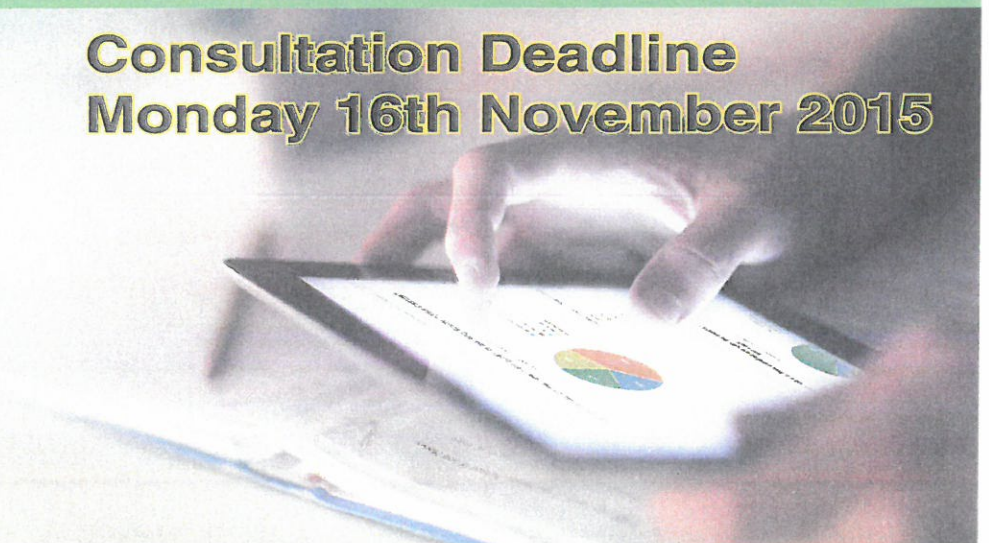




GREAT AYCLIFFE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

YOUR ISSUES, OUR PROPOSALS

Consultation Deadline
Monday 16th November 2015



CONSULTATION

This consultation is important please take the time to read this information sheet and let us know your views in the 'Do you Agree' sections.

If you are completing this sheet you can use one of the drop boxes located at: Oak Leaf Sports Complex; Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre; The Library; The Pioneering Care Centre and Marie Joy Hairdressers at Aycliffe Village.

Or drop off or post the completed form to:- c/o Great Aycliffe Town Council, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6QF

The consultation document is also available on the Town Council's website great-aycliffe.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/consultation or - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GreatAycliffeNP>

The deadline for responses is **Monday 16th November 2015** but meanwhile, if you would like any further information please contact Chrissy Walton on 01325 300700 or email christine.walton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

The Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan is about protecting our uniqueness and developing additional planning policies that are relevant for us and our area. It is our opportunity to shape the future of our parish.

We are undertaking this second consultation to make sure we have got it right. Your opinions are important - once again, it's time to give your views.

You told us your issues in the first round of consultation and we have been working to develop and incorporate clear proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan, where applicable, to help address these.

The planning system helps decide what gets built, where and when. It is essential for supporting economic growth, improving people's quality of life, and protecting the natural environment. Communities often find it hard to have a meaningful say over planning matters, however, the Neighbourhood Plan and process gives you the opportunity to influence the future of Great Aycliffe.

Neighbourhood Plans do have limitations. They must conform to national planning policy, a set of general rules and guidelines for the country. They must then be in 'general conformity' with any local planning policies (County Durham Plan and saved policies from the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan). There is always a presumption in favour of development. They can only deal with planning matters.

Part of the Neighbourhood Plan process was to develop a 'vision'. We read all of your comments and developed a number of statements. After consultation the preferred vision is **"To make Great Aycliffe a vibrant community, the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to enhance the natural environment, support and encourage high quality housing, local jobs and improved retail and leisure facilities in a healthy, green and attractive town"**.

The initial consultation responses were prioritised and 6 topic areas were set.

