lines in the zone though there were some colliery waggonway spurs when the mines were active. There is little by way of industry now but the main A1 has a strong and intrusive influence on the eastern edge of this zone, together with the attendant electricity pylons. South of Big Waters, the industrial estate at Brunswick Village is a prominent and poorly screened eyesore, perched on high ground immediately west of the village.

Green spaces in the zone are predominantly farmed countryside. Public open spaces include the Big Waters Local Nature Reserve, a popular area widely used as a country park for informal walking and recreation. There are recreation grounds and a scatter of amenity spaces at Dinnington and Brunswick village which also offer limited recreational opportunities. Parts of Prestwick Carr straddling the western city boundary are used as a military training area and are off limits to the public when the firing range is in use.

The zone contains a number of plantation woodlands, most being mixed conifers and deciduous, with several are of fairly recent origin. The largest wooded area is at Prestwick Carr. The woodlands at Milkhope form a distinctive backdrop adjoining the Blagdon Estate just outside the northern City boundary. Mature trees and tree groups are relatively rare.

Dinnington has shops, village hall, a former library, public houses and a village green which give this settlement a stronger village identity than the other settlements in the zone.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest definite route in the zone was the route of the Great North Road, now the main A1. The zone was certainly used by early farming peoples and there thought to have been a number of rectilinear enclosures.

Prestwick Carr was referred to in the twelfth century as *Merdesfen* later altered to Mason's Fen with status as common land shared between the adjacent townships. Certainly the Norse *Kjerr*, or the modern word *carr*, means a marshy woodland and has been incorporated in the place name. The marshy area extended from Dinnington almost to Ponteland. The carr's main claim to historic fame was the discovery in 1890 of a hoard of bronze vessels identified as the contents of a Roman camp kitchen, near Prestwick Whins Farm. Open water and other smaller pools were still permanent features, particularly during the winter months when the River Pont often overflowed into the area to form a large lake until well into the nineteenth century. First attempts to drain the area were made in the late 1700s. Even at this time, the carr was recognised as a local beauty spot for fishing, wildfowling, walking and nature study and acknowledged as one of the most interesting wildlife sites in the north east. The drainage scheme was completed in 1860 and involved the realignment of the River Pont.

Dinnington was in existence as a mediaeval agricultural village.

### **4 Current role**

The Dinnington/Brenkley zone is Green Belt land and is probably more vulnerable to change in the rural economy, mining and agricultural policy than straightforward development pressure for new housing and other buildings, although there is some current infill development around Dinnington itself as part of the Strategic Land Release programme. This is not to say however that there is no demand for development and change in the area. The zone still has workable coal reserves, although this is likely to come to the limit of viability with the completion of the current opencast scheme north of Brenkley Village. The airport is another possible area for expansion and the zone may need to accommodate an extension of the runway at some future date, though this would certainly be a longer term issue.

**5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

Tributary streams and drains feeding the River Pont and the Seaton Burn  
Prestwick Carr and its SSSI and SNCI  
Local wildlife  
Big Waters Local Nature Reserve  
Local farmsteads  
Local country roads, bridleways and footpaths  
Dinnington and the village green  
Toft Hill viewpoint

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Airport activity and land use controls  
Current opencast mining  
Loss of traditional agricultural activity and employment  
Neglect in public realm including open spaces  
Loss of mature trees and hedgerows and failure to replant  
Poor opencast restoration  
Flooding  
A1 corridor and pylons

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage at Prestwick Carr  
Big Waters Local Nature Reserve  
Recreational routes network and off-road routes  
Woodland plantations  
Sustainable water management and flood control  
Good quality opencast restoration

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Housing improvement that erodes intrinsic character  
Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
Changes in agricultural management and practice  
Tree and hedge removal  
Building on green spaces  
Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership  
Opencast mining

**9 References**

- Prestwick Carr Management Plan
- Report to the drainage ratepayers on the drainage of Prestwick Carr September 1978
- *Prestwick Carr: Its Draining and Enclosure*. B Harbottle in *Archaeologia Aeliana* Fifth Series Volume XXIII

- Newcastle Airport EIA
- Gardener’s Houses and Brenkley Open Cast Coal Environmental Impact Assessments
- “*Survey of the Prehistoric Settlement at Gardeners’ Houses Farm, Dinnington*” Biggins, Biggins, Coxon and Watson. Archaeological Journal 13 1997
- Northumberland County History (Vol XII) MH Dodds
- “An Historical and Descriptive Account of Prestwick Carr and its Environs” D Maddison
- “*Unenclosed settlements in Northumberland*” in “Settlement in Northern Britain” T Gates
- “*The Changing Past*” Air Survey in the Tyne-Tees Region Harding
- “*The Settlement at Doubtstead and Roman-British Settlement on the Coastal Plain between Tyne and Forth*. Archaeologia Aeliana. G Jobey
- “Notes on Air Reconnaissance in Northumberland and Durham” Archaeologia Aeliana (2Articles) N McCord and G Jobey
- “The Prehistory of Tyne and Wear: An Inventory of Prehistoric Discoveries in the Metropolitan County of Tyne and Wear” R Miket. Northumberland Archaeological Group
- Geology of North East England: DA Robson and GAL Johnson
- “Beakers from Northumberland” J Tait
- Maps by Armstrong (1769), Fryer (1820), Greenwood (1828). Northumberland County Record Office

**Strengths and opportunities.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Strengths and opportunities</b>	<b>Do’s</b>	<b>Don’ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>D1+</b>	Diverse villages and rural setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> <li>• Protect mining heritage.</li> <li>• Reinforce village cores, rural setting and identity.</li> <li>• Have name signs and interpretation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to blur and remove subtle differences and separation between the villages.</li> <li>• Lose/erode rural features and setting.</li> </ul>	

<b>D2+</b>	Woodland plantations and linear woodland/shelter belts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance and protect</li> <li>• Management and interpretation.</li> <li>• Manage woodlands for wildlife</li> </ul>		
<b>D3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, promote and protect as key local viewpoints:</li> <li>• <b>Toft Hill</b></li> <li>• <b>North Brenkley area</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar or block views</li> </ul>	
<b>D4+</b>	Tree cover, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant native trees in hedges, field corners and roadsides.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement.</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>D5+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links</li> </ul>		

**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>D1-</b>	Further opencast working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include effective restoration to create an enhanced final landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permit ad-hoc small scale schemes</li> </ul>	



Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## Woolsington Park: Landscape and Townscape Character Zone E

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### 1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas

This zone lies between Ponteland Road (the former A696), the Airport, Brunton Road and Brunton Lane. Newcastle International Airport occupies a ridge line location lying along the northern boundary of this distinctive and very high quality landscape character zone. There are 6 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which 5 are rural (including 2 Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS) and 1 is urban (and an Area of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.

The topography is defined by the shallow valley created by the Ouseburn, crossing from west to east. The zone lies over heavy clay soils and glacial boulder clay. The zone has a reasonably level topography rising gradually to the north with the highest ground in the zone at just over 70 metres above sea level and the lowest at 56 metres on the Ouseburn at Brunton Bridge.

The village of Woolsington is located on the south bank of the Ouseburn: only the eastern portion of this commuter village is within the zone as the boundary follows the main Ponteland Road and what was originally the historic park boundary. This part of Woolsington village was built on the south western woodland edge of the parkland, as evidenced by the remaining mature trees, now in large suburban gardens, and the road names such as Middle Drive and South Drive.

The zone derives its quality and value from having Woolsington Park at its core with substantial tracts of mature mixed woodland and traditional, intact, farmland surprisingly free of urban influences. The parkland was laid out in the style of Capability Brown, then very fashionable, with a grand carriage drive, rides, encircling woodlands, an open prospect from the hall, across a ha-ha wall, of pasture, copses, individual trees and a lake feature. Apart from Woolsington village the parkland features are still intact if a little neglected and the landscape is registered by English Heritage as a Historic Park and Garden. The historic landscape does gain a degree of stability from the established executive-style homes built at a low density within the woodland belt along the western edge of the park.

The Woolsington zone offers a diversity of landscape interest within a relatively small and clearly defined area. The tree cover is a key aspect with some fine specimen and veteran trees including a majestic cedar, and turkey and holm oaks, as well as numerous mature beech trees. There is comprehensive coverage with Tree Preservation Orders. The perimeter woodlands of Woolsington Park and the adjoining land are prominent over a very wide area and feature strongly in views north and west from the edge of the city, from Gosforth to St. John's. They are also seen by air and Metro travellers and from the local roads. As a result of this prominence the woodlands appear to be more extensive than they actually are. From many viewpoints Woolsington Park appears to be a huge woodland. However a look at the ordnance map will confirm that the woods are only relatively narrow stands of mature trees around open farmland. It would only take the loss of a relatively small number of trees to damage the integrity of these enclosing woodlands. The park land also contains the relatively modest listed buildings of Woolsington Hall and its gardens and some associated farm cottages north of the hall and two small houses south of the former lake. The lake is now mostly marsh with streams since the collapse of the eastern dam, and is fed by the Ouseburn which runs eastwards near the southern boundary of Woolsington Park.

To the north-east of Woolsington Park there are wetlands with tree belts, a few smaller woodlands and a number of scattered mature trees (Foxcover Wood and Beeftub Plantation in particular). There is a narrow belt of paddocks and small fields which provide something of a buffer between Woolsington Park and the Airport.

To the south of Woolsington Park and village, there are more large woodland plantations and the stream valley of the Ouseburn tributary, Harey Dene. This part of the zone also includes the Northumbria University and Newcastle Falcons' sports fields at Bullocksteads which provide an effective "buffer" use between the agricultural land and the historic parkland to the north, and the suburban edge of Newcastle at Kingston Park and Kenton Bank Foot to the south.

The restricted public access may have contributed to the area's landscape character and wildlife, and this is a major consideration for the future if more access is to be permitted. There is certainly pressure for more access to the countryside close to the urban area and there is also demand for recreational and sporting facilities, as evidenced by the recent expansion of the Falcons/Bullocksteads. The Woolsington area could also be threatened by changes to the current farming practices in the area which have allowed a landscape of such interest and diversity to survive here thus far. The landscape and habitats of this zone must be regarded as fragile and will need to be very carefully protected from activities and changes which would damage the existing fabric and the very special landscape of Woolsington Park in particular. Planning decisions and enforcement have a key role to play. Woolsington Hall and Park have already been acknowledged as being of conservation importance. The parkland is certainly of exceptional importance as the

setting for the listed buildings but also and perhaps more importantly as a registered historic landscape in its own right. A current planning permission for redevelopment as a boutique hotel and spa, with associated golf course and some enabling housing at the south east, will clearly change the site, but if well implemented should ensure the longer term survival of the parkland while having only limited adverse impact and some significant benefits, including significant additional woodland reducing the visual impact of earlier development on the main parkland area north of the Ouseburn, and offering some public access as a further benefit.

This zone is very rich in wildlife, with key local species and protected species present including water vole, otter, skylark, bats, song thrush and barn owl and a good range of other botanical, bird, mammal and invertebrate species of interest. Because of its relative seclusion Woolsington Park is a good refuge area for wildlife and its value is recognised through designation of the woodlands and former lake as Sites of Local Conservation Interest.

Outside the main Park area, the other buildings in this zone are the houses of Woolsington Village, some of architectural merit, at the south-western boundaries of the Park, farms at Sunnyside, and Brunton Mill, former farm buildings at Bullocksteads and Brunton Bridge, and the sports facilities at Bullocksteads/Falcons including the Falcon's Stadium.

Main accesses to and through the zone are south-east to north-west on the western boundary only. A farm access track provides a private access east-west but otherwise there is no public access into the heart of this zone.

Green spaces in the zone are private consisting of farmland, parkland and gardens, plus the sports fields to the south at Bullocksteads, where there is some limited public access.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest definite route was the road to Jedburgh and the borders, now the A696. The original mediaeval village of "Wulsingtona" was thought to have been close to the location of Woolsington Hall. The Hall is listed as are the adjoining stables, coach house, orangery, gate piers and lamps. There are also other historic buildings and features within the park: an ice house, bath house, bridges, and the remains of ridge and furrow ploughing in the fields.

Woolsington Park was laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is thought to have started with the building of a large house and garden, shown on a map dating from 1727. In 1748 the property was purchased by the Bell family and substantially improved. The Ouseburn was modified to create the lake to supply the hall's kitchen with carp and freshwater mussels as well as being a visual amenity.

#### 4 Current role

Modern Woolsington is a popular residential village, originally developed in the 1920's which is suburban in character, offering a range of individually-designed and predominantly detached "executive" homes: low rise, low density set in generous landscaped gardens. The remainder of the zone is attractive farmland and parkland of strong character and high conservation value as a landscape, historic parkland and for wildlife. The zone is a very good buffer between the outer suburbs of Newcastle and the larger scale, open landscape of the airport and its associated land uses beyond. However areas to the southern and eastern boundaries are allocated for development as part of the Strategic Land Release programme with housing proposed adjacent to Kingston Park and the western part of area 32 Sunnyside, while the eastern section of area 30 is proposed for commercial development relating to the airport. Care will be needed to ensure this provides enhanced boundaries to the remaining green belt along with enhanced public recreational access and wildlife habitat.

