

## HERITAGE & CHARACTER ASSESSMENT – YOUR VIEWS

### 1. Southern Landscape Buffer

The character area forms the southernmost section of the towns boundaries. The main section of land forms an undeveloped segment of land which sits between the A1(M) and the southern development edge of Aycliffe Business Park. The area is divided from the business park by a substantial belt of mature trees.

The character area consists of irregular agricultural fields, paddocks and meadow grassland with substantial tree belts. The area is typical of the character found within the wider rural landscape that surrounds Newton Aycliffe.

#### Key characteristics

- Rolling farmland including arable and pasture
- Mature tree groups
- Livestock including horse paddocks
- Influenced by the A1(M) & A167 and associated services

#### Comment –

This area has been set aside for the future expansion of Aycliffe Business Park and is allocated as Employment Land within the County Durham Plan.

### 2. Aycliffe Business Park

Aycliffe Business Park is over 400 Hectares of business units of varying age and scale. The business park is located on the site of a previous munitions factory was fundamental to the formation of Newton Aycliffe New Town.

The character area is dedicated to business and industry with some supporting ancillary uses and is encapsulated on all sides by belts of trees and mature vegetation. A range of business and industrial buildings are positioned around a grid of local roads with good access the A1(M) and A167 primary roads.

#### Key characteristics

- Buildings of varied styles, mass and age
- Effective screening from mature vegetation
- Occasional structures of recent historical interest
- Contained views due to close range buildings, landform and vegetation
- Areas of amenity grassland

#### Comment -

Aycliffe Business Park Group is progressing matters and issues regarding the Business Park through the 'Shaping the Future' Project.

### **3. Aycliffe Village Landscape Setting**

Aycliffe Village Landscape Setting is defined by agricultural, rough grassland and meadows. The character area bounds the north and south of Aycliffe Village built edges and ensures that the village remains in a semi-rural landscape setting. The character area also provides a definitive boundary from which to restrict the further expansion of the settlement edge in order to preserve the integrity of the village in terms of built form type, scale and density.

#### **Key characteristics**

- **Gently undulating landform**
- **Arable farmland**
- **Grazing land and meadows**
- **Mature vegetated boundaries and tree groups**
- **Features the River Skerne**

### **4. Aycliffe Village (including Conservation Area)**

The village is the historical settlement area of Aycliffe and is partly designated as a conservation area. The village contains a number of listed buildings including the Grade I listed St. Andrews Church which dates back to the Saxon period.

The Village has been adapted over time and has lost many of the original features and in parts is heavily influenced by the A167. However, a village green formation at the heart of the conservation area creates a village focus and substantial area of quietness, commonly associated with traditional villages.

#### **Key characteristics**

- **Village green formation**
- **Listed buildings including the Grade I St. Andrews church**
- **Variety of period buildings relating back to the original Aycliffe settlement**
- **Variety of new build homes**
- **Influenced by the A167**
- **Access to the River Skerne**

### **5. Open Farmland**

Open Farmland is a large section of land to the east. It is populated by a number of isolated farms and encompasses the Autistic Centre, including ancillary buildings and houses.

The character area encompasses a ridgeline which slopes down to a shallow valley in the east. This affords long views from the south and east over well-defined arable fields.

#### **Key characteristics**

- **Open mixed farmland**
- **Rolling landscape**

- **Dispersed farms and buildings of traditional character**
- **Country lanes**
- **Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees**
- **Linear belts of woodland**
- **Minor influence from the A1(M) and A167**

**Comment –**

The Low Copelaw Site within this area has been identified for a housing development consisting of approximately 900 houses. Durham County Council has developed a planning brief for this site.

## **6. Original New Town**

The Character Areas defined as New Town is the residential area which was created in 1946 under the New Towns Act of 1946. From the outset the new town board's policy had been that good landscaping and generous planting were one of the best and most effective ways of making the new towns more attractive. The view was also taken that the industrial estate should also be planted as well as housing areas. This is still evident today. A combination of homes, amenities and proximity to employment embody the new town 'self-sufficient' philosophy.

**Key characteristics**

- **Social housing including terrace, semi-detached and pre-fabricated bungalows.**
- **A series of village green formations**
- **Mature tree lined avenues**
- **Grass verged pedestrian walkways**
- **Relatively quiet setting**
- **Uniformity in building density**

## **7. School Aycliffe**

School Aycliffe is a housing area situated to the west of the study area. The area comprises modern homes and golf course with a small number of Grade II listed buildings in the way of traditional homes. The homes comprising School Aycliffe is split in two by School Aycliffe Lane. The southern housing area comprises of the recently developed 'Chestnuts' housing estate which sits in the Borough of Darlington.

Despite being a distinct area there are few amenities such as shops but there is a community hall and play area.