- Environment
- Housing
- Retail, Leisure & Economy
- Aycliffe Village
- Sustainability & Climate Change
- Transport & Access

Working papers with detailed information, including everything we have investigated, for all of these areas and more can be found on the Town Council's website – www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk
This consultation paper will only provide an overview of the topics and set out the proposals where a planning policy can be developed.



SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE

You told us you were concerned about the environment, climate change and making Great Aycliffe a better place for future generations. You said the Neighbourhood Plan should make



considerations for renewable energy sources including solar panels to help keep bills down and more allotments so you could grow your own fruit and veg and for the health benefits they provide.

What have we done?

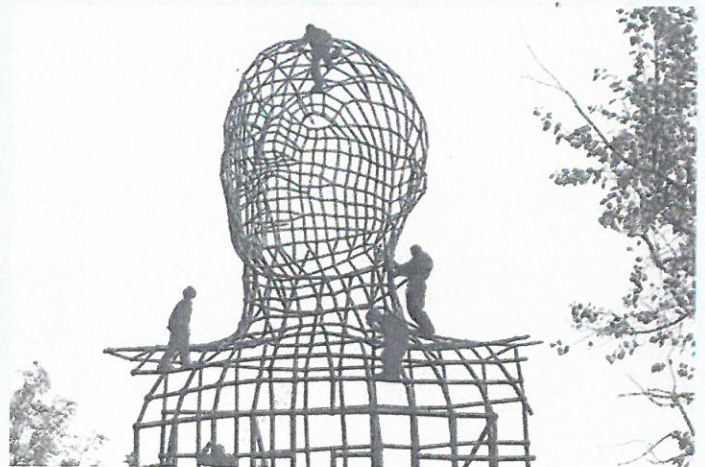
There is no overwhelming demand for allotments and the waiting lists are short therefore the Town Council will continue to monitor allotment provision. We considered other sources of renewable energy including wind and solar farms. However, due to the strong opposition to wind farms nothing further will be done on this. Technology is advancing and we could receive numerous applications for solar farms throughout the lifetime of the Plan, currently there is adequate planning policy in place to deal with this.

AYCLIFFE BUSINESS PARK

Aycliffe Business Park is of regional significance, with over 250 companies and approximately 8000 employees. Business was excluded intentionally as the Business Park is currently working on a project "Shaping the Future". This project is led by the businesses, with task and finish groups working to address various issues across the park. Rather than duplicate their work it was felt the sensible approach was for the Neighbourhood Plan to support the "Shaping the Future" project.

The Chairperson of the Business Park Steering Group sits on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to ensure information is shared. Every effort has been made to try and address planning issues that we are

aware of on the Business Park within the context of the Neighbourhood Plan.



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

You were asked questions to determine the priority for any CIL funding (a financial contribution to off-set infrastructure needs within the Parish) received as a result of future development. You said affordable homes were the top priority followed by public areas, such as parks and streets and your third priority was for road infrastructure.

There has been a government suggestion of allowing Local Planning Authorities to take longer to put CIL in place, or not at all if they so choose. In order to ensure that Great Aycliffe does not lose out on any CIL or Section 106 monies, it was agreed that the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan should have two specific policies to mitigate any future problems that may occur.

Our Proposals - **Mark your response on page 11**

1. That the Town Council are consulted in advance where CIL or Section 106 monies will be available.
2. To set local priorities for the investment of CIL or Section 106 monies.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

You wanted the speed reducing along the A167, improved cycle ways that were joined up and an improvement to bus and train services.

You said there were parking problems in many areas around the town. However, access to the wider transport networks were very good.

Parking issues have been incorporated into both the environment and housing sections.

What have we done?

Although most of your issues were unable to be addressed through planning we felt it important to understand the range of transport issues.

We contacted Durham Constabulary and the Traffic Asset Manager at DCC regarding speeding on the A167 to see if any changes could be implemented. However, this had been investigated in the mid-2000s and unfortunately no changes could be made.