#### 5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.

The upper reaches of the river Ouseburn and its valley profile, including Woolsington Lake area  
 Harey Dene  
 Woolsington Park (Registered Historic Park and Gardens)  
 Listed buildings and structures at Woolsington Hall  
 Individual executive homes of architectural interest and merit  
 Attractive and well maintained large gardens  
 Mature woodlands, tree groups, and individual trees  
 Hedges and hedgerow trees  
 Quality landscape setting for the airport and approach to Newcastle  
 Variety of wildlife and habitats  
 Sports facilities

#### 6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.

New stands and other developments at the Newcastle Falcon's ground, Brunton Road, Kingston Park.  
 Loss of traditional farmed landscape and hedges  
 Loss of part of Woolsington Park to suburban development in the inter-war and post war years  
 Poor water quality in the Ouseburn  
 Lack of Conservation Area or equivalent status for Woolsington Park  
 Woolsington is a suburb rather than a village in character  
 Loss of mature trees and in places failure to replant  
 Gradual decline of mature woodlands because of failure to manage them properly  
 Recent neglect of Woolsington Hall and Park, including arson damage to some key buildings since occupancy ceased  
 Vandalism, trespass and poaching at Woolsington Hall and Park

Visual impact of transport and construction at and around the airport

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage at Woolsington Hall and Park  
 The River Ouseburn and Woolsington Lake  
 Recreational potential  
 Main roads, Metro corridor, streets and thoroughfares  
 Tree and woodland cover  
 Off road routes

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Development pressure linked to airport activities  
 Sports development at Bullocksteads  
 Housing improvement that erodes intrinsic character  
 Paving over gardens for parking  
 Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
 Demolition/ repairs of unsafe historic buildings and features  
 Tree removal  
 Building on Green Belt land  
 Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership  
 Continuing neglect of historic landscape  
 Poaching and other disturbance of local wildlife

**9 References**

- Ouseburn Management Plan and PURE Project papers
- Woolsington web pages
- Woolsington Hall EIA
- Newcastle International Airport EIA

**Strengths and opportunities.**

Ref	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
E1+	18 <sup>th</sup> Century Woolsington Hall and Estate Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> <li>• Consider Conservation Area status</li> <li>• Management Plan</li> <li>• Enforce proper care and respect through use of planning powers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose features through neglect</li> <li>• Allow loss of healthy veteran trees and woodland</li> </ul>	Refer to English Heritage guidance on registered historic parks and gardens

<b>E2+</b>	Residential Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance character of large villa style homes in generous, mature landscaped gardens.</li> </ul>		
<b>E3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, promote and protect as key external viewpoints:</li> <li>• <b>Kenton Bar and A167 Ponteland Road</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	
<b>E4+</b>	Main street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active street frontages</li> <li>• Consider “home zones”.</li> <li>• More safe crossings between spaces and residential areas.</li> <li>• Retain grass verges</li> </ul>		
<b>E5+</b>	Tree cover, and garden trees, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets, and street corners.</li> <li>• Plant woodland belts in parks and spaces.</li> <li>• Manage dene woodlands for wildlife.</li> <li>• Engage the local community..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies</li> </ul>
<b>E6+</b>	Ouseburn and Woosington Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the stream and Lake are retained and enhanced as landscape and wildlife features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-engineer the waterways if implementing flood protection measures</li> </ul>	
<b>E7+</b>	Parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain connection with local countryside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow high rear fences abutting spaces or countryside.</li> </ul>	

**Weaknesses & threats.**

Newcastle Character Assessment

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>E1-</b>	Dilution of high residential building quality by inappropriate and ad-hoc redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise character guidance and Village Envelope status</li> </ul>		
<b>E2-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>		
<b>E3-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes.</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate.</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths.</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	

Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## North Gosforth & Newcastle Great Park: Landscape and Townscape Character Zone F

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### 1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas

The zone is north of the centre of Newcastle, extending from the edge of Newcastle's built up area at North Gosforth, Kingston Park and Red House Farm to the village of Hazlerigg. The zone reaches almost to the boundary of the airport in the north-west corner. Coach Lane and the former Havannah Colliery, now a Local Nature Reserve, form the northern boundary. The minor road from Kingston Park to Dinnington is the western boundary, and the A1 and Great North Road define the eastern edge. There are 12 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which 6 are presently rural (including 2 Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS) and 5 are urban (but no Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.

This zone is an area with a reasonably level, gently undulating topography. The lower ground is in the south along the middle reaches of the Ouseburn with a low point of about 50 metres above sea level where the Ouseburn is bridged by the Great North Road in Gosforth. North of the Ouseburn, the land rises gently and the highest ground in the zone is at around 80 metres, and is the former colliery spoil heap, now woodland, at Three Hills, Havannah Nature Reserve. Most of the zone is heavy and quite stony glacial clay over sandstone. The River Ouseburn has a shallow valley from west to east.

This zone supports a good variety of wildlife, with key local species - otter, brown hare, water vole, skylark, song thrush and many other farmland birds present and a good range of botanical, bird and invertebrate species of interest.

There was considerable mining activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries at Havannah and Burn Pit on the Ouseburn, with some spoil heaps still present today (although no longer obvious). A former waggonway crossed the zone running from Fawdon north to Hawthorn Farm and on to Hazlerigg. The disused route is now used as a public path.

The zone was until recently entirely within the Newcastle Green Belt and intensively farmed, mainly in arable production. Buildings were few and



generally farms and farm cottages on Brunton Lane and a few small-holdings. Following a local planning inquiry process, large tracts were taken out of the Green Belt in 1998 to allow the development of an urban extension known as the Newcastle Great Park. Building work is presently around half completed and there are already considerable areas of new housing east and west of the A1, and north of Kingston Park. These are low rise, medium density brick houses mainly detached with some terraces, mews, blocks and semi-detached private homes, most with front and rear gardens. The developers have attempted to create modern "village" style estates with "Home Zones" instead of typical estate roads and cul de sac access roads, although more recent developments have been more conventional in approach.

The main business development is for the Sage Group, north of Brunton Lane, but much of the projected commercial areas have not proved viable and the Great Park is now being developed almost exclusively as housing. The Great Park, as the name suggests, is not intended to be wall-to-wall built development and there are large expanses of land still reserved as Green Belt and intended to form a strategic open space setting for the new development in the form of a country park style landscape for recreation, nature conservation and flood attenuation. The entire area is changing fast and its character will be further transformed over the remaining 15 years or so.

At the moment much of the western part of the zone is still largely an open, arable landscape with few woodlands and poor hedgerow cover, although in time these areas will also be developed as housing with associated strategic open space landscaping. The landscape interest is relatively limited, but the area has distinctive lines of trees and some remnant attractive farm settlements, stone built and traditional, usually sheltered by mature trees. Where hedges have been retained, they are regularly cut and rarely over a metre in height, and most are no longer stockproof. The Ouseburn crosses this zone but is relatively inconspicuous and from a distance it is difficult to identify its course. There are very few stream-side trees or shrubs. Much more noticeable however is the line of electricity pylons which cross the landscape intrusively from the west, near Brunton Bridge, to the north east at Hazlerigg, sitting above the main swathe of Strategic Open Space housing the SUDS features and recreational routes.

The better landscape features are toward the north where there is reclaimed colliery land at Havannah. The old pit-heaps were landscaped and planted some 25 years ago to create Three Hills picnic site and woodland. Further west the colliery and its sidings were reclaimed to provide a Local Nature Reserve, retaining and managing the natural regeneration, the valuable wet heath vegetation and unimproved pasture. The colliery buildings are still in existence and have been in industrial use for many years. Some of the buildings are quite dilapidated, and the plant is an incongruity and something of an eyesore in the improving local landscape west of Hazlerigg.

The Airport has an influence on the area although it is not particularly visible. The eastern end of the runway is close to the Brunton Lane/Coach Lane junction and the sight and sound of aircraft taking off and landing is an intrusive characteristic of the zone. The airport imposes restrictions on development which affects building heights and prohibits the creation of any new open water which would attract waterfowl and other birdlife that could pose an extra risk to aircraft. Airport restrictions have restricted the opportunities for habitat creation and diversity within the Great Park Development.

Main accesses to and through the zone are around the perimeter with the A1 trunk road slicing through diagonally south-west to north-east, and with a major link road leading from this into the western parts of the Great Park. There is a remnant east-west country lane (Brunton Lane) and a reasonable network of Public Rights of Way that are being made more extensive through the Great Park development.

The construction of the Newcastle Western Bypass in 1989-90 has had a huge impact on the area. The road itself is partly in cutting (middle section) and partly at ground level or elevated. The new interchange at North Brunton is particularly prominent. The road is highly visible in the landscape although as the landscaping reaches maturity, it will be less intrusive. The road is also very noisy and the cars and other vehicles crossing the landscape at speed are still visually prominent. The road had the initial effect of opening up a previously inaccessible area of the countryside to public view but this has led quickly on to opening up the area for development. Seen from the trunk road the zone is now screened by bunds with development proceeding apace beyond. There are a series of three conical pointed mounds just south of the Brunton interchange that act as a landmark gateway feature to the Great Park.

The zone has relatively few mature trees and woodlands, but they are all now protected by an extensive Tree Preservation Order. The larger individual trees are often associated with the farm settlements. There are still a few hedgerow trees but most are in very poor condition having suffered root damage by ploughing. There is a prominent tree line known as the Letch plantation and two others on the zone perimeter at Coach Lane and Lane Plantation. These tree belts are characteristic local features. There are also some small plantation woodlands and the larger and more recent plantations at Havannah, and within the new development's open space areas. The Great Park open spaces will eventually contribute some 60 hectares of new plantation woodland of locally native trees. There is also significant tree planting within the City of Newcastle Golf Club which occupies the south-east corner of the zone.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest definite route was the Great North Road, in use from Roman times and probably before. The area was always agricultural and there were two known Iron Age settlements just south of Hazlerigg and

possibly others nearby. East and West Brunton (originally "Burn Ton") were settlements by the Ouseburn and although existing side by side the two Bruntons were included in different baronies with one belonging to Bolam, and the other to Styford. Little is known of the manorial role until they both came into the possession of the *Haselrigg* family, forming part of the parish of Gosforth.

Coal mines operated at Burn Pit on the Ouseburn, at Hazlerigg (1892 – 1964) and the drift mine at Havannah Colliery (1950-1977) all with linking colliery railways or waggonways, to take the coal to the riverside for shipping, or for processing at other sites.

#### **4 Current role**

The development of Newcastle Great Park is now well on, with around half the development now completed, including some commercial office development and a school, but mainly consisting of housing and strategic open space areas. Originally envisaged as being complete by 2008, construction work is currently expected to be a dominant and continuing activity for at least the next decade or longer. Almost all of the zone will change, but some parts like the nature reserve and the Ouseburn river valley will only see the indirect impacts of user pressure, different management, and investment to mitigate the adverse impacts of the urban development. The whole zone will need to adapt to its very different role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, accommodating what it is hoped will be a healthy and vibrant community.

The remaining landscape features are vulnerable. However the new urban extension still has the potential to bring major landscape and wildlife improvements for this zone softening the edges of the City seen from the north, reintroducing a strong landscape structure and creating a large new country-park style open space with recreational opportunities that will be accessible to everyone.

#### **5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

The River Ouseburn (middle reaches and valley)  
The Letch watercourse  
Retained stretches of Green Belt countryside and edge of city setting  
Locally designated wildlife habitats  
Farm settlements of local historic and architectural character  
Proposed new Ouseburn Valley country park.  
Havannah and Three Hills Local Nature Reserve  
Public Rights of Way  
Former waggonway network  
Trees, hedges and woodlands  
New landscaping and woodland plantations  
Wetlands and reedbeds

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Loss of “countryside” character  
 Construction operations on a major scale  
 A1 and its interchanges and slip roads  
 Pylon line and additional new service infrastructure  
 “Sameness” of houses over large areas  
 Piecemeal and incremental programme of development

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

The Rivers Ouseburn and Letch  
 Great Park strategic and local open spaces  
 Tree and woodland cover  
 Planning Section 106 Agreement  
 Off-road routes and footpaths  
 Home Zones

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Highway, trunk road and parking requirements  
 Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership  
 Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
 Tree removal  
 Neglect and poor environmental maintenance  
 Building on green spaces

**9 References**

- Newcastle Great Park EIA
- Unitary Development Plan

**Strengths and opportunities.**

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
F1+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The River Ouseburn (middle reaches and valley) and The Letch watercourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> <li>• Protect mining heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose/erode rural features and setting.</li> </ul>	Refer to Newcastle Great Park EIA, Design Codes and Management plans.

<b>F2+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retained stretches of Green Belt countryside and edge of city setting</li> <li>Proposed new Ouseburn Valley country park.</li> <li>Havannah and Three Hills Local Nature Reserve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance and protect retained landscape features and wildlife habitats</li> <li>Management and interpretation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow high rear fences abutting spaces.</li> <li>Create more low-grade amenity space.</li> <li>Allow more vehicle access</li> </ul>	
<b>F3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, promote and protect as key local viewpoints</li> <li><b>Brunton Lane flyover</b></li> <li><b>Southern edge of Havannah/ Three Hills</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mar or block views</li> </ul>	
<b>F4+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main roads, future new streets and thoroughfares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active street frontages</li> <li>Adhere to “home zone” principles.</li> <li>Retain grass verges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove tree and hedge cover adjacent to main roads</li> </ul>	
<b>F5+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trees, hedges and woodlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant trees in new streets, and street corners</li> <li>Plant woodland belts in parks and spaces</li> <li>Manage woodlands for wildlife.</li> <li>Introduce native black poplar along the Ouseburn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove trees without replacement.</li> <li>Allow loss of linear woodlands and hedges</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>F6+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Rights of Way</li> <li>Former waggonway network</li> <li>Off-road routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly access to wider countryside.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suburbanise countryside routes</li> </ul>	

<b>F7+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm settlements of local historic interest and architectural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve</li> </ul>		
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**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>F1-</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of "countryside" character</li> <li>• "Prairie" style farmland</li> <li>• Construction operations on a major scale</li> <li>• A1 and its interchanges and slip roads</li> <li>• Three "cones" landscape feature</li> <li>• Piecemeal and incremental programme of development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace new development at Newcastle Great Park, but ensure quality design and proper implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow neglect of landscape setting</li> <li>• Poor maintenance, particularly during establishment periods for new planting</li> </ul>	Make use of enforcement powers if necessary
<b>F2-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrict parking and enforce restrictions</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking</li> </ul>		
<b>F3-</b>	Pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement woodland planting and attractive landscaping to draw the eye away from the pylons</li> </ul>		

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# Newcastle Character Assessment

## High Gosforth Park: Landscape Character Zone G

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### 1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas

This zone is on the north eastern edge of Newcastle between the outer residential suburbs of Melton and Whitebridge Parks and the busy main roads linking Newcastle with the Northumberland coastal area: the A1, A1056 and the A189. The zone consists of High Gosforth Park plus the area to the south extending in a narrowing finger of countryside to the Metro line close to Longbenton Station. There are 3 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which all are rural (including 2 Areas of Local Landscape Significance - ALLS).

### 2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.

The zone has a reasonably level topography and is relatively low-lying, although it occupies the watershed between the Ouseburn and Seaton Burn river catchments. The highest ground in the zone is at just over 68 metres above sea level close to the Sandy Lane B1318 roundabout and the lowest is close to the Ouseburn in the southern tip of the zone at 47 metres. The land lies over coal measures overlain by stony glacial clay. Part of the middle-reaches of the River Ouseburn flow along the south-west boundary of the zone, in a shallow valley with tributary streams from the Sacred Heart Pond and from Gosforth Lake. This zone supports an excellent range of wildlife on a diverse range of habitats, much of the area being designated for its local or regional nature conservation importance and Gosforth Lake is of national significance as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Key local species including otter, red squirrel, water vole, great crested newt, skylark, song thrush and a wide variety of wildfowl are present and a good range of botanical, bird and invertebrate species of interest.

The zone has relatively few buildings. There is very little housing other than the former farms and cottages at North Brunton and at Heathery Lane, and a small number of lodge cottages in High Gosforth Park, all with strongly rural character and traditional stone construction. The Victorian buildings of Brandling House and the associated stables and cottages at the centre of High Gosforth Park are now part of the Newcastle Racecourse enclave and are used for horse racing related accommodation and offices, and for the Brandling Public House. The racecourse buildings, and the floodlights and main stand in particular, dominate the centre of High Gosforth Park: they are highly visible and are out of scale and character with their historic parkland setting and the former country house, but given their function this is to be expected.

Brandling House (or Gosforth House) and the other original buildings are now listed, but their setting has little formal protection for heritage conservation other than Tree Preservation Orders and wildlife designations. The other main buildings of note are the large, modern and monolithic Gosforth Park Hotel, along with the Trunk Road services area at North Brunton, two Golf Club buildings and the Peter Barratt's garden centre.