**Key characteristics**

- **Medium to large sized modern homes in cul-de-sac formation**
- **Traditional properties in prominent location**
- **Busy through road (School Aycliffe Lane)**
- **Slightly elevated position with filtered long range views north**
- **Vegetated road verges and tree groups**
- **Oakleaf Sports Complex including a golf course**

## **8. Simpasture / West Park**

Simpasture and West Park Character Area consist of residential properties focused around two large open areas of parkland which prevent the coalescence of a number of housing estates.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Open areas of parkland**
- **Feature lake**
- **Play areas and children's facilities**
- **Residential homes of various types in a cul-de-sac formation**
- **Individually modified properties**
- **Vehicle dominated streets**
- **Small groups of mature trees**

## **9. Town Centre**

The town centre is focused around a traditional shopping street which has been pedestrianised with recent upgrades to the public realm. The recent addition of a Tesco Extra and Argos outlet has reoriented the way the town is used and has now become a primary focus due to a increase in building scale and primary location from the primary route of Central Avenue.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Traditional linear high street formation of glass fronted shops**
- **Pedestrianised public realm with seating and sound installations**
- **Clock tower which forms a focal point due to its position and height**
- **Covered arcade**
- **Large scale Tesco Extra, Argos, Aldi and car parks**
- **Inward looking formation**

### **Comments -**

The Town Centre is privately owned and is currently undergoing refurbishment following an approved master plan which has been in place for a number of years.

Planning cannot change the rents charged.

An independent assessment of retail interest and need has been completed.

## **10. Burn Lane South**

Burn Lane South Character Area consists of varied types of residential properties built around the north of the town centre.

The character is varied with many types of properties and formations which change in quick succession. There are no overriding qualities that define the area.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Residential properties of varying types**

- **Predominantly road facing properties**
- **Modified properties with few common characteristics**
- **Small pockets of shared amenity green space**
- **Relatively flat landscape**

## **11. Burn Lane Central**

Burn Lane Central is an area of social housing. The character area is spread across a number of estates which bear the same characteristics with the exception of building brick colour. As a result of this the estates are known locally as the black, yellow and red estates.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Social housing**
- **Triangulated roof patterns**
- **Blank and windowless building faces**
- **Circular roads which feed dead end access roads**
- **Minimal soft estate palette consisting of amenity grass and boundary trees**
- **Small private space with increased amounts of shared amenity space.**

## **12. Williamfield Way**

Williamfield Way area consists of social housing with a distinct character due to flat roofed homes. Blocks of residential development is set in large and open areas of amenity grassland.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Predominantly flat roofed properties**
- **Large areas of open amenity grassland**
- **Minimal variety within the public realm**
- **Minimal variety within the soft estate**
- **Dissected by Williamfield Way**

## **13. Alston Crescent**

Alston Crescent Character area defines a residential area with properties that vary in size and type, which are interconnected by a network of pedestrian routes and pockets of shared amenity space. The density of built form is in harmony with the amount of allocated amenity space.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Varied property types**
- **Appropriate balance between built form density and allocated greenspace**
- **Variety of mature trees**
- **Minimal variety within the public realm hard scape**
- **Large area of open recreational space to the south**

## **14. Burn Lane North**

Burn Lane North Character Area is a swathe of modern residential development which forms the northern boundary of Newton Aycliffe. Beyond the residential areas to the north, land use changes to open mixed farmland. The residential areas are nestled into a belt of mature woodland which provide screening and containment of the built up areas.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Variety of modern properties**
- **Garden fronted cul-de-sac formation**
- **Minimum shared space provisions**
- **Woodland and green space belt to boundary edges**
- **Defined local services and retail provisions at Cobblers Hall**

## **15. Woodham**

Woodham is a modern private residential area bound in the west by mature woodland and Woodham Park, and in the north and east by Woodham Golf Course and open farmland. Residential areas are focused around a church and a parade of shops overlooking a central green, which acts as a local centre.

Designated footpaths provide good access into the surrounding rural landscape.

### **Key characteristics**

- **Variety of modern properties**
- **Dense clusters of garden fronted cul-de-sacs**
- **Access to large open areas of greenspace**
- **Segregated from adjacent development by a significant woodland block**
- **Centrally located amenities**
- **Borders open farmland**

## Questions and Responses

### Aycliffe Village Landscape Setting

1	Do you feel agree that the village and conservation area should be protected from adjacent developments?	YES <b>7</b>	NO <b>2</b>
2	Do you agree that the character area provides a valuable setting?	YES <b>9</b>	NO <b>0</b>

### Aycliffe Village (including Conservation Area)

3	Do you agree that the village forms an important part of the towns heritage?	YES <b>8</b>	NO <b>0</b>
4	Do you agree that the village contains the most significant buildings in the town (St Andrews Church)?	YES <b>8</b>	NO <b>1</b>
5	Do you feel that this setting is being affected by a close proximity to Aycliffe Business Park in any way?	YES <b>0</b>	NO <b>8</b>
6	Do you consider overlooking greenspace more important than parking immediately outside your home?	YES <b>4</b>	NO <b>5</b>