We collated all of your comments and have passed them to the Transport Section, Rights of Way Section and Sustainable Travel Team at Durham County Council as well as the Local Motion Team and the



River Skerne Project Team. We also attended a number of meetings to ensure your issues and concerns were heard.

Parking issues outside of schools continues to be progressed by the Aycliffe Road Management School Safety group, in conjunction with DCC and the Police. We will endeavour to limit parking issues within future developments through a suitable policy within the housing section.



AYCLIFFE VILLAGE



Aycliffe Village – your primary concern was to prevent urban sprawl/encroachment and to maintain the village feel. You were concerned about the speed of traffic, which has been dealt with above, and you wanted a shop.

What have we done?

A number of options have been considered including a settlement boundary and a renewable energy specific site North of Demon's Beck. The preferred option to protect Aycliffe Village would be a green wedge policy (a specific green area to create a natural buffer) and this has been included in the environment section.

There was no interest from a number of retailers who were contacted prior to the redevelopment of the North Briton site. However, there was one company who showed a speculative interest in the site but the square footage they required would

have taken the whole site and would have left no provision for parking. Due to its location on a busy road, this would not have received planning permission.



ENVIRONMENT

Local distinctiveness contributes to a sense of place and community. In order to **“enhance the natural environment, and ensure we maintain a healthy, green and attractive town”** We have developed the following objectives and proposals to help us deliver this part of the overall vision.

Some of the main comments/issues from the consultation that we have taken into account are:

- Green spaces allow our children to play safely - we need to keep them.
- Aycliffe is attractive and known for its green space and trees.
- Very important we stay a green town.



- The trees are the lungs of the town and make people feel better.
- Renewable energy keeps costs down, we need to help with climate change and it can help protect the environment.

There was much support to keep Newton Aycliffe true to Lord Beveridge's vision which 'was to be a paradise for housewives with houses grouped around greens, so children could play safely away from the roads'.

Aycliffe Village residents felt strongly that the Village should not be incorporated into Newton Aycliffe and should retain a 'village' identity.

Objective 1.

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

Objective 2.

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

Objective 3.

To retain and protect the green and leafy character of our area.

Objective 4.

To protect Aycliffe Village from urban sprawl and maintain the traditional village feel.

Our Proposals - Mark your response on page 11

1. To protect the larger traditional green areas from future development, except where there is an overwhelming need and demand to alleviate parking problems.
2. To protect the existing and encourage new wildlife corridors by developing a specific policy.
3. Ensure the tree lined avenues are kept to retain the uniqueness of Newton Aycliffe.
4. To develop a green wedge policy to ensure Aycliffe Village maintains a buffer zone from any potential development encroachment.

HOUSING

Great Aycliffe is a “vibrant growing community”. The Neighbourhood Plan “will support and encourage high quality housing” with “suitable green spaces” and “adequate parking facilities” to meet the needs of the residents.

We have developed the following objective and proposals to help us deliver the overall vision. Some of the main comments/issues from consultation that we have taken into account are:

- More bungalows are needed for the ageing population.
- More suitable two bedroomed accommodation is needed, particularly for the elderly.
- Suitable alternative housing for the elderly such as sheltered accommodation and retirement homes.
- Any new development needs to be of a good design and provide adequate parking.

Objective 5

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

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



- Different types and tenures of housing needed to suit all requirements.
- Older persons' housing needs to be near services.
- Energy efficiency should be built into all new developments.

Our Proposals - Mark your response on page 11

1. Request an enhanced percentage of bungalows or older persons' accommodation within 600m walking distance from the Town Centre, Cobblers Hall and Neville Parade as a substitute to the affordable homes provision.
2. That gardens can be made smaller or of a communal nature to make bungalows more viable.
3. To avoid small one bedroomed dwellings, a multi-purpose room should be included in any design that can be used as a bedroom, dining room, study or storage giving greater flexibility to the accommodation.
4. To specify a minimum garage size or an option to provide a drive, in curtilage, with a car port on new developments. If only a drive is provided safe cycle storage should be included.
5. Guidance in the character assessment must be followed. Adequate green open space included in new developments in line with Lord Beveridge's vision.
6. Developments built to the highest energy standards will be encouraged.