The area was originally part of the Gosforth Park Estate of the Brandling family, centred around the 18<sup>th</sup> century Gosforth House (itself now part of the racecourse buildings), and was laid out broadly in line with the informal English Landscape style popularised by Capability Brown, with a stone boundary wall and notable gateway features and lodges. The character of the wider historic parkland has been significantly eroded, particularly through the post-war years with opportunistic and speculative development, usually linked to sports and leisure activities. This process started much earlier with the relocation of the racecourse from the Town Moor in 1881. There is a garden centre immediately east of Gosforth Park. There is also the large and prestigious Gosforth Park Hotel. Some land uses are less insensitive than others in terms of their physical and visual impact on the historic parkland but to date, the park has not been placed on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

There are two golf courses within the main High Gosforth Park area, and a nature reserve leased and managed by the Natural History Society of Northumberland. These latter three users, together with the hotel, provide varying degrees of conservation and protection through their management regimes because of the nature of their operations and interests. One of the most damaging recent developments for the historic park was the realignment of Sandy Lane and the associated highway and junction work which cut off the whole north-west corner of the park, including the Sacred Heart Church. The parkland was originally much larger covering virtually all of this character zone but the land to the south was sold to local farmers, with a third golf course developed in the extreme south of the zone.

Main accesses to and through the zone are on the perimeter with fast, busy dual carriageway roads to both eastern and western boundaries and a main link road to the northern boundary. There are no rail links in the zone, although there are remnants of a tramway formerly serving the racecourse.

The green space in the zone primarily consists of the three golf courses (Gosforth, Northumberland and Parklands golf clubs), farmland (mainly arable, with a little pasture), the Gosforth Nature Reserve (including Gosforth Lake), the Newcastle Racecourse and significant areas of mature plantation woodland. Whilst the public enjoy a generous degree of permissive access to the open spaces, there are relatively few Public Rights of Way and none within High Gosforth Park.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**



The earliest definite route was the line of the former Great North Road from London to Newcastle and then north to the borders and Scotland, which is likely to be the course of a Roman Road. The area was a mix of heath and farmland for many years and is thought to have been a location for a late prehistoric or Romano-British settlement similar to those nearby at Hazlerigg, Burradon and Dudley. Remnant heath can still be found in parts of High Gosforth Park and Heathery Lane runs along the boundary of Gosforth Golf Course. In 1166 a small village was recorded at "Goseford" (Goose Ford, on the Ouseburn). A mediaeval village also existed at North Gosforth, and Gosforth became an important parish. There are extensive areas of "rigg and furrow" still very evident in Gosforth Park.

The North Gosforth township was acquired by the local Brandling family in 1566 but it became the family seat from 1760s, funded by wealth from agriculture and coal. The parkland was laid out at the same time as the country house was designed and built by James Paine. Gosforth Lake was added in the early 1800s. The park was enclosed within stone walls and there are several lodge houses at the entrances, and a range of other buildings, gardens and features within the park. High Gosforth Park followed the fashion of the time, based on the ideas of "Capability" Brown: encircling woodland belts, a lake, carriage drive, radiating rides and a fine open prospect from the house.

In 1852 the Gosforth Park estate was divided and sold. The High Gosforth Park Company acquired the main northern parkland in 1880 and laid out the racecourse and also the Northumberland Golf Club 18-hole course. The tramway to transport race-goers from Newcastle opened in 1924, and was in use until 1947.

### **3 Current role**

The main function of the zone is for edge-of-town, leisure-based activity with increasing pressure from the owners to develop the leisure assets more intensively and to increase the range of activities. Green Belt policy currently prevents most forms of built development unless a very special circumstances case can be made. Recent proposals have included ideas for sports and fitness centres, an open-air market, camping and holiday cottages. Recent developments include a Football Centre and the walled gardens are now being redeveloped as executive housing. In addition the racecourse was recently remodelled with an all-weather track and floodlighting allowing more intensive use including evenings, and with increased TV and betting revenue potentially enabling more effective management of the estate as a whole, in line with the associated management plan. Gosforth Park is also being used increasingly as a venue for large open-air events such as the Children's Cancer Run. It is ideally placed to host such events being in an attractive setting, with an out-of-town, but easy-to-drive-to location. These developments are being proposed at the expense of the agricultural uses, the wildlife and the more informal passive recreational pursuits that

many people enjoy albeit often on a permissive basis within the park land and its environs. Golf is the largest recreational land user but is available to members only, not for public access.

**5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

High Gosforth Park designed historic landscape  
Wildlife and habitats  
Designated wildlife sites  
Plantation woodland and trees  
Gosforth Lake  
Gosforth Nature Reserve  
Newcastle Racecourse  
Ridge and Furrow cultivation pattern  
Brandling House and associated Listed Buildings  
The River Ouseburn and its tributaries

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Leisure development at High Gosforth Park  
Erosion of fabric of historic designed landscape at High Gosforth Park  
Decline in agricultural activity  
Lack of the effective implementation to date of the Management Plan for High Gosforth Park  
Trespass, poaching, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour  
Poorly managed public access  
Increasing car parking demand on race days and other events  
Loss of mature trees and woodland and failure to replant  
Adverse visual impact of racecourse buildings  
Sandy Lane realignment  
Lacks Conservation Area or Registered Park and Garden status

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage at High Gosforth Park  
The River Ouseburn valley and its tributaries  
Tree and woodland cover  
Wildlife habitats  
Main roads  
Access management and possible establishment of Public Rights of Way

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Development pressure  
Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
Tree removal  
Development and paving close to mature trees  
Building on green space and Green Belt land  
Increasing numbers of cars  
Highway widening and other transport improvements

**9 References**

- Gosforth – Cramlington Corridor Biodiversity Action Plan
- Unitary Development Plan
- High Gosforth Park EIA
- Gosforth Nature Reserve Management Plan
- A Guide to the Historic Parks and Gardens of Tyne & Wear” Fiona Green 1995

**Strengths and opportunities.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Strengths and opportunities</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>G1+</b>	Designed historic landscape with Grade II* and II Listed Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value</li> <li>• Protect farming heritage (outstanding rigg and furrow)</li> <li>• Reinforce and enhance the racecourse function and Listed Buildings core</li> <li>• Produce a Management plan</li> <li>• Access plan and interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to erode or sever parts of the parkland</li> <li>• Lose/erode rural features and setting.</li> </ul>	Possible designation as a Conservation Area and registration by English Heritage as an Historic Park and Garden.
<b>G2+</b>	Plantation woodlands and veteran trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey all trees, prepare &amp; implement a long term management plan.</li> <li>• Introduce new native tree planting to retain species and age diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove all Turkey oaks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to national guidance on care of veteran trees.</li> <li>• Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies</li> </ul>

<b>G3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, promote and protect as key local viewpoints</li> <li>• <b>Views from Heathery Lane area</b></li> <li>• <b>Views from A189 to south and west</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar or block views</li> </ul>	
<b>G4+</b>	Main roads and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and increase tree cover&amp; hedges along main and trunk roads</li> <li>• Safe crossings to the A1</li> <li>Retain grass verges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain good “buffer” uses around the perimeter of High Gosforth Park to protect the special amenity, wildlife and tranquillity of the parkland and golf courses</li> </ul>	
<b>G5+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links to and between Gosforth, Great Park and North Tyneside.</li> </ul>		
<b>G6+</b>	River Ouseburn and tributaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and protect water quality, river banks, landscape and wildlife.</li> <li>• Open up more public access along the Ouseburn corridor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow buildings within 20 metres of the river without good reason.</li> </ul>	

**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>

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<b>G1-</b>	Inappropriate development and highway expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace sensitively designed and managed recreational development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow neglect of landscape setting</li> </ul>	Refer to Green Belt policy and guidance
<b>G2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quality of paths, historic features and boundary treatments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce urban/suburban features and paving</li> </ul>	
<b>G3-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrict vehicle access and parking</li> </ul>	
<b>G4-</b>	Grasslands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationalisation, habitat creation and selective sites for upgrading.</li> <li>• Management plans and good quality workmanship &amp; repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow motor cycles ,quad bikes etc.</li> </ul>	
<b>G5-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes.</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate</li> </ul>	
<b>G6-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure adequate screening of parking areas and routes</li> </ul>		

Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## Northern Newcastle: Townscape Character Zone H

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### 1 **Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

This zone covers the northern urban edge of Newcastle between the A1 and High Gosforth Park. The zone includes the outer suburbs and estates of Kenton, Fawdon, Montagu, Regent Farm, Red House Farm, Coxlodge, Brunton Park, Melton Park, Whitebridge Park, and the area around Regent Centre in northern Gosforth. There are 25 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which all are urban (including 1 Area of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 **What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The growth and development of this zone is recent and predominantly post-war to house the expanding population of the city, strongly influenced by transport corridors, pit closures and the location of a number of large industrial employers in Fawdon.

The topography of this zone is defined by the Ouseburn Valley which is wide, gently sloping and shallow, crossing through and to the north of this zone. The river here is small, flowing west to east, generally little more than two metres wide but still able to pose a flood risk to certain lower lying residential areas in this zone at times of exceptionally heavy rain. There were five tributary streams draining from this zone down to the Ouseburn, although most have now been culverted. The land slopes significantly north and eastward across this zone from the highest ground in the western corner of the zone at Kenton Bar, at over 120 metres above sea level. This is a hilltop and a spectacular viewpoint with panoramic landscape views to the north. The lowest point, some 70 metres lower, is at the eastern end of the Ouseburn Valley by Salters' Bridge, at around 47 metres above sea level. Geologically this zone has a heavy stony glacial clay over sandstone or coal measures. There are large areas of glacial sands and gravels on the lower lying ground on the south side of the Ouseburn and alluvium immediately adjacent to the river. Scattered areas of filled ground indicate the location of former coal mines and sandstone quarries.

North Newcastle's residential areas are predominantly low rise, brick built and usually with gardens. There is a very noticeable contrast from east to west within the zone's suburbs. Homes range from some of the highest valued and lowest density private suburbs and bungalows with generous gardens in areas like Melton Park, Fencer Hill and Whitebridge Park to higher density 'out-of-town' council estates, often with a mix of small link houses, apartments and maisonette blocks at Kenton Bar and North Kenton. There is a mix of dwelling types but although there are a few post 2000 developments virtually all homes are 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the majority are post war, and often rather bland. Older terraces are rare. Interspersed are pockets of contrasting and often older residential areas. There are miners'

cottages and retirement homes at Coxlodge. Former farm buildings have been engulfed by the built-up area at Kenton Lane and Red House Farm. The Hollywood Avenue area was planned and built as a 'Garden Village' and is still referred to as such.

The built environment is fairly homogenous principally low rise, low density brick homes in short terraces or semis, with detached bungalows and houses more frequent in the eastern character areas. The majority have good sized front and rear gardens, often with good tree and shrub cover. The "garden village" suburb style nationally popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century makes its appearance in this zone in the tree-lined Grange Estate, at Hollywood Avenue and in the Montague Estate. Tall buildings are few and widely spaced, for example on the edge of the Town Moor at Montague and in Fawdon, taking advantage of the open prospects from the high ground in the west of the zone.

There are no Conservation Areas within this zone.

Main road access is via north-south routes, with the A1 forming much of the western boundary of the zone, while the Great North Road runs though the eastern area. The A191 Kenton Lane provides the main east-west connection and the Metro line links South Gosforth with the airport through the centre of the zone.

Green spaces in the zone are more limited than in the inner parts of Newcastle. The two parks (at North Kenton and Fawdon) are too small and of poor quality, and there are none at all in the eastern part of the zone. Amenity space is a rarity in the east, becoming more abundant but often just poor quality open grassed areas in Kenton, Montagu and Fawdon. Sports and particularly golf courses are noticeably large and prominent green space assets but they tend to cater for a limited club membership rather than the wider public. The area does feature one of the best maintained allotment sites in the city at Three Mile, North Gosforth

Woodland is very limited in the area, examples being new plantations along the A1, around the golf courses to the northern and eastern boundaries and at Kenton Dene. There are a few small pockets of mature woodland and groups of mature trees in North Gosforth, most now surrounded by development or incorporated in gardens. Some streets and estates have good street trees: for example Grange Estate, Melton Park, and parts of Kenton, Kingston Park, Regent Farm and Garden Village. There are also some exceptionally fine tall mature trees on the Great North Road central reserve between Melton and Brunton Parks, providing an excellent gateway to the city. These street trees significantly enhance local character, creating a distinctive sense of place in what might otherwise be a bland environment. However there is a downside. The trees are all of a similar age and species and in some cases disease is causing loss of mature trees, compounded by threats to street trees from vehicles, services work, and the need for highway refurbishment. In many of the streets in this zone, rising demand for parking has led to replacement of grass verges with tarmac, often as a result of residents' petitions. In the Grange Estate most verges were hard surfaced with natural cobbles but these are uneven to walk on and are now being lifted by tree roots. Often verges are really too narrow for the mature trees or to permit replanting.

Residential areas at the edge of the built up area derive benefit from both large private gardens and close proximity and some outlook over open countryside. For most residents though the countryside is not accessible, the Public Rights of Way network is limited and the amenity is not readily available to all.

The gardens and open spaces in this zone generally support a good range of wildlife. Otter and many other species are using the Ouseburn corridor. Many bird species like the song thrush, a local target species, benefit from the larger gardens with mature tree and shrub cover. However grey squirrel have been seen in this zone which is a matter of concern for the remaining protected red squirrel population.

Whilst housing is by far the predominant land use this zone contains two of the city's biggest secondary schools (Kenton and Gosforth), St Nicholas' Mental Hospital, St Oswald's Hospice, industry at Fawdon (Nestle etc) and Gosforth Industrial Estate, the main Metro depot at South Gosforth, and retail and offices at Regent Centre.

### **3 Why its there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest lasting human influences on this zone were the ancient routes: to the north along the Great North Road and to the north-west. An ancient highway is marked on the route of Kenton Lane to Salter's Lane and then Salter's Bridge over the Ouseburn, which was probably an early trading route. Coal has been worked in many parts of this zone and several former waggonways cross the zone linking the former collieries at Fawdon, Coxlodge, West Brunton, Regent Pit Gosforth, and others. Most of the pits here had closed by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the last appears to be Coxlodge in 1894. Parts of the waggonways remain as roadways at Christon Road and Jubilee Road and sometimes as vegetated areas between or behind houses. Settlements at Red House Farm and Kenton date from early mediaeval times, and farming settlements will almost certainly have existed much earlier. In 1777 this area consisted of 5 townships; Coxlodge, Kenton, Fawdon, East Brunton and North Brunton. Place names are sometimes geographical and descriptive and many contain the Anglo-Saxon 'tun' for a settlement, and Gosforth is from Goose Ford. Historic buildings dating from before the 19<sup>th</sup> century are very few but there are remains of a 12<sup>th</sup> century chapel at Melton Park.

### **4 Current role**

North Newcastle remains a popular outer suburb and residential area with a relatively short commuting journey to school or work. The zone's wealth and popularity also means pressure for yet more home building, with new development just beyond the zone boundary at the Great Park. With building space at a premium, properties and non residential uses with generous grounds are attractive for redevelopment as higher density flats and apartments. Conserving the appearance and quality of the townscape and achieving individuality and distinctiveness is a key challenge as many parts of these outer suburbs are bland and the same as in many other UK cities. Improving the quality, diversity and distribution of green space and retaining local employment are also important issues for the zone.



**5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

The Ouseburn river, its valley and tributaries  
Melton Park Chapel  
Salter's Bridge and adjacent area  
Woodland at Fencer Hill, McCracken Park, Newcastle Golf Course.  
New plantation woodlands  
Kenton Dene  
Street and garden trees  
Great North Road central verge  
Roadside grass verges  
Coxlodge miner's terraces  
Views from Kenton Bar, Nun's Moor and Kenton Dene

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Bland, large scale retail and commercial development  
Uniformity over large areas, with often rather bland housing  
Highway improvements  
Loss of mature private gardens and grounds to development and parking  
Loss of street and garden trees and failure to replant  
Increasing car ownership and use, with more than one car per household  
Standardised traffic calming and management  
Loss of verges to tarmac and parking  
Poor maintenance and loss of character in "Garden Village" and similar estates  
Neglect in public realm including parks, amenity spaces, and cemeteries  
Loss of traditional garden walls, railings and gates  
A1 and its crossing points and junctions

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

River Ouseburn corridor  
Wildlife habitats on the green and open spaces  
Main streets and thoroughfares  
Street Trees  
Tree and woodland cover and hedges  
Kenton Dene  
Amenity spaces  
North Kenton and Fawdon Parks  
Off road routes and linking the green spaces

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

High density redevelopment  
Provision for cars and parking, including paving over front gardens and highway widening  
Property "improvement" that erodes intrinsic character  
Building on green spaces, particularly where these are of reasonable value or provide a link between other spaces or an opportunity to redress deficiency and/or improve quality and distribution

**9 References**

- Newcastle Town, R J Charlton
- Bygone Fawdon and Coxlodge, Millie Walker
- Durham Mining Museum web site
- St Nicholas Hospital Conservation Character Statement and Management Plan.

**Strengths and opportunities.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Strengths and opportunities</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/ Comments</b>
<b>H1+</b>	The River Ouseburn, its valley and tributaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain enhance &amp; manage open streams</li> </ul>		Refer to Ouseburn Catchment Management Plan and wildlife strategy.
<b>H2+</b>	Woodland at Fencer Hill, McCracken Park, City of Newcastle Golf Course; new plantation woodlands; street and garden trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve tree cover especially adjacent to schools, boundaries, incidental amenity spaces and residential areas.</li> <li>• Encourage tree planting in gardens and on Town Moor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow tree removal to expose industrial premises to Metro users</li> </ul>	Refer to Newcastle Tree Strategy ("Trees Newcastle")
<b>H3+</b>	Great North Road central verge and other roadside Grass verges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and protect from vehicle over-run</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tarmac over</li> </ul>	

<b>H4+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect as key city viewpoints.</li> <li>• <b>Countryside views from Metro &amp; A1 junctions</b></li> <li>• <b>St Nicholas Hospital /Cricket field from Salter's Road.</b></li> <li>• <b>Kenton Bar and A167 Ponteland Road</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	
<b>H5+</b>	Green/open spaces: Gala Field, Kingston Park, and Kenton Dene amenity spaces, and North Kenton and Fawdon Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to provide true local and city parks</li> <li>• Hedging and more trees</li> </ul>		Refer to tree, green space and biodiversity strategies
<b>H6+</b>	Main streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management plan for street tree replacement/enhancement</li> </ul>		
<b>H7+</b>	Off road routes and linking the green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance non vehicular routes along the A1 corridor.</li> <li>• Better interpretation and signage</li> </ul>		
<b>H8+</b>	Local shops and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and unify shop fronts, surfacing and street furniture.</li> <li>• Rationalise parking.</li> </ul>		Brunton Park shops as good practice example

<b>H9+</b>	Residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and protect small scale and single storey areas</li> <li>• Protect and enhance older brick terraces and Miners' cottages.</li> <li>• Consider "home zone" treatments.</li> <li>• Retain boundary brickwork and hedges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on garden space</li> <li>• Increase front boundary heights over original.</li> <li>• Allow building forward of existing building line on 1940s semis.</li> </ul>	.
<b>H10+</b>	Business and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unify signs and street furniture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large expanses of car parking.</li> <li>• Heavy duty security fences.</li> </ul>	

**10 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve, and threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/ Comments</b>
<b>H1-</b>	Bland, large scale retail and commercial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trees for screening.</li> </ul>		Tesco at Kingston Park as good practice example
<b>H2-</b>	"Sameness" over large residential areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage appropriate architectural distinctiveness in new development and refurbishment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend at gable ends.</li> </ul>	

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<b>H3</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character in “Garden Village” and similar estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage appropriate context evaluation and management</li> </ul>		
<b>H4-</b>	Highway improvements and widening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate street trees and verges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of cobbles, grass verges, street trees.</li> </ul>	Refer to tree strategy
<b>H5-</b>	Increasing car ownership and use, with more than one car per household. Standardised traffic calming and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider “home zone” design approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn streets into car parks</li> </ul>	
<b>H6-</b>	Loss of original garden walls, railings and gates with increasing provision for cars including paving over front gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage retention of boundaries and consider improvements to on street and other parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pave with non-permeable surfacing.</li> </ul>	
<b>H7-</b>	Loss of mature private gardens and grounds to development and parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders and developer guidance.</li> </ul>		
<b>H8-</b>	Property improvement that erodes intrinsic character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider Conservation Areas where appropriate</li> </ul>		
<b>H9-</b>	Low tree cover, loss of street and garden trees and failure to replant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree planting and retention in open spaces and as part of development schemes</li> </ul>		Need to reinforce “garden village” character

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<b>H10-</b>	Building on green spaces, where these provide a link or opportunity to redress deficiency, or improve quality, diversity and distribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage redevelopment where there is surplus green space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc building schemes</li> </ul>	Refer to Green Space Strategy
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Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## North West Newcastle: Townscape Character Zone J

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### 1 **Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

The North West Newcastle zone is situated north of the A69 West Road and straddles the A1 Western bypass, extending from the western edge of the Town Moor out to the urban fringe. The zone includes a number of large modern outer suburbs, from Fenham, Cowgate and Montagu which adjoin the Town Moor out to Kingston Park, Newbiggin Hall, West Denton and Chapel Park further out. There are 27 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which all are urban (including 3 Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 **What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The topography of this zone is influenced by its prominent position on the watershed between the Tyne and Ouseburn valleys. The zone occupies a broad ridge rising from 55 metres above sea level at the north of Kingston Park to hill tops at Kenton Bar, Coley Hill and at Denton Hill Head which, at 132 metres above sea level, is the highest point in Newcastle. Reflecting the ridge groundform, there are very few watercourses in this zone. Two small streams rise from Newbiggin Hall (Harey Dene and Newbiggin Dene) flowing north to the Ouseburn, while Sugley Burn rises in West Denton (Ravenshill Road) flowing south to the Tyne. Geologically this zone has heavy stony glacial clay over either coal measures or over sandstone at Fenham, Cowgate and Chapel House. Coal measures are exposed at North Walbottle and West Denton, sandstone outcrops close to the surface at East Denton and Chapel House, along the West Road and line of Hadrian's Wall. There is much filled ground along the route of the Western Bypass, and at sites such as the former Caroline and Blakelaw pits and Westgate College.

During the later 19<sup>th</sup> century demand had grown for houses away from the fumes and crowding of the industrial riverside, notably around the fringes of the Town Moor. During the first half of the twentieth century the introduction of public transport routes out to the north-west encouraged the growth and popularity of places beyond this such as Fenham, West Denton, Kenton Bankfoot and Westerhope, and this continued post war with the building through the 1950's to 1980's in particular of a number of large private estates including Chapel Park and Kingston Park. The other major pressure for house building in this zone was for council housing, with a series of large estates being built within this zone including areas of Fenham and Cowgate in the interwar years and then a post-war series of estates such as Blakelaw, West Denton, and Newbiggin Hall. The zone thus underwent a massive transformation during the twentieth century from a rural agricultural landscape with occasional villages, farms and pits to an entirely built up area.

The zone is almost exclusively low rise and low density housing, brick construction with tiled roofs. However there are a small number of 3-5 storey flats and maisonette blocks at Blakelaw and Newbiggin Hall, and there is a scattering of tower blocks including some at Cowgate, Blakelaw and West Denton. There has been extensive ongoing refurbishment, improvement and in some cases demolition within the council housing estates, but other than maturing the private estates have remained largely unchanged.

Main access routes are by road: principally north-south along the A1 Western Bypass, A191 Silver Lonnen and B1306 Two Ball Lonnen. The main east-west links are the A186 West Road, A167/A696 Jedburgh Road and B6324 Stamfordham Road. The only rail route is the Metro which crosses the extreme northerly section of this zone to Kenton Bank Foot.

Green spaces in the zone are plentiful but generally poor quality. There is no proper traditional park and although Gala Field in Newbiggin Hall has had substantial investment to create a new park, there is still some way to go. There is Newcastle's largest cemetery at West Road Crematorium and sports pitches at Blakelaw Park, West Denton, Westerhope and Cowgate. There are allotments at Newbiggin Hall, Westerhope, West Denton and Fenham. The zone has a large quantity and generous distribution of amenity green space particularly in and around the council estates, but much of this has little amenity, diversity or recreational opportunity: grass with a tree or two is often all that is on offer. In some areas there has been a lot of anti-social behaviour, vehicles and motorcycles, tipping, litter, etc addressed by quick-fix barriers and repairs using a mixed jumble of materials. This does little to improve the quality of the environment in parts of Newbiggin Hall, Blakelaw or West Denton.

The open spaces support some wildlife, particularly bird species where there is tree cover and hedging, but the area is poor for habitat diversity compared with other parts of the city, having very little woodland, no mature parks, rivers, ponds or lakes, and few stream valleys. However this zone does derive some benefit from the pleasant open countryside just beyond the built up area.

The zone's only mature woodland trees are in Newbiggin Dene, linking through to Kenton Bankfoot. There area also more recent immature plantations along the A1 Western Bypass and the A696 Woolsington Bypass. Street trees are scarce too with only a few tree-lined streets in places like Blakelaw south, Ponteland Road and central Fenham. Often where there have been roadside verges in the past these have been paved to provide parking, for example at Springfield Road, Blakelaw.

Whilst residential is the predominant land use in this zone there are five senior schools, the Northumbria Police HQ at Etal Lane, small to medium commercial/retail/industrial premises at Slatyford Lane/Stamfordham Road, and Westerhope, and larger areas at the Airport Industrial Estate and Kingston Park Business/Retail Park. There are a number of small local shopping areas and major centres but no traditional local 'High Street' shops other than at Westerhope. There are small supermarkets at Stamfordham Road and Westerhope and large ones, with huge car parking areas, at Cowgate and Kingston Park.



**3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest lasting human influences on this zone were the ancient routes: to the west along the line of Hadrian's Wall and to the north-west on the roads to Stamfordham and Jedburgh. Coal mining activity at locations like Blakelaw, and Slatyford, were linked to the Tyne by waggonways; a main route went north-south along the line of what is now the A1 Western Bypass with two parallel links across Blakelaw. There are also small pockets of former mining terraces at Slatyford and Chapel Park. Prior to the rapid 20<sup>th</sup> century development, there were only agricultural and mining buildings in the area, although the village of Westerhope was in existence during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Buildings from this earlier period include St John's Church, Whorlton and Fenham Hall (now St. Mary's College), along with remnant farm houses at Kenton Bar, Blakelaw, Newbiggin Hall and Westerhope. Other than these and coal mining heritage there is little of archaeological note in this zone. Place names are generally descriptive and Saxon in origin: Fenham was 'a marshy place' for example. Of interest as one of the few areas with special character and identity in this zone is the Northumberland Gardens Conservation Area, private red brick family houses in the arts and crafts tradition, laid out with generous gardens for growing produce, in an effort to create a better lifestyle outside the city. Westerhope has similar origins as the 'Red Cow Estate' farmland purchased by the Northern Allotment Society in the 1890s.

**4 Current role**

North West Newcastle is very much a dormitory suburban residential area, with pockets of popular housing but large parts that are bland, lacking interest, identity and amenity. Improving the diversity, vitality, appearance and quality of the townscape and green environment is a priority.

**5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

Westerhope Village  
 Newbiggin Dene  
 Harey Dene  
 Gala Field Park  
 Northumberland Gardens Conservation Area  
 Street and garden trees  
 Views from Kenton Bar.

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Large quantities of low quality amenity green space  
 Inappropriate management and repairs on green spaces  
 Loss of street and garden trees and hedges, failure to replant  
 Increasing car ownership and use, with increasingly more than one vehicle per household  
 Vacant and boarded up buildings  
 Motor cycles on green spaces  
 Standardised traffic calming and management

Loss of verges to tarmac and parking  
 Neglect in public realm including open spaces, streets and schools  
 Loss of traditional garden walls, railings and gates  
 Main road edges and crossings

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage in the Conservation Area  
 West Denton linked open space system  
 Main streets and thoroughfares  
 Street trees and highway verges  
 Stamfordham Road  
 Green Spaces, particularly Gala Field and other amenity spaces that could be converted to provide proper parks  
 Tree and woodland cover and hedges  
 Off road routes and linking the green spaces  
 Airport Industrial Estate  
 School grounds

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Provision for cars and parking, including paving over front gardens and highway widening  
 Poor quality paths and boundary treatments  
 Loss of woodland and trees, particularly through vandalism  
 Property improvement that erodes intrinsic character  
 Building on green spaces, especially where these provide a link between spaces

**9 References**

- Northumberland Gardens Conservation Character Statement and Management Plan
- Hadrian’s Wall: The Wall Walk Volume 1
- Newcastle Town, R J Charlton
- Bygone Westerhope, Fenham. Newcastle City Libraries.

**Strengths and opportunities.**

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do’s	Don’ts	Notes/Comments
J1+	Former villages and distinctive residential areas of architectural value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> </ul>		Refer to Northumberland Gardens Conservation Area Character Statement and Management Plan

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<b>J2+</b>	Former and existing denes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Newbiggin Dene &amp; Harey Dene with new woodland to reflect original landform</li> </ul>		
<b>J3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect as key city viewpoints</li> <li>• <b>Kenton Bar and A167 Ponteland Road</b></li> <li>• <b>West Road and A69</b></li> <li>• <b>B6324 Stamfordham Road, west of Westerhope</b></li> <li>• <b>North Walbottle Road</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	
<b>J4+</b>	Main streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active street frontages</li> <li>• Consider “home zones”.</li> <li>• More safe crossings between spaces and residential areas.</li> <li>• Retain grass verges</li> </ul>		
<b>J5+</b>	Tree cover, street and garden trees, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets, and street corners.</li> <li>• Plant woodland belts in parks and spaces.</li> <li>• Manage dene woodlands for wildlife.</li> <li>• Engage the local community..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees or hedges, without replacement.</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>J6+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly access to countryside</li> </ul>		

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<b>J7+</b>	Parks and green spaces (West Denton, and other spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address scarcity of parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow high rear fences abutting spaces</li> <li>• Create more low-grade amenity space</li> </ul>	
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**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>J1-</b>	Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement regeneration plan</li> </ul>		
<b>J2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value in residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quality of paths and boundary treatments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce more medium and high rise development.</li> </ul>	
<b>J3-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider relocation</li> </ul>		
<b>J4-</b>	Large grassed amenity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationalisation, habitat creation and selective sites for upgrading</li> <li>• Management plans and good quality workmanship &amp; repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow motor cycles on green spaces</li> <li>• Lose linkage between spaces</li> </ul>	
<b>J5-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>J6-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider "home zones"</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking</li> </ul>		

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# Newcastle Character Assessment

## West End and Riverside: Townscape Character Zone K

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### 1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas

The West End and Riverside is the area immediately west of the city centre, positioned along the north valley side of the River Tyne to Scotswood Bridge and including the mixed use and residential areas of Elswick, Benwell and Scotswood. There are 24 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which all are urban (including 2 Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.

The West End of Newcastle is an area with sloping and often steeply sloping topography (some north-south streets have gradients as steep as 1 in 7). The zone occupies the south facing valley side of the River Tyne which rises to a noticeable ridge line with high points at Condercum (126 metres above sea level) and Arthur's Hill. The Tyne gorge starts to widen west of Elswick Riverside. Most of the West End is over glacial boulder clay, but has exposed coal measures in places and sandstone outcrops creating the West End's two hilltops at Condercum and Arthur's Hill. The West End open spaces support a diversity of wildlife, particularly on or close to the Tyne, with key local species such as otter, seal, bats, skylark, song thrush and dingy skipper butterfly present, and with a richness of invertebrates along the Tyne mudflats and banks that in turn support many bird and aquatic species. Two public spaces are designed as nature parks creating many different habitats to encourage local wildlife including pond species like amphibians and dragonfly.

The Tyne has been greatly deepened, altered and narrowed in the later nineteenth century (from 1863) to accommodate shipping, especially for the coal industry. This included the removal of islands, most notably "King's Meadows" and "Clarence Islands" and many other sands and shoals exposed at low tide which once lay south of what is now Newcastle Business Park. There is reclaimed land along most of the West End waterfront, and several steep sided stream valleys (denes) have been filled in, often in the course of mining activity. A riverside railway once ran parallel to the Tyne and for much of its route through this zone this is now Hadrian's Way National Trail, an off-road recreational route. There are six bridges across the Tyne within this zone, three at the Scotswood end (although the former railway bridge is no longer in use) and three close to Elswick Riverside (one road, one rail and one Metro), although this still leaves a long wide stretch of river with no crossing available.

The Tyne no longer supports any river-related industry in the West End, though there is a significant amount of new business, industry and commerce close to the river and Scotswood Road. Some areas of former riverside industry have been

replaced by the Newcastle Business Park along the south facing section of the Tyne at Elswick and South Benwell.

Away from the riverside the West End also has a significant amount of residential land use, with a mosaic of many different and often distinctive residential neighbourhoods, and a range from low rise, brick terraces and semis to medium rise apartments and high rise towers. This is in strong contrast to the more homogenous urban housing estates of eastern and northern Newcastle. Housing density is generally high across this zone compared to other parts of the city.

Some homes still date from the late nineteenth century and there are a number of locally traditional "Tyneside flats" at North Benwell, Elswick and Scotswood built before the First World War, with rear yards and sometimes a very small front garden. Later housing is predominantly council owned, often with more generous front and rear gardens. In the West End the vast majority of nineteenth century terraces were cleared in the period 1960-80 and replaced with modern brick "link" terraces, apartments, and a number of tower blocks of flats. The remaining six tall tower blocks at Cruddas Park form a strong local landmark.

Although the West End has seen substantial refurbishment (often over decades), properties in certain places remain unpopular and difficult to let. The West End housing pattern gives way to large expanses of open grassy slopes in Scotswood and western Benwell where huge numbers of failing council homes have been demolished since 1993, opening up panoramic views across the river to Gateshead, the Metro Centre and the Derwent Valley.

Main access to and through the West End is aligned east-west or parallel to the Tyne: the A186 West Road, the A695 Scotswood Road, and the B1311 Elswick Road. North-south links within the zone are minor roads with the main A1 and A189 at the west and east edges respectively. Industrial growth was shaped by the river, the riverside railways, and the many local collieries. Permeability is high except where larger scale, high security industrial use prohibits public access to the waterfront at Scotswood and western Benwell.

Green spaces in the West End are as varied as the residential areas and the zone has a reasonably generous distribution of green spaces apart from the central character areas adjoining the West Road: Grainger Park, Bentinck and Condercum. Regeneration initiatives over the last 20 years have tried to provide better quality spaces with investment in tree planting, play areas, kickabout space and other benefits. The West End is well provided with public parks and reclaimed green spaces, as a legacy of the Victorian and Edwardian industrial age. Thus the zone contains two Victorian Parks, (Elswick and Hodgkin) and St John's Cemetery. Small portions of wooded dene survive at Benwell Dene, at Denton Dene, and possibly a small fragment at Elswick Dene. At all three the former natural valleys have been substantially obliterated by coal mining, and infill. Those areas that could not be developed have remained as amenity grass. A very large number of interlinked amenity spaces provide open grassland and tree cover parallel to and often adjoining Scotswood Road. Sports pitches are less frequent because of the sloping landform. The area has a reasonable supply of allotments though not all in good condition nor fully used. Over the last 30 years, housing clearance has helped improve the number and range of smaller spaces in the West End, notable among

these are the award winning Benwell Nature Park, in North Benwell, and the Scotswood Community Garden.

Apart from the ancient woodland remnants in the denes, and the relatively recent Scotswood Road plantations, there is no other woodland. However the West End does have some fine mature tree lines and groups in the parks and cemetery, at Grainger Park, and in the grounds of a number of former large houses like Benwell Grange, institutions, convents, public buildings and schools. There are relatively few mature street and garden trees but many young trees have been planted over the last 40 years as part of residential improvement schemes.

The West Road and Adelaide Terrace have always been the West End's main shopping streets. Adelaide Terrace now has a new local shopping centre but further efforts are needed to rejuvenate and provide better shops and more choice.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

Generally in this zone little now remains of the pre-industrial uses, landscape and buildings, apart from the river and the street and place names. A Neolithic axe find indicates settlement well before the Roman occupation. The earliest definite route was adopted by the Romans for 'Hadrian's Wall,' aligned east to west through the West End, its route now marked by Westgate Hill, the West Road and Condercum. There were two milecastles, number five at Elswick Road/Corporation Road and Number 6 at the top of Westgate Hill. Condercum Fort was a cavalry fort sited on what is still some of the highest ground in the West End. The Roman name means '*a place with a fine view*'. A short distance downhill from the fort and now tucked away in an interwar residential suburb are two archaeological gems. There are remains of a Mithraic Temple at Broomridge Avenue, and a crossing point on the Vallum is exposed at Denhill Park Avenue. There was a turret on the Wall close to Adair and Pease Avenues. There are Roman wall remains exposed on the A69 West Road verge at Turret Road, Denton Burn and Roman masonry built into Thorntree Cottage.

Benwell became a mediaeval manor. There is a picture (1925) of the well at Benwell, although opinions differ whether this is the origin of the name, as it is also thought to mean "*bynewalle*" - 'a place on the wall.' Old Benwell village was established a little to the south west of the Condercum Roman fort, and the mediaeval street pattern is still retained at Ferguson's Lane and Benwell Lane. Scotswood was originally a 200 acre mediaeval deer park, enclosed in 1367 by Richard Scot, a wealthy local merchant and landowner.

In Victorian times much of the area remained in agricultural use with the scattered settlements remaining on the upper slopes and the industrial uses mainly along the Tyne itself. However urban expansion was already occurring in the eastern part of the zone close to the City centre, primarily in the form of housing for the middle classes. There were also a number of large Victorian villas set in substantial grounds which were built by local industrial magnates. A number of these remain although in greatly reduced circumstances (such as Pendower Hall and Benwell Towers) but others have since been demolished. In addition there was significant building of terraced houses and flats on the banks running down to the Tyne to house industrial workers, although much of this has since been demolished.

#### 4 Current role

Most of the West End grew with the Industrial Revolution as housing to accommodate those working in the chemical, shipbuilding, coal mining and armaments industries, and the distributive trades. The West End economy relied on its riverside industries, the most significant being William Armstrong's heavy engineering works at Elswick, occupying a mile long stretch of Tyne waterfront. Taken over by Vickers in 1928, the old factory was replaced with a modern version in 1982, built a short distance upriver. The current West End has lost much of its economic base, but many different communities, some long established, others more recent, still live there. Much of the area has become unpopular. However the area has been changing and regeneration is starting to be evident along the waterfront and quayside and a number of other pockets of renewal. Newcastle College is growing with more new building planned. Scotswood Road has been enlarged to a fast dual carriageway. However the West End has no Metro service. Tourism, riverside recreation and heritage are relatively new concepts for the area that are starting to become established at Newcastle Business Park and Elswick Riverside. The Roman heritage is barely recognised. More of the West End will need to change and adopt a different role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and nowhere is this more apparent than in the remaining empty spaces of Scotswood and Benwell, although housing regeneration in Scotswood is now progressing well.

#### 5 Strengths: special character, successes

The River Tyne, the waterfront, bridges, tidal reaches and mud flats  
 Views across the Tyne and downstream to the Tyne Bridges  
 Tyneside flats and traditional terraces  
 Benwell Nature Park  
 Hadrian's Way National Trail  
 Line of Hadrian's Wall  
 Newcastle Business Park and waterfront  
 West Road and Adelaide Terrace retail areas  
 Westgate College  
 Newcastle College  
 Elswick and Hodgkin Parks  
 Denton and Benwell Denes  
 Grounds & mature trees from former large villas

#### 6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain

Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment  
 Poor maintenance and loss of character in traditional terraces  
 Neglect in public realm including open spaces  
 Benwell perceived as being a "chaver" town  
 Fears about crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour  
 Loss of mature trees and failure to replant  
 Decline of traditional shopping streets  
 Boarded up and derelict property  
 Unsightly business/industrial premises  
 Decline in activity on the River Tyne



Lack of direct access to the River Tyne in some areas  
Contamination  
Some of the non-refurbished Tower blocks

## **7 Opportunities for enhancement, improvement**

Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall  
The River Tyne and its waterfront  
North Benwell Terraces  
Grainger Park  
Scotswood Village  
Benwell and Denton Denes  
Scotswood Road corridor and Hadrian's Way  
Hodgkin and Elswick Parks  
Main streets and thoroughfares  
Tree cover  
Off road routes  
Scotswood Railway Bridge

## **8 Threats**

Demolition of homes and local landmark buildings  
Failure to achieve sustainable regeneration for Scotswood/Benwell  
Vandalism and arson  
Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
Tree removal  
Building on parks and valued green spaces  
Increasing numbers of cars  
Loss of river views and access

## **9 References**

- Benwell Scotswood Area Action Plan
- Elswick Study
- Hadrian's Wall: The Wall Walk Volume 1
- Sustrans Coast to Coast Cycle Guide
- English Heritage website
- "Bygone" booklets series. (Benwell, Scotswood, Arthur's Hill and Westgate, etc)
- 'Tyne Landscape'
- 'Colour on the Tyne'
- Tyne Gorge Study

## Strengths and opportunities .

Guide point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
K1+	The long River Tyne waterfront, bridges, tidal reaches and mud flats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and open up for public view and access</li> <li>• Enhance river and river edge wildlife habitats</li> <li>• Retain and refurbish bridges.</li> <li>• Interpretation</li> <li>• Retain and extend waterfront walkway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block access or key viewpoints with buildings, barriers or fences</li> <li>• Build within 20 metres of the river</li> </ul>	Refer to wildlife strategy
K2+	Views across the Tyne and downstream to the Tyne Bridges and other viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and maximise views across the Tyne, working with topography in all new build</li> <li>• Identify and protect as key city viewpoints:</li> <li>• <b>Business Park waterfront promenade</b></li> <li>• <b>Redheugh Bridge</b></li> <li>• <b>Scotswood Bridge</b></li> <li>• <b>Whitfield Road</b></li> <li>• <b>Hodgkin Park</b></li> <li>• <b>Cruddas Park</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	Refer to "Tyne Gorge Study", where key views are identified
K3+	Tyneside flats and traditional terraces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish any more</li> </ul>	
K4+	Former and existing denes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance to reflect original landform and vegetation cover</li> </ul>		

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<b>K5+</b>	Line of Hadrian's Wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation</li> <li>• Signage</li> <li>• Good path links, including Hadrian's way Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give priority to vehicle movement</li> </ul>	
<b>K6+</b>	Hadrian's Way National Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote</li> <li>• Ensure security and signage for users</li> <li>• Produce management plan</li> <li>• Demolish former abattoir</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow wardening and maintenance standards to slip</li> </ul>	
<b>K7+</b>	Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall & vallum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect features and settings.</li> <li>• Interpretation</li> <li>• Signage</li> </ul>		
<b>K8+</b>	Landmark buildings and structures (Bridges, churches, Hadrian's Wall remains,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain, protect and enhance.</li> <li>• Provide interpretation and signage.</li> <li>• Protect viewpoints of these features.</li> <li>• Prepare management guidance for repainting etc.</li> <li>• Assess for listing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish or allow degradation of character and upkeep of built fabric and setting.</li> </ul>	
<b>K9+</b>	West End Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Design Code.</li> <li>• Recreate character and positive sense of place</li> <li>• Taller features for identity at key points along south side of Scotswood Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow ad-hoc demolition leaving gap-sites</li> <li>• Leave isolated communities surrounded by post demolition sites</li> <li>• Lose local heritage features such as stone boundary walls, gates, older buildings</li> </ul>	

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<b>K10+</b>	Main streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active street frontages</li> <li>• Consider more “home zones”.</li> <li>• More safe crossings between spaces and residential areas</li> <li>• Enhance shopfronts on West Road</li> <li>• Enhance back lanes</li> <li>• Retain traditional pavings</li> <li>• Agree palette of materials/features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pave over grass verges or front gardens</li> <li>• Remove or cover back lane cobbles and setts</li> <li>• Over-use bollards</li> <li>• Proliferation of street furniture and use of non-matching types, particularly bollards</li> </ul>	
<b>K12+</b>	Tree cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets, and street corners</li> <li>• Plant woodland belts in parks and spaces</li> <li>• Manage dene woodlands</li> <li>• Engage the local community</li> <li>• Enhance woodland along Scotswood Road north side.</li> <li>• New structure planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement</li> </ul>	Refer to Wildlife strategy
<b>K13+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly along the valley sides</li> </ul>		
<b>K14+</b>	Distinctive housing areas (Scotswood Village, North Benwell Terraces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and refurbish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish</li> <li>• Plain render gable ends</li> </ul>	Piecemeal demolition is already in progress.
<b>K15+</b>	Parks and green spaces (Denton Dene, Hodgkin Park, Elswick Park and other spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management plans</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance heritage features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow high rear fences abutting spaces.</li> </ul>	

**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>K1-</b>	Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment. Decline in activity on the River Tyne	Implement regeneration plan		See Scotswood Benwell Area Action Plan
<b>K2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value in residential areas.	Consider need for Conservation Area or listing	Demolish piecemeal.	
<b>K3-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	Provide screening & consider re-location		
<b>K4-</b>	Large grassed areas where demolition has taken place	Maintain tidy edges and mown grass perimeters Consider short term economic uses.	Continue to manage as amenity grass.	
<b>K8-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	Design guidance Co-ordinated colour schemes. Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent.	Allow security measures to dominate. Security fences abutting footpaths. Over specification	
<b>K9-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	Consider "home zones". Tackle pavement parking.	Allow street to become car parks	

Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## City Centre: Townscape Character Zone L

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### 1 **Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

The City Centre is the smallest character zone in Newcastle and covers the mediaeval walled town and Tyne waterfront, the main shopping and business centre and the peripheral University and Civic precincts to the north. A large part of the zone is designated as Conservation Area (Leazes and Central). The zone covers the River Tyne historic quayside from the Queen Elizabeth (Metro) Bridge to Pandon Bank, and is circled by the central motorway on the east side and St James Boulevard to the west.. The zone includes both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. There are 9 individual character areas identified within this zone, of which all are urban (including 5 Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 **What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The central zone occupies some steep slopes down to the River Tyne. Early in the city's history the whole central zone was intersected by a series of steep sided stream valleys of the Lort, Erick, Pandon and Bailiff's burns (and others), all leading down to the waterfront. Today these have all been filled and altered, with the watercourses culverted deep below the city centre streets, and often also below the metro and railway lines.

The Tyne occupies a distinct, dramatic and memorable gorge landscape, bridged by some of the finest bridge structures to be found in any city, fine buildings old and new, and some superb riverside views. The Tyne itself has been greatly deepened, altered and narrowed by constructing river walls to accommodate shipping, with quayside buildings constructed on reclaimed land at the shallow edges of the river, the gorge sides rising above them. Several narrow passages lead down between the buildings on the gorge to the Tyne waterfront with steep steps: on Castle Stairs for example pedestrians have to negotiate a steep drop of 20 metres or so from the lip of the gorge at Castle Garth down to the Quayside.

There are four Tyne bridges in this zone which present a classic series of views: each one distinctive and different, famous as engineering structures in their own right, the Tyne, High Level and Swing bridges are all listed.

Open water in the city is an attraction that changes constantly with weather, night and day, tides and the ships and other craft that use the river. The Tyne also brings much wildlife right into the city centre with a diverse range of sea birds, ducks and waders. The south facing banks attract invertebrates and many more bird species. The Tyne Bridge area is home to a breeding colony of kittiwakes (February to August) normally a strictly coastal bird, nesting on sea cliffs. The colony is the most inland in the UK. Otter and seal use the river, salmon have returned to the cleaned-up Tyne after a long absence, and angling remains a popular activity along

the promenades. Some of the older Quayside buildings have bat populations, feeding over the river and the tree clad banks. The river and its wildlife, buildings, structures and activity together create a very dynamic and visually interesting waterfront. The city centre waterfront is still used for naval and recreational shipping, seen at its best during events like the Tall Ships Race.

The main shopping centre (Eldon Square/Northumberland Street) and the Civic Centre all occupy the higher ground above the Tyne rising to 57 metres at Victoria Street behind the University of Newcastle, the highest point in this zone, which falls down to sea level at the tidal quayside area.

Main transport routes all converge on the City Centre zone. The main railway station is within the zone, close to the west quayside, and the main lines head either south across the Tyne via the High Level and King Edward Bridges or cut across the city to the east crossing the motorway and Tyne Bridge approach for the north bound East Coast mainline. The Metro crosses the Tyne at the modern Queen Elizabeth II Bridge and the main interchange is the underground station at Monument. Main bus stations are at Haymarket and Eldon Square, along with a coach station on St. James Boulevard. Much of the city centre road network is an uncomfortable mix of pedestrianised streets, one way systems, no-car lanes, cycle and bus lanes, with standard highway design, barriers, signs and other efforts to control and limit the traffic in the city centre. Through traffic is funnelled on to the Central Motorway circling the centre from the Tyne Bridge to the Universities, or the West Central Route (St James Boulevard) which links the Redheugh Bridge to the north-west bound A189 Barrack Road, both routes linking at the Town Moor. As a result heavy traffic has something close to an inner ring network. Hadrian's Way National Trail, an off road recreational route, follows the quayside promenade right through the city centre area.

City centre industry has been replaced by retail, leisure and commercial activity, particularly food and drink, hotels, clubs, shops, and offices. There is a significant and increasing amount of housing compared to virtually none a decade or two back. The new homes are usually high priced flats and apartments, for example along the Quayside. 'Graingertown' the Georgian sandstone heart of Newcastle has also attracted residents back to live in the upper floors, restoring the city centre's vitality and vibrancy. Accommodation tends to be for the younger market: single and childless people. There are some recent landmark housing developments and conversions, for example the refurbished "55 Degrees North" (former Swan House offices) and the Turnbull –a former warehouse. The city is becoming a fashionable and popular place to live (although with a significant proportion of buy to let). Developments are typically medium rise 4 or more storeys. There are few tower blocks in this zone (most notably the 20 storey Bewick Court its roof bristling with telecommunications masts) although several of the quayside developments rise to 10 storeys. The 10 storey Civic Centre and several church spires compete for attention on the City Centre skyline, but the dominant feature (especially when illuminated at night) is St James Park football stadium, just outside this zone, although now mitigated to an extent by the new developments west of this.

Few city centre dwellers have gardens, and green spaces in the centre are small and infrequent, thus those green spaces that do exist have a scarcity value. More often city centre spaces are paved with perhaps a few trees, and are civic spaces

rather than green spaces: the Quayside promenade, Laing Square, Times Square and the area around the city centre landmark the 40m high Earl Grey Monument. All these spaces accommodate special events and gatherings as well as offering spaces to sit out, meet, have outdoor cafes and display public art.

Old Eldon Square, recently refurbished as part of the shopping centre revitalisation, is a well used central green space doubling as a war memorial and as a gathering place for shoppers and teenagers. The Civic Centre and St Thomas' Church grounds at the Haymarket are perhaps the most park-like of the central zone green spaces, well used particularly in nice weather by city centre workers, shoppers, visitors and students as a place to sit out, eat, meet friends, feed the ducks and so on. There are two graveyards in the zone, but no allotments, outdoor sports grounds or children's play areas. Street trees were once virtually absent from the city centre though efforts have been made to introduce small numbers in Northumberland Street, St James Boulevard, the Quayside, Saville Row and the Haymarket area. These new trees are all still young and face a difficult establishment period in a tough environment. Small areas of woodland trees occupy some of the steeper unbuilt ground above the Quayside, and some mature tree groups are well established in church grounds, the Civic Centre and around the Castle Keep, and there are good shrub and tree planted areas in the University campuses. Trees, now semi-mature, have also been planted in considerable numbers along parts of the central motorway.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences and current role**

The topography of the natural landscape was a determining factor that played a significant role in the growth and development of the city and had a direct influence on its highly distinctive character. Early settlers and traders used the mouths of the various tributary burns to land their boats and wares. The establishment of the Roman "*Pons Aelius*" bridge with a protective fort on the sandstone cliff overlooking the Tyne in AD122 is the first record of a settlement. There are many Roman finds in the vicinity of the Quayside/Guildhall area and around the fort site, which is now occupied by the mediaeval Castle Keep and Black Gate. Hadrian's Wall passed through the city centre and is thought to have curved slightly to the north of the fort. Milecastle No 4 was near All Saints, the site now under the railway line. The line of Hadrian's Wall is picked up heading west aligned with Westgate Road.

The Roman Fort site later became an 8<sup>th</sup> century Saxon burial ground, the settlement then being known as Monkchester, before being redeveloped as the Norman 'new' castle after which the City was named. The remaining keep dates from 1168 and the defensive site was completed in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the town walls a hundred years later. The mediaeval walled town contained much of the southern portion of this zone, an area now bounded by the river, the railway station, Low Friar Street, Blackfriars, Gallowgate, Blackett Street, Carloliol Square and Milk Market. Parts of the town wall and towers remain at Orchard Street, West Walls, behind Stowell Street and at Plummer Tower. A Medieval timber bridge was built in 1248 and a stone bridge in 1781. Modest port and commercial activity developed and continued to grow. Beyond the Castle and St Nicholas' Cathedral, a variety of markets became established: the Bigg Market, Groat Market and Cloth Market for example. By the late medieval period there were still spaces behind the streets



given over to orchards, pastures and gardens. Four churches and the Blackfriars Monastery are shown on Corbridge's map dated 1723.

From the 16th century, coal mining and shipping generated enough wealth to bring about significant social and economic change. Parts of the town walls & gates were demolished in the 18th century where they restricted urban growth. Grainger's grand design for the upper city began to take shape with the curving Grey Street as its splendid centrepiece, linking Dean Street to Blackett Street over the infilled Lort Burn. Followed by Mosley and Collingwood Streets, the town began its urban renaissance in the Tyneside Classical style, being completed in the period 1835-42, and consequently improving both the status of the city and its quality of life. Newcastle's Graingertown is an historic urban environment of national significance, where 40% of the buildings are listed, and a third of these are Grade 1.

Major changes occurred in the city centre zone in the 1960s; Newcastle's T. Dan Smith era. The council tried to tackle post war traffic and growth with large scale concrete construction of motorways, junctions and new tall buildings. As a consequence parts of the historic city were lost. Eldon Square opened in 1975 creating a very large indoor shopping centre that took trade away from traditional shopping streets including Graingertown. The Central Motorway cut through historic Pilgrim Street and divided the centre from the eastern areas and Town Moor in an effort to serve the area's economic growth and attract investment in the region. Following this attitudes changed and efforts were made to retain and consolidate the best of the historic city centre, notably in the award winning "Graingertown Project" which successfully revitalised what had become a rather rundown heart of the Georgian centre. Extensive recent and ongoing redevelopment within the city centre reflects the renewed vibrancy of the area, including some substantial new buildings within the formerly rather run-down area south of the Central Station.

## **5 Strengths: special character, successes**

- Graingertown
- Quayside
- Bridges
- River Tyne views
- Railway heritage
- Roman heritage
- Mediaeval heritage including the City Walls and Keep
- Civic Centre grounds
- Old Eldon Square
- High quality floral displays
- Streets with traditional stone or paviour surfacing

## **6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain**

- Central Motorway
- Standard highway treatments
- Highway barriers, crossings and signs
- Street trees in inappropriate places
- Vandalism, litter, discarded food /drink and other anti-social behaviour
- Flower towers

Traffic growth and parking

## **7 Opportunities for enhancement, improvement**

Highways (all carriageways and footways)

High level walkways

Quayside stairs and chares

Trees

Spaces for planting and flower displays

## **8 Threats: risks, difficulties**

Risk management

Highway Design and management

Poor levels of planning enforcement

Contamination and debris in the Tyne

Inappropriate development

## **9 References**

- 'Patterns of Experience', A Character Assessment of the Newcastle upon Tyne Central Conservation Area
- Leazes Conservation Area Character Statement
- Graingertown 'Investing in Quality'
- Graingertown Maintenance Manual
- A Guide to the Public Monuments and Sculpture of Tyne and Wear.
- Hadrian's Wall Vol. 1 The Wall Walk
- Tyne Gorge Study
- 'Colour on the Tyne'
- 'Tyne Landscape'

**Strengths and opportunities.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Strengths and opportunities</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>L1+</b>	Distinctive areas of nationally important historical and architectural value: Graingertown, Blackfriars, Castle Keep, Stephenson Quarter, Quayside, University precincts etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value</li> <li>• Reinforce mediaeval core</li> <li>• Good quality interpretation for features, e.g. line of Hadrian's Wall, City Walls.</li> <li>• Protect and enhance settings of Listed Buildings and monuments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose scale and sense of place through new developments</li> <li>• Neglect demolition sites and part-demolished blocks.</li> </ul>	Refer to City Centre, Leazes and Framlington Place Conservation Area Management Plans and Tyne Gorge Study
<b>L2+</b>	Landform, particularly the Tyne gorge and steep streets and chares down to the waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance</li> <li>• Control siting, form and scale of new buildings</li> </ul>		Refer to Tyne Gorge Study
<b>L3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect key views.</li> <li>• <b>Waterfront views along the river</b></li> <li>• <b>Views from lip of Gorge</b></li> <li>• <b>Views from bridges</b></li> <li>• <b>All Saint's Church from Pilgrim Street</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	Refer to Tyne Gorge Study

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<b>L4+</b>	Main streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active street frontages</li> <li>• Treat city centre streets as spaces with more greenery and incidental spaces to rest, eat and socialise</li> <li>• Consider the needs of all users</li> <li>• Better streetscapes</li> <li>• Slow and reduce traffic and air pollution</li> <li>• Stronger, clearer pedestrian links</li> <li>• Design palette(s) for coherent paving materials and street furniture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow continued vehicle dominance.</li> <li>• Introduce more controls, segregation barriers and signage</li> <li>• Over-use tarmac surfacing, at expense of traditional paving</li> </ul>	Refer to City Centre Action Plan and associated design guidance
<b>L5+</b>	Tree cover, street and garden trees, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets, and street corners</li> <li>• Maintain planting along motorway corridors</li> <li>• More trees in internal courts and squares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without justification and providing for replacement</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>L6+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links, particularly access to quayside and Hadrian's Way, the parks and the universities</li> </ul>		

**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>L1-</b>	Central Motorway and traffic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a transport strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with ad-hoc highway modification</li> </ul>	
<b>L2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value in peripheral areas, out-of-the-way places, car parks, temporary sites, universities and highways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quality of paths and boundary treatments</li> <li>• Prepare and Implement an asset management plan and materials palette</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use scrap or spare materials for access controls</li> </ul>	Refer to Conservation Management Plans.
<b>L3-</b>	Unsightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>		
<b>L4-</b>	Large paved or unbuilt areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationalisation, landscaping and/or habitat creation and selective sites for upgrading.</li> <li>• Management plans and good quality workmanship &amp; repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose linkage between spaces</li> </ul>	
<b>L5-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	

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<p><b>L6-</b></p>	<p>Increasing numbers of cars and rising demand for car parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote park and ride and drop-off zones</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow streets to become car parks (e.g. Grey Street)</li> <li>• Prevent temporary car parks on cleared sites</li> </ul>	
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Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## Mid Newcastle: Townscape Character Zone M

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### 1 **Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

The Mid Newcastle zone is situated right at the heart of Newcastle just north of the city centre and extending over many of the older Victorian and Edwardian suburbs of Sandyford, Heaton and Jesmond in the east, parts of Fenham to the west, and Gosforth to the north. The Town Moor lies at the centre of this character area. There are 52 individual character areas identified within this zone, all of which are urban (including 26 Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### 2 **What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

Historically, the growth and development of this zone was strongly influenced by the presence of the Town Moor as protected open pasture land, where the City's Freemen hold historic grazing rights that are still exercised today and protected by statute (The Town Moor Act 1988). The Town Moor is unique in the UK - no other city has such a large tract of pasture, grazed by cows, so close to the city centre. The Town Moor extends over 388 hectares (959 acres) of semi-improved neutral and damp grassland, and is subdivided by tree-lined main roads, some parts having their own name and separate character: Nun's Moor, Castle Leazes, Hunter's Moor, Duke's Moor and Little Moor. Once its primeval tree cover had been removed the moor was originally probably a wet and rather boggy area of lowland heath. It was not just for grazing and there are well preserved stretches of rigg and furrow indicating cultivation by ploughing. There are numerous areas affected by coal mining, from the hummocky remains of bell pits to large opencast operations during the Second World War and as recently as the 1990s at Hunter's Moor. The moor has probably always been used recreationally. During the nineteenth century the Newcastle Races were held on the moor and the course is still visible in places. The Moor still accommodates travelling circuses and fairs including the largest such fair in Europe, the annual Hoppings. As Newcastle expanded in the Victorian era, public open spaces were created on sections of the Town Moor: Leazes, Brandling, Exhibition, Nun's Moor and Brandling Parks. Since then other public facilities have been accommodated on Town Moor land with hospitals, new highways, allotment gardens, a golf course, and playing fields added over the years. Sometimes these developments entailed a deal whereby extra land was added to the Town Moor ("intakes") to compensate for the area lost to grazing.

During the late nineteenth century there was demand for larger residential properties and suburbs developed on the edge of the city centre and away from the main industrial areas. Some of the new residential areas had to "leap frog" across the Town Moor into the rural townships and parishes of Gosforth, Jesmond and Fenham, extending the built up urban area very significantly. This was also the time that public transport services developed to serve these suburbs. Prior to this rapid expansion, there were only small agricultural and mining settlements in the area for

example at Jesmond Vale, Brandling Village, Spital Tongues, Gosforth and Haddrick's Mill.

The topography of this zone is strongly influenced by the Ouseburn Valley in the form of a steep sided north-south "dene" running from South Gosforth through Jesmond and Sandyford. There were several tributary streams including the large steep-sided Pandon Dene between Shieldfield and the city centre. Most have now been culverted. One stream still drains the northern edge of the Town Moor and although culverted in part continues east as Craghall Dene, to join the Ouseburn. Another stream (Sandyford Burn) has been captured to create the lake in Exhibition Park. Apart from the incised river valleys which descend to as low as around 10 metres above sea level, the zone has a reasonably level plateau landform set well back from the River Tyne Valley sides and is mainly between 40 and 70 metres above sea level. The highest natural ground in this zone is at Cow Hill (114 metres) in the west corner of the Town Moor with the nearby but artificially constructed second hill, constructed from surplus material excavated to form the dual carriageway, reaching a few metres higher. Geologically this zone has a heavy stony glacial clay over sandstone. There are sandstone outcrops visible as crags within Jesmond Dene, exploited for building stone and as romantic landscape features by wealthy armaments and engineering magnate Sir William Armstrong, the dene's nineteenth century owner and one of the city's benefactors.

Mid Newcastle has varied residential areas, many with very strong identity, particularly where there are popular and well maintained Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses and villas. The zone is almost exclusively low rise, 2 storey brick houses with slate or tiled roofs. At least half were built before the First World War and these earlier terraced homes (both houses and "Tyneside" flats) will typically have small to medium sized front gardens and rear yards. The houses are predominantly privately owned, mostly owner-occupied though private rental properties are frequent in Jesmond, Sandyford and Heaton. To the east in High Heaton there are generally more recent interwar and post-war housing including bungalows, semis and links. Tower blocks are rare but noticeable on the skyline, especially seen from the Town Moor. Tall blocks are found at The Spinney in High Heaton, at Freeman Hospital, Lower Heaton and Jesmond Vale, Shieldfield, Moor Court on the edge of the moor in Gosforth, and at Arthur's Hill.

Main accesses by rail and road to and through mid Newcastle are those radiating out from the City Centre to the north (B1318 Great North Road), the north-west (A167 Jedburgh Road) and the east (A1058 Coast Road), plus two main east-west road links: the A189 and A191. A distinctive characteristic of the Town Moor is the number of major tree lined transport corridors that criss-cross the open space and most travellers within this character zone will at times journey across the Town Moor.

Green spaces in the zone are amongst the best quality, most popular and well used in the city. The range is good although there are relatively few smaller incidental amenity grass areas compared with other parts of Newcastle. The spaces tend to be larger, and serve a very large catchment and population, often extending well beyond the city limits. The zone is well endowed with traditional parks, all different and all attractive with mature trees and landscaping that balances and enhances the built environment and local quality of life. The open spaces also support a good



range of wildlife, and key local species such as otter, skylark and song thrush - to name but a few - are present and flourishing in this zone. There are also numerous cemeteries and churchyards, institutions, sports clubs and schools (public and private), with a rich diversity of pitches, gardens and mature grounds that contribute greatly to local amenity. Examples include Westgate, Byker & Heaton and the Jesmond Cemeteries, Heaton Manor and Royal Grammar Schools, the County Cricket Club, and St Nicholas' Hospital. The area has a good supply of allotments and generally they are popular with waiting lists.

For a city that few would describe as leafy or tree lined, this zone contains a good proportion of Newcastle's street trees with the leafy character further strengthened by trees, hedges and shrubbery in front gardens. The zone has two of the best tree-lined streets in the city at Towers Avenue, Jesmond and North Avenue, Gosforth. Mature street trees are threatened though principally because of the increase in car use and ownership, services workings and the way streets are now used. Grass verges cannot withstand vehicle pressure and many have been paved over and used for parking. Some in streets like Oaklands and Moor Crescent in Gosforth are almost too narrow to support trees or to survive as grass.

The zone contains eight of Newcastle's twelve Conservation Areas and it is no surprise given the zone's very obvious amenity and environmental assets, and the many vibrant and sustainable 'urban villages', that it should contain many of the most popular and thus highest property value residential areas in Newcastle.

Whilst residential is the predominant land use, this zone contains all the city's hospitals, Newcastle University and also secondary campuses of both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities and many schools. There is also a scatter of local shopping and commercial centres; principal among these is Gosforth which has a popular and fairly traditional small-town style high street. Larger scale commercial/retail operations are rare, but some are located at Sandyford/Shieldfield, Etherstone Avenue/Cochrane Park and South Gosforth. There is a minimal amount of industrial use and this tends to be small-scale back lane businesses and very occasional other operations, although there is an industrial estate tucked away at Christon Road in Gosforth. The main area for new development is within the former Newcastle Brewery site which is now being developed - in a partnership between the city and Newcastle University - as Science Central, with numerous new and striking research, educational and commercial buildings set within a cohesive townscape of streets and major squares, and with later phases to include some innovative residential provision related to this.

### **3 Why its there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest lasting human influences on this zone were the ancient routes: to the west along the line of Hadrian's Wall and to the north on what became the Great North Road. The Town Moor is the largest archaeological feature and dates from early mediaeval times, possibly earlier, as do settlements at Heaton, and Brandling. A 14<sup>th</sup> century route of pilgrimage led from Barras Bridge to St Mary's Well and Chapel ('Our Lady's Chapel') in Jesmond Dene which remains as a ruin. Pilgrims may have used the route of Jesmond Road or a footpath leading from the Town Moor. Place names are often geographical and descriptive such as Westgate and

Arthur's Hills. Heaton was a high settlement and Sandyford was a crossing of a stream, while Gosforth is from Goose Ford. Shieldfield is possibly named as the mustering ground for troops, outside the walled city, and was once the site of a fort. Alternatively the name is Anglo-Saxon meaning 'shelter in a forest clearing' – a shiel is a hut or shelter. Historic buildings dating from before the 19<sup>th</sup> century are very few. There is the so-called 'King John's Castle' in Heaton Park, St Mary's Well and Chapel, and a number of stone bridges. There was a mediaeval village of North Gosforth under what is now Melton Park, and the remains of the mediaeval North Gosforth Chapel remain today, protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument amid the modern houses. There are Roman carved stones at the chapel site.

The industrial era brought more historic features, often linked to local industry and engineering: the elegant steel bridge over the Ouseburn at Benton Bank, the railways and waggonways, including an underground route, the Victoria Tunnel connecting Spital Tongues former colliery to the lower Ouseburn. Mining was a major influence in later years, and although most traces have now gone some colliery waggonways remain as off-road routes like Coxlodge Waggonway or highway as at Criston Road, and Jubilee Road. The zone is also crossed by the east coast mainline railway and the Metro, both developed on the lines of early Victorian railways. There are also a number of churches, mills and also Sir William Armstrong's various halls, follies, houses, and other features within Jesmond Dene.

#### **4 Current role**

Mid Newcastle remains a popular inner suburban residential area with a short commuting journey to school or work, and generally this is seen as the wealthiest part of Newcastle. The zone's popularity also means unrelenting pressure for yet more home building. With building space at a premium, properties with generous grounds are attractive for redevelopment as higher density flats and apartments. This trend is often not popular with the resident population who regret the loss of gardens and green space and historic character. Conserving the appearance and quality of the townscape and green environment is a key concern - Mid Newcastle does not need to embrace major change.

#### **5 Strengths: special character, successes: to protect and enhance.**

The Town Moor  
The River Ouseburn and its tributaries  
The Ouseburn parks and woodlands: Jesmond Dene and Vale, Armstrong and Heaton Parks, Paddy Freeman's Park  
St Mary's Chapel  
Exhibition, Leazes, Gosforth and Nun's Moor Parks  
Armstrong Bridge, Benton Bank  
The Jesmond Conservation Areas (Brandling, South Jesmond, Jesmond Dene)  
Gosforth Conservation Area  
St Nicholas' Hospital Conservation Area  
Framlington Place Conservation Area  
Leazes Conservation Area  
Summerhill Conservation Area  
Newcastle University precinct  
Ancient woodland at Heaton Park

Street and garden trees  
Hadrian's Wall/Westgate Road  
Traditional terraces and 'Tyneside flats' (Arthur's Hill, Jesmond, Sandyford, Lower and Central Heaton, and Gosforth and South Gosforth Terraces)  
The Great North Road and Gosforth High Street  
Westgate, Byker & Heaton and the Jesmond Cemeteries  
Views from Town Moor, Cowgate and Arthur's Hill

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Large scale retail and commercial development  
Castle Leazes  
Loss of unlisted buildings of local townscape value  
Loss of mature private gardens and grounds to development and parking  
Loss of street and garden trees and failure to replant  
Increasing car ownership and use, with more than one car per household  
Standardised traffic calming and management  
Loss of verges to tarmac and parking  
Poor maintenance and loss of character in "Tyneside" flats and terraced houses  
Neglect in public realm including open spaces, Town Moor, cemeteries  
Loss of traditional garden walls, railings and gates  
Coast Road

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage in the eight Conservation Areas  
Heritage on the line of Hadrian's Wall  
The Town Moor: recognition, heritage and enhancement of its unique character  
River Ouseburn corridor  
Wildlife habitats on the green and open spaces  
Main streets and thoroughfares  
Street Trees  
Great North Road  
University of Newcastle precinct  
Tree and woodland cover and hedges  
Off road routes and linking the green spaces  
Science Central (former Newcastle Brewery site)  
The hospitals  
Westgate Hill towers  
The main roads, particularly Jesmond Road/Coast Road and Gosforth High Street  
Continue with improvements to the poor quality path, boundary treatments and gates on Town Moor

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

High density redevelopment  
Provision for cars and parking, including paving over front gardens and highway widening  
Loss of Town Moor trees  
Property improvement that erodes intrinsic character

Building on green spaces, especially where these provide a link between other spaces

## 9 References

- The Gosforth Strategy
- Conservation Area Character Statements
- Conservation Area Management Plans
- Hadrian's Wall: The Wall Walk Volume 1
- Newcastle Town R J Charlton
- The Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Town Moor Stewards Committee of the Freemen of Newcastle.
- Town Moor Management Plan

### Strengths and opportunities.

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/Comments
<b>M1+</b>	Distinctive residential areas of architectural value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve heritage.</li> <li>• Recognise heritage/rarity value.</li> <li>• Consider new Conservation Areas at Exhibition Park/University, Jesmond, Spital Tongues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alter roof alignments with large or insensitive loft conversions.</li> <li>• Introduce standardised road closures and culs de sac</li> <li>• Over use highway barriers, bollards and railings</li> <li>• Extensions and garages between semi-detached houses creating a terrace effect</li> </ul>	Refer to Gosforth, St Nicholas' Hospital, Jesmond Dene, South Jesmond, Brandling Village, Summerhill, Leazes and Framlington Place Conservation Area Character Statements and Management Plans
<b>M2+</b>	Former and existing denes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Jesmond Dene &amp; Little Dene with new woodland and reflect original landform</li> </ul>		

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<b>M3+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect as key city viewpoints</li> <li>• <b>Town Moor Hills</b></li> <li>• <b>Great North Road and Grandstand Road</b></li> <li>• <b>Armstrong Bridge</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	
<b>M5+</b>	Tree cover, street and garden trees, hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant and manage trees in front gardens, streets, junctions, traffic calming schemes and street corners</li> <li>• Manage Town Moor tree belts and woodlands in parks and spaces</li> <li>• Protect garden and street trees from loss and harm, Protect veteran trees in mature suburbs</li> <li>• Engage the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement</li> </ul>	Refer to Tree and Wildlife strategies
<b>M6+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, promote and enhance Town Moor paths and Coxlodge Waggonway</li> </ul>		
<b>M7+</b>	Parks and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and manage heritage city parks to consistent Green Flag or equivalent standard (Leazes, the Ouseburn Parks, Exhibition Park, Nuns Moor Park, Gosforth Central Park</li> <li>• Management Plan for Town Moors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow high rear fences abutting spaces</li> <li>• Create more low grade amenity space</li> </ul>	Refer to Green Spaces Strategy and related documents

**Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
<b>M1-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character and value in residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quality of paths and boundary treatments</li> <li>• Encourage good maintenance of front facades and gardens, particularly where houses are rented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-standardise highway improvements and design.</li> <li>• Remove setts, granite or whinstone kerbs, and other traditional street features</li> </ul>	
<b>M2-</b>	Unightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monolithic buildings</li> </ul>	
<b>M3-</b>	Large grassed amenity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rationalisation, habitat creation and selective sites for upgrading</li> <li>• Management plans and good quality workmanship &amp; repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow motor cycles on green spaces</li> <li>• Lose linkage between spaces</li> </ul>	
<b>M4-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidance</li> <li>• Co-ordinated colour schemes</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate.</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths.</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>M5-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and rising car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider "home zones"</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow parking on pavements and bus/cycle lanes</li> </ul>	

Newcastle City Council

# Newcastle Character Assessment

## East End and Riverside: Townscape Character Zone N

### **1 Where: location and extent, number of character areas**

The East End and Riverside is in the south east of Newcastle, extending along the Tyne waterfront between St Ann's and Low Walker, containing the predominantly residential areas of Byker, Walker and Walkergate, and the more mixed, industrial and commercial areas at Lower Ouseburn, St Lawrence, Shields Road, Fossway and Benfield. There are 18 individual character areas identified within this zone, all of which are urban (including 6 Areas of Local Townscape Significance - ALTS).

### **2 What's there: key characteristics, geography, landscape and land use.**

The East End of Newcastle is an area with a reasonably level topography apart from a sandstone outcrop at Byker Hill reaching the highest ground in the zone, just over 64 metres above sea level. Very steep south and south east facing slopes and cliffs form the northern side of the Tyne Gorge, which drop to sea level as this area is tidal. Most of the East End is built on stony glacial clay over sandstone. The River Ouseburn has carved a steep sided valley to join the Tyne, with three dramatic and distinctive bridge viaducts linking St Ann's and Byker. This zone supports a surprising variety of wildlife, with key local species (otter, skylark and song thrush) present and a good range of botanical, bird and invertebrate species of interest along the River Tyne and its steep banks.

The Tyne itself has been deepened and narrowed to accommodate shipping and there is reclaimed land along the narrow waterfront. There was much landfill during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries using industrial wastes and ballast, with more recently efforts to cover or cap these filled areas with inert clays and soils. The north bank of the Tyne between St Peter's Basin and Waverdale is a dramatic cliff falling over 20 metres to the waterfront. A former railway along the top of the cliff now provides part of Hadrian's Way National Trail, an off road recreational route. The riverside industry has been largely replaced by the abundant tree cover of Walker Riverside Park along the south facing section of the Tyne at St Anthony's. The Tyne is however still supporting vibrant marine-related development in the more downstream section particularly in relation to the offshore industries, where the primary colours of the landmark cranes and other structures are visible over a considerable distance. There is a new marina for recreational boats at St Peter's Basin and more riverside commerce and industry at St Lawrence. The only bridge within the area is the innovative Gateshead Millennium

Bridge, a pedestrian crossing and the world's first rotating bridge, which was opened in 2002 and was the winner of several awards.

With the exception of Victorian terraced housing in Byker, industrial development along the banks of the Tyne, and housing and other facilities (Church, park and so on) around the Walker Pit area most of this zone was agricultural until after the First World War. As a result of rapid twentieth century development the East End has large and homogenous residential areas, principally low rise, low density brick links and semis built between and just after the wars, most with front and rear gardens and predominantly council housing. These houses occur in lots of Newcastle's neighbourhoods but are particularly numerous in Walker. The "garden village" style was nationally popular at the time; an interpretation of the traditional rural brick cottage influenced by social housing experiments at Bourneville and Port Sunlight. Walkergate by contrast is primarily private housing consisting mainly of semi-detached homes and bungalows although of a similar date.

This East End pattern does change strikingly at the Byker estate, now four decades old but still regarded as a nationally significant achievement in innovative public housing design and renewal. The medium rise apartments in the Byker Wall and Tom Collins House are defining features providing a backdrop for the rest of the estate and creating enclosure. These "iconic" landmark buildings are just as recognisable from afar as the riverside cranes. The redevelopment of Byker replaced the Victorian terraces, primarily of Tyneside flats and typically with no gardens, although there are some remnants of Old Byker such as some of the churches and other community buildings which were retained and integrated into the redevelopment. These include some of the buildings on the steep slopes of St Michael's Mount (80m AOD) where there are magnificent views along the river to the bridges and medieval core of Newcastle. These views through the Tyne Gorge characterise the area creating a strong sense of character and identity.

The other exceptions to the typical East End housing pattern are the seven tower blocks of flats; St Anthony's House at Pottery Bank, three at Dovercourt Road, and three at Titan Road. There is also the very recent redevelopment of up-market medium rise apartments, business and leisure blocks at the East Quayside.

Although the council estates of the East End have seen substantial refurbishment (often over decades), properties in some areas remain unpopular and difficult to let.

Main accesses to and through the East End are east-west or parallel to the Tyne. North-south links are minor roads. Industrial growth was shaped by the railways (riverside, east coast mainline and the Tynemouth line, which is now the Metro), the main east-west roads (A186 & 187, A193 and B1313) and the rivers Tyne and Ouseburn. Permeability is high except where steep topography limits access.



Green spaces in the East End are often small and concealed from view behind the houses, usually amenity grass, with some sports pitches. The area has a good supply of allotments though nowadays they are not all in full use and some are run-down. The key open spaces are along Walker Riverside and at Walker Park, which was laid out as a traditional urban park in the late Victorian period, and is still the only proper park in the East End zone. Over the last 30 years, housing clearance has helped improve the connectivity and variety of open space. Other larger spaces are at Harbottle Park, occupying an exposed corner at Allendale Road, and Waverdale, a contaminated industrial infill site restored to semi-natural grassland and emerging woodland, and used for recreation and increasingly by wildlife, although the area has been significantly reduced by the construction of the new Walker School. The Lightfoot Sports Centre is seen by many as being at the heart of the East End and is characterised by its silver “dome” roof. The centre and its numerous sports pitches are popular and well used but again relatively hidden away behind houses.

Apart from the riverside plantations (all less than 40 years old) there is no woodland, and mature trees are rare, the main groups being within Walker Cemetery and the former vicarage. There are relatively few street and garden trees. Many of those planted when the “garden village” estates were laid out have not survived into maturity, though significant numbers of new trees have been planted as part of environmental renewal schemes over the last 30 years. By contrast Byker has an abundance (perhaps over-abundance) of trees, but they are all of the same age, being contemporary with the redevelopment, and need significant management.

A small light industrial/trade retail area is centred around Industry Road/Benfield Road/The Coast Road, and there is a new retail park between Shields Road and The Fossway with vast areas for car parking, showing the scale of regeneration going on in the area, but also a development that has minimal regard for local character or place.

Shield's Road was always the East End's main shopping street and recently efforts have been made to rejuvenate it with a new public square, supermarket (Morrison), fast food (KFC), and the new swimming pool and library.

### **3 Why it's there: archaeology, history, cultural influences.**

The earliest definite route was adopted by the Romans for ‘Hadrian's Wall,’ aligned east to west through the East End, its route now marked by the eastern part of Shields Road and then the Fossway. (Fosse means ditch or ditch-lined road). Wall remains were uncovered recently during the construction of Shields Road Square in Byker, and the terminal fort at Segedunum (Wallsend) is just outside the city boundary. There were three Milecastles, the first at St Francis of Assisi, Eastfield Avenue, the second at “The Fosse” Public House, and the third perched high above the Ouseburn valley on the eastern side. The name “Walker” is said to

mean the marsh by the wall. Certainly the Norse *Kjerr* or the modern word, *carr* means a marshy woodland, and has been incorporated in both Walker and Byker place names.

City Road has strong archaeological and historic interest, close to the historic centre of Newcastle, and with features like the Keelman's Hospital, St Ann's Church, Sallyport House, St. Dominic's Priory, and remnants of the City Wall around Pandon Tower.

The lower Ouseburn is a Conservation Area with complex landscape and industrial archaeology: the riversides, buildings, bridges and a tunnel. The valley once contained important nineteenth century lime kilns, glassworks, potteries (including the renowned Maling pottery at Hoult's Yard which closed in 1963), lead and copper works, and corn mills. Coal mining has been associated with the valley since 1239 and there is also a history of landfill. The area is now being redeveloped for housing and small commercial/creative units, building on the distinctive and somewhat quirky character of the area.

The Tyne with its open aspect and distant views contrasts with the Ouseburn which has a very tight, enclosed, intimate character. The Tyne through Walker was modified and deepened in the 1860s to remove "Walker Sand" in the river between the Wincomblee area and Low Walker. Bill Point which jutted out into a bend of the Tyne just east of St Anthony's and the Riverside Park was also removed to improve the width for shipping.

Mining was widespread through the area through to Victorian times, along with heavy industry along the banks of the Tyne and also around the main railway lines (such as the large Parsons engineering works on Shields Road).

#### **4 Current role**

Most of the East End zone grew as inter-war housing to accommodate the families of those returning from the wars, and the area's economy relied on the riverside and Fossway heavy industries. These industries have now all but vanished, and the current East End has lost much of its economic base, but the community still lives there. Much of the area is therefore now a dormitory suburb, although unemployment is relatively high in many areas, and some residential areas are not particularly popular. The area has been changing and regeneration is evident at the East Quayside and at Shields Road/Fossway, and is underway in parts of Walker. Tourism and heritage are relatively new concepts for the area. However much of the East End still needs to change and adapt to a different role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to provide a healthy and vibrant community.

**5 Strengths: special character, local gems, successes: to protect and enhance.**

The long River Tyne waterfront  
The river Ouseburn (lower tidal reaches and valley)  
Lower Ouseburn Conservation Area  
Byker Farm  
Walker Riverside Park  
Hadrian's Way National Trail  
Line of Hadrian's Wall  
Landmark buildings and structures  
Byker Wall and estate  
Byker Hill  
Colourful waterfront industries  
Shields Road  
Lightfoot Centre  
Walker Park  
East End Pool  
Ouseburn viaducts

**6 Weaknesses: detractors, challenges, development against the grain: to change and improve.**

Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment  
Poor maintenance and loss of character in "garden village" style homes and Byker.  
Neglect in public realm including open spaces  
Loss of mature trees and failure to replant  
Decline of traditional shopping streets  
Unsightly scrapyards  
Decline in activity on the River Tyne  
"Sameness" over large areas  
Fossway retail development

**7 Opportunities; priorities for enhancement and improvement.**

Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall  
The River Tyne and its waterfront  
The River Ouseburn  
Walker Riverside Park and Hadrian's Way  
Harbottle Park  
Walker Park  
Waverdale  
Byker Estate  
Main streets and thoroughfares  
Tree cover  
Off road routes

**8 Threats: needing action to prevent further harm.**

Comprehensive redevelopment

Housing improvement that erodes intrinsic character  
 Paving over front gardens for parking  
 Security fencing, CCTV and other protection  
 Demolition  
 Tree removal  
 Building on green spaces  
 Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership  
 Loss of river views

## 9 References

- Walker Riverside Area Action Plan
- Walker Riverside Master plan
- Lower Ouseburn Conservation Area Character Statement and Management Plan
- Byker web pages
- Hadrian's Wall: The Wall Walk Volume 1
- Sustrans Coast to Coast Cycle Route Guide
- History of Maling Pottery (Web Page)
- 'Tyne Landscape'
- 'Colour on the Tyne'
- Tyne Gorge Study

### Strengths and opportunities.

Guide Point Ref no	Strengths and opportunities	Do's	Don'ts	Notes/ Comments
N1+	The long River Tyne waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and open up for public view and access</li> <li>• Enhance river and river edge wildlife habitats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block access or key viewpoints with buildings, barriers or fences</li> </ul>	Refer to Tyne Gorge Study
N2+	The river Ouseburn (lower tidal reaches and valley)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect water and wildlife habitat quality,</li> <li>• Retain river walls and boating activity, public access and views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over gentrify.</li> </ul>	Proposed barrage will be a significant change
N3+	Byker City Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and promote.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose farm activity</li> </ul>	

<b>N4+</b>	Hadrian's Way National Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote.</li> <li>• Ensure security and signage for users.</li> <li>• Prepare and implement management plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow maintenance standards to slip</li> </ul>	
<b>N5+</b>	Heritage along the line of Hadrian's Wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance</li> <li>• Interpretation</li> </ul>		
<b>N6+</b>	Walker Riverside Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain, manage &amp; protect wildlife habitats and trees</li> <li>• Management plan</li> <li>• Create views out through woodlands</li> <li>• Upgrade so that people can safely use the space as a park</li> <li>• Achieve Green Flag/ City Standard Grade 1a</li> <li>• Interpretation and signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build apartments or other tall buildings</li> <li>• Allow buildings that back on to the park and gardens with perimeter fencing over 1.2 metres height</li> </ul>	
<b>N7+</b>	Landmark buildings and structures (Ouseburn viaducts, Byker Wall and estate, colourful shipyard cranes and waterfront industries, Lightfoot Centre, East End Pool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, retain, protect and enhance</li> <li>• Provide interpretation and signage.</li> <li>• Protect viewpoints of these features.</li> <li>• Prepare management guidance for repainting etc.</li> <li>• Assess for listing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish</li> <li>• allow degradation of character or neglect of upkeep of built fabric and setting</li> <li>• Lose local heritage features: stone walls, gates, railings, etc.</li> </ul>	

<b>N8+</b>	Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect as key city viewpoints:</li> <li>• <b>Byker Hill,</b></li> <li>• <b>Ouseburn bridges,</b></li> <li>• <b>high level sections of Hadrian's Way</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow development to mar or block the view</li> </ul>	
<b>N9+</b>	East End Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and enforce Walker Design Code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow ad-hoc demolition leaving gap-sites</li> </ul>	
<b>N10+</b>	Main streets and thoroughfares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create more tree-lined suburban streets</li> <li>• Active street frontages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove or cover setts, cobbles and stone kerbs</li> </ul>	
<b>N11+</b>	Tree cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees in streets on road verges, and street corners.</li> <li>• Plant woodland belts in parks and spaces.</li> <li>• Engage the local community in the planting and management through partners such as Groundwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove trees without replacement</li> </ul>	
<b>N12+</b>	Off-road routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote existing routes and links</li> <li>• Implement Linked Open Space Plan in GSS and prepare a local linked open spaces plan for the East End</li> </ul>		

<b>N13+</b>	“Garden village” building style and site layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and match render, brick &amp; tile colours, features, doors, windows, roof pitch, spacing of houses and gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piecemeal refurbishment or redevelopment</li> <li>• Flat roofs</li> </ul>	
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**10 Weaknesses & threats.**

<b>Guide Point Ref no</b>	<b>Weaknesses and threats</b>	<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>	<b>Notes/ Comments</b>
<b>N1-</b>	Loss of industrial economy and traditional employment. Decline in activity on the River Tyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement regeneration plan</li> </ul>		
<b>N2-</b>	Poor maintenance and loss of character in “garden village” style homes and Byker, Comprehensive redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare management guidance for home owners</li> <li>• Designate Byker Conservation Area and prepare Management Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish</li> </ul>	
<b>N3-</b>	Unsightly buildings and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide screening &amp; consider re-location</li> </ul>		
<b>N4-</b>	“Sameness” over large areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce high quality focal point and landmark buildings and features</li> </ul>		
<b>N5-</b>	Comprehensive redevelopment and building on green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use planning powers and policy</li> <li>• Implement Walker Design Code</li> </ul>		

<b>N6-</b>	Paving over front gardens for parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce design guidance and Article 4 Directions</li> </ul>		
<b>N7-</b>	Security fencing, CCTV and other protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare design guidance and co-ordinated colour schemes</li> <li>• Use landscaping to soften appearance and act as deterrent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow security measures to dominate</li> <li>• Security fences abutting footpaths</li> <li>• Over specification</li> </ul>	
<b>N8-</b>	Increasing numbers of cars and higher car ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider “home zones”</li> <li>• Tackle pavement parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow parking on pavements and bus/cycle lanes</li> </ul>	
<b>N9-</b>	Demolition sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep fenced and free of litter and debris</li> <li>• Mown grass to perimeter verges</li> <li>• Short term uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote public access unless there is a need</li> <li>• Topsoil and seed whole site</li> <li>• Ad-hoc demolition, gaps in urban fabric</li> </ul>	
<b>N10-</b>	Low tree cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase tree, hedge and woodland provision as part of regeneration plans</li> <li>• Street &amp; boulevard trees</li> <li>• Garden hedges and trees</li> </ul>		Need to reinforce “garden village” character