### Open Farmland

7	Do you agree that the open areas of farmland are typical of the surrounding rural landscape?	YES <b>10</b>	NO <b>0</b>
8	Do you think that it is important to screen development from the surrounding rural landscape?	YES <b>7</b>	NO <b>3</b>
9	Do you consider the area to have recreational value (walking etc)?	YES <b>10</b>	NO <b>0</b>

### Original New Town

10	Do you consider the greenspace ratio to development appropriate within the character area?	YES <b>8</b>	NO <b>0</b>
11	Do you consider overlooking greenspace more important than parking immediately outside your home?	YES <b>5</b>	NO <b>4</b>
12	Do you agree that the New Town character area is of national significance?	YES <b>8</b>	NO <b>2</b>
13	Do you think local centres such as Simpasture and Neville Parade are valuable to the area?	YES <b>9</b>	NO <b>0</b>

### School Aycliffe

14	Are you aware of listed buildings within School Aycliffe?	YES <b>2</b>	NO <b>2</b>
15	Do you consider School Aycliffe to be a village?	YES <b>4</b>	NO <b>5</b>

### Simpasture / West Park

16	Do you agree that the parkland setting provides valuable recreational facilities?	AGREE <b>10</b>	DISAGREE <b>0</b>
17	Are the parks a town wide asset or are they used exclusively by immediate residents?	YES <b>9</b>	EXCLUSIVE <b>1</b>

18	What is the most valuable feature within the area?	Parks (3), open spaces (2), lake (2), shops, green areas, settled community
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#### Burn Lane South

19	How would you rate the area for accessibility?	GOOD <b>8</b>	POOR <b>0</b>
20	What is the most valuable feature within the character area?	The burn (2), central access, green lungs,	
21	Do you consider overlooking greenspace more important than parking immediately outside your home?	YES <b>3</b>	NO <b>3</b>

#### Burn Lane Central

22	Do you feel that open areas of grass add value to residential areas?	YES <b>8</b>	NO <b>1</b>
23	Do you think that the black, yellow and red brick of each estate should be retained in any future development?	YES <b>4</b>	NO <b>4</b>
24	Do you agree that it is positive that all residents can access Woodham Burn?	YES <b>9</b>	NO <b>0</b>

#### Williamfield Way

25	Do you feel that the flat roofed properties are characterful or are a detrimental feature?	CHARACTER <b>3</b>	DETRIMENTAL <b>8</b>
26	Do you feel as though an abundance of greenspace in this area creates large areas of unused space?	YES <b>1</b>	NO <b>7</b>
27	How would you rate the quality of the greenspace in this character area?	GOOD <b>7</b>	POOR <b>0</b>

#### Alston Crescent

28	Do you agree that footpaths which are separated from highways are valued?	YES <b>7</b>	NO <b>1</b>
29	Do you think that local centres such as convenience stores and churches etc. are valuable areas of public realm?	YES <b>8</b>	NO <b>0</b>

#### Burn Lane North

30	Do you think cul-de-sacs form social communities or exclusive communities?	SOCIAL <b>8</b>	EXCLUSIVE <b>1</b>
31	Do you place value on local centres such as Cobblers Hall?	YES <b>9</b>	NO <b>1</b>
32	Do you think all greenspace should be accessible or should be protected for wildlife?	ACCESSIBLE <b>4</b>	PROTECTED <b>6</b>

#### Woodham

33	Do you feel that Woodham is an exclusive section of town?	YES <b>5</b>	NO <b>3</b>
34	Do you feel that the green areas of the golf course add to the setting?	YES <b>3</b>	NO <b>1</b>



1 person had extensive comments

Q12 – much more resident-friendly than the open plan areas eg Agnew, they don't work

Q18 – The Lake but it should be surrounded by more trees/bushes. Better lake management needed – a 'natural' well-managed lake does not need continuous cleaning out

Q23 – The red brick looks best

Q 32 – mostly protected, but some access (limited)

They also made the following comments on the feedback form.

Area 11 – Burn Lane Central. I live in Alfrid Place. The 'open grass area' serve no useful purpose.

Attract rubbish and dog mess. Houses open to grass areas get vandalised. Yards too small for keeping pets eg dogs or growing flowers/veg. Should add the land to individual hoses for people to use themselves.

Great Aycliffe way is excellent (but would be better with less mowing of grass and chopping trees down – gentle management is all that is required).

Questions on the feedback form -

Do you think the descriptions of the character areas are accurate? **YES - 19** **NO – 1**

If you don't agree with a character area name please specify the number and your alternative location name.

Only 1 comment and that was for Aycliffe Business Park.

The brief reason was that there was no mention of heavy traffic, competing with pedestrians and cyclists.