RETAIL, LEISURE AND EMPLOYMENT

Providing “local jobs and improved retail and leisure facilities in a healthy, green and attractive town” will help “make Great Aycliffe a vibrant community”.

Retail was ranked the most important topic by respondents in the town wide NP questionnaire. Your comments have been collated and forwarded to the Town Centre Manager and owners.

You wanted

- Improved retail for Newton Aycliffe
- Improved evening economy in the town centre
- Better choice of shops, including national brands
- A retail park
- Cheaper rents in the town centre (this is not a planning matter and cannot be taken forward).

This was a very difficult topic to tackle. The easy option would have been to stick to the ‘general conformity’ rule and refer to the County Durham Plan which states no additional retail space is required. As there were so many comments on this topic, from residents, everyone working on the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Town Council, recognised how important this was for residents and the County Durham Plan was challenged.

It was agreed that the best way forward would be to obtain an up to date independent soft retail test which would provide a definitive answer on the current retail situation for Newton Aycliffe.

A soft retail test involves contacting large and small retailers (national and local brands) to ascertain a number of facts – 139 companies were contacted, they were asked -



1. What type of Retail do you provide?
2. Do you currently have a presence in Newton Aycliffe?
3. If you currently have a presence in Newton Aycliffe, would you consider any additional space, either within the existing retail core or an ‘out of town’ location?
4. If you currently have a presence in Newton Aycliffe, could you indicate any improvements you would like to see to encourage trade?
5. Have you previously considered locating within Newton Aycliffe?
6. If yes, why have you discounted the location?
7. Is there anything which would encourage you to locate within Newton Aycliffe?
8. Do you have a presence in nearby centres? (Please indicate any you consider relevant.)
9. Is your occupation in a nearby centre a significant reason not to locate in Newton Aycliffe?
10. Do you have any general observations you would like to make which would explain why you would consider other locations to Newton Aycliffe and which would deter your interest in Newton Aycliffe?

Unfortunately, the independent soft retail test had very little response even after many follow up emails and telephone conversations, with only 12 responses being received.

ONLY three companies indicated they may be interested in coming to Newton Aycliffe, one had never heard of the town but the proximity to the A1 was the key factor. Additional information regarding the two other companies is being followed up by the independent commercial agent who undertook the soft retail testing, with the details being forwarded to the Town Centre owners.



RETAIL, LEISURE AND EMPLOYMENT

Retailers will always consider the financial implications before a shop is approved at a new location. We CANNOT force retailers to come here or manufacture a 'business need' through the plan.

Options we considered and investigated

- Can we make click and collect easier?
- Improved, regulated shutter provision, so the town looks better?
- Can we improve local centres and what could be added to them?
- Developing and supporting an evening economy in the Town Centre
- Relaxing Change of Use
- Supporting the long term plans of the Town Centre.

Nearly all the above are covered in the national and local planning policies and the Neighbourhood Plan could not add anything extra to existing planning policy. There is a Town Centre Masterplan in place which we are unable to change.

What have we done?

- We acknowledged how important retail was for Great Aycliffe residents.
- We listened to your comments and investigated a range of ways to improve retail.
- We challenged the findings in the County Durham Plan.
- We received funding to undertake an independent soft retail needs analysis.

Unfortunately the soft retail analysis confirmed the County Durham Plan findings, that there is very little retail interest in Newton Aycliffe. However, the changing retail habits will be kept under review and revisited when the update of the Neighbourhood Plan is undertaken.

The Neighbourhood Plan is about planning policy only. Although residents are concerned about the high rents being demanded by the Town Centre owners, the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council and Durham County Council can't influence the rents being charged in the Town Centre.

The focus now is to concentrate on the positives that this plan can deliver rather than something which is outside the control and remit of the Neighbourhood Plan.

What can we do?

Objective 6.

To facilitate and encourage improved retail provision for Newton Aycliffe.

Objective 7.

To support and encourage local jobs for local people.

Our Proposals - Mark your response on page 11

1. Should a suitable site near the Town Centre, that meets the sequential tests required be identified, we will support and encourage change of use from garage/workshop (B2) to retail (A1) without the need for a change of use planning application, if the site could be developed for retail.
2. We will keep retail changes under review and undertake a detailed assessment when the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed in 5 years.
3. We will support and encourage the development of a small 'retail row' within Aycliffe Business Park to serve the needs of the businesses and their employees.
4. That local labour market agreements are in place to ensure jobs are offered to local people first.



CIL - Our Proposals - Mark your response opposite

1. That the Town Council are consulted in advance where CIL or Section 106 monies will be available
2. To set local priorities for investment

Environment - Our Proposals - Mark your response opposite

1. To protect the larger traditional green areas from future development, except where there is an overwhelming need and demand to alleviate parking problems.
2. To protect the existing and encourage new wildlife corridors by developing a specific policy.
3. Ensure the tree lined avenues are kept to retain the uniqueness of Newton Aycliffe.
4. To develop a green wedge policy to ensure Aycliffe Village maintains a buffer zone from any potential development encroachment.

Housing - Our Proposals - Mark your response opposite

1. Request an enhanced percentage of bungalows or older persons' accommodation within 600m walking distance from the Town Centre, Cobblers Hall and Neville Parade as a substitute to the affordable homes provision.
2. That gardens can be made smaller or of a communal nature to make bungalows more viable.
3. To avoid small one bedroomed dwellings, a multi-purpose room should be included in any design that can be used as a bedroom, dining room, study or storage giving greater flexibility to the accommodation.
4. To specify a minimum garage size or an option to provide a drive, in curtilage, with a car port on new developments. If only a drive is provided safe cycle storage should be included.
5. Guidance in the character assessment must be followed. Adequate green open space included in new developments in line with Lord Beveridge's vision.
6. Developments built to the highest energy standards will be encouraged.

Retail - Our Proposals - Mark your response opposite

1. Should a suitable site near the Town Centre, that meets the sequential tests required be identified, we will support and encourage change of use from garage/workshop (B2) to retail (A1) without the need for a change of use planning application, if the site could be developed for retail.
2. We will keep retail changes under review and undertake a detailed assessment when the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed in 5 years.
3. We will support and encourage the development of a small 'retail row' within Aycliffe Business Park to serve the needs of the businesses and their employees.
4. That local labour market agreements are in place to ensure jobs are offered to local people first.

CIL - DO YOU AGREE?

Proposal 1. YES NO

Proposal 2. YES NO

ENVIRONMENT - DO YOU AGREE?

Proposal 1. YES NO

Proposal 2. YES NO

Proposal 3. YES NO

Proposal 4. YES NO

HOUSING - DO YOU AGREE?

Proposal 1. YES NO

Proposal 2. YES NO

Proposal 3. YES NO

Proposal 4. YES NO

Proposal 5. YES NO

Proposal 6. YES NO

RETAIL - DO YOU AGREE?

Proposal 1. YES NO

Proposal 2. YES NO

Proposal 3. YES NO

Proposal 4. YES NO

Please complete the proposals above and any comments overleaf, and post to:

Great Aycliffe Town Council
"Your Issues, Our Proposals"
Town Council Offices
School Aycliffe Lane
Newton Aycliffe
Co. Durham DL5 6QF

or left at one of the following collection points:

Oak Leaf Sports Complex, Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, The Library, Newton Press,
The Pioneering Care Center or Joy Marie Hairdressers (Aycliffe Village).

This document is also available on the Town Council's website www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk

