

ALNWICK PLACE PLAN

2023-2033



ALNWICK
TOWN COUNCIL



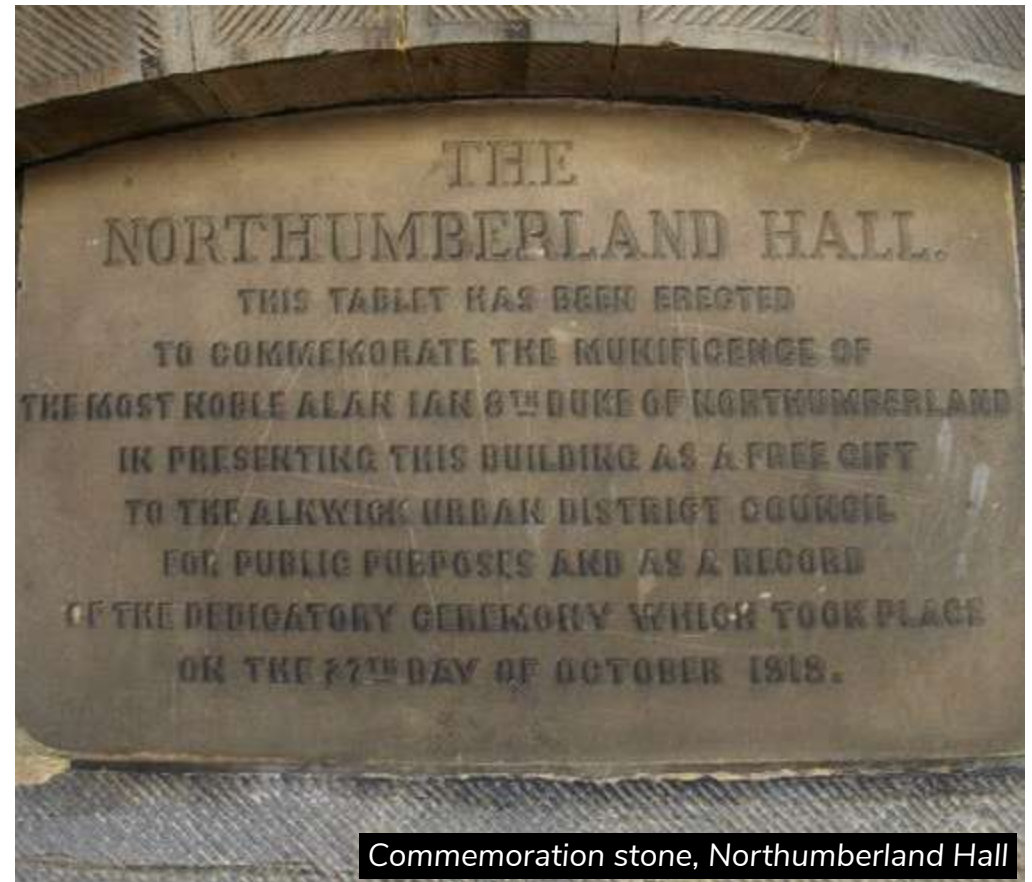
Foreword

Our Place Plan for Alnwick sets out our 10-year vision for the town's future as a vibrant, growing, connected and inclusive place to live, learn, work, and invest in. It has been shaped with input from the local community and partners and sets out our priorities to deliver investment and sustainable economic growth in the town.

The Alnwick community has been involved throughout development of this plan, and the outcomes we describe will not only benefit the local community but also the residents of the surrounding area for whom Alnwick is a service centre. Successful delivery will encourage people to live, work and bring up families in an area with strong community spirit, creativity, events and festivals, access to glorious countryside and coast and good connections to the wider region and beyond.

The Place Partnership Group was formed to help develop this plan. It includes representation from business, education, community and the third sector, as well as county and town councillors. The group is working on behalf of the community to develop opportunities that can build on the town's distinctive offer.

Statistical data on economic performance informed the selection of Alnwick as a priority for Borderlands investment, but development of this plan has also been able to draw on local action plans, the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, Northumberland-wide strategic discussions and other regional or local strategies, as well as the overarching ambitions of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. Most importantly, Alnwick benefits from an energetic and spirited community. Community engagement has enriched our description of



Commemoration stone, Northumberland Hall

the town, its economic performance, assets, opportunities and the direction it needs to move if it is to keep ahead.

The catalyst for creation of the Alnwick Place Plan was the town's inclusion in the Borderlands Place Programme, but the partnership is looking beyond any single source of funding to support projects and secure funding for activities that will have a significant impact on the town and help it achieve its vision and objectives.

Three investment themes have emerged to ensure the town is vibrant, connected and inclusive. These themes are inter-connected: each requiring the others to succeed, and each contributing to the overall story of Alnwick's future.

This document builds on a vision of Alnwick's future as an outstanding place to live, work and visit. It sets a number of strategic objectives that will ensure successful delivery over the next ten years. And it lays out compelling evidence to attract future funders and investment that will bring about meaningful and sustained change.

We look forward to working with the community, businesses and stakeholders to implement the Alnwick Place Plan.

Peter Reed

Chair of Alnwick Place Partnership Group



Aln Valley Railway



Alnwick Town Hall, Market Square

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Part 1: Our vision for change

Introduction

The Alnwick Place Plan sets out a 10-year vision for the town. It has been developed in association with the local community, stakeholders and businesses and focuses on three key investment themes. These themes will drive the 10-year plan forward, ensuring that Alnwick becomes a place of opportunity for residents, a place of inspiration for visitors and a place of prosperity for businesses.

A series of projects are identified within the plan with the aim of capitalising on the ambition of the **Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal** and other targeted investment opportunities.

It has been prepared in the context of the **Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal** which commits fresh investment into our region and is being jointly funded by the UK Government and Scottish Government from 2021 to 2031. The Deal is focused on four strategic themes of improving places; enabling infrastructure; encouraging green growth and supporting business, innovation and skills. The Growth Deal includes the Borderlands Place Programme which identified seven towns in Northumberland to benefit from investment, including Alnwick.

The Place Plan for the historic Northumberland town of Alnwick has been prepared collaboratively by the local Place Partnership Group, working with the local community. Engagement with the community has been key to developing the plan, and it is the community's engagement which captures the spirit and energy of the town. It is vital to ensure that this enthusiasm and determination to drive improvement over the coming ten years is represented fully and appropriately.

This plan details a desire for change within the local community, aligning with, and contributing to, the objectives of the Borderlands Growth Deal and its three BIG Challenges - inclusive growth, narrowing the productivity gap and increasing the working age population.

The Plan represents a vision of Alnwick both in the next ten years and beyond. The community has engaged throughout the process, through stakeholder mapping sessions, business focus groups, public consultations and showcase events. It is from these discussions that our ambitious vision has been created, building upon the engagement so far to create a meaningful change for the better.

The plan is framed around five key development themes, which taken together, offer a balanced approach to a 10-year vision for the future area.

- **Place-based:** Assessing what assets are already in place and what investment needs and solutions for each place on its own terms: what the place wants to be in 20 years, what it needs, and what it offers. This should make the most of what makes the place distinctive using local heritage and culture.
- **Collective:** Looking at the contribution of each part to the whole: the added value to the place, the area, the region, and the country.
- **Systemic:** Bringing public, private, third sector, and community assets together as part of a single, integrated system supporting communities, services and the economy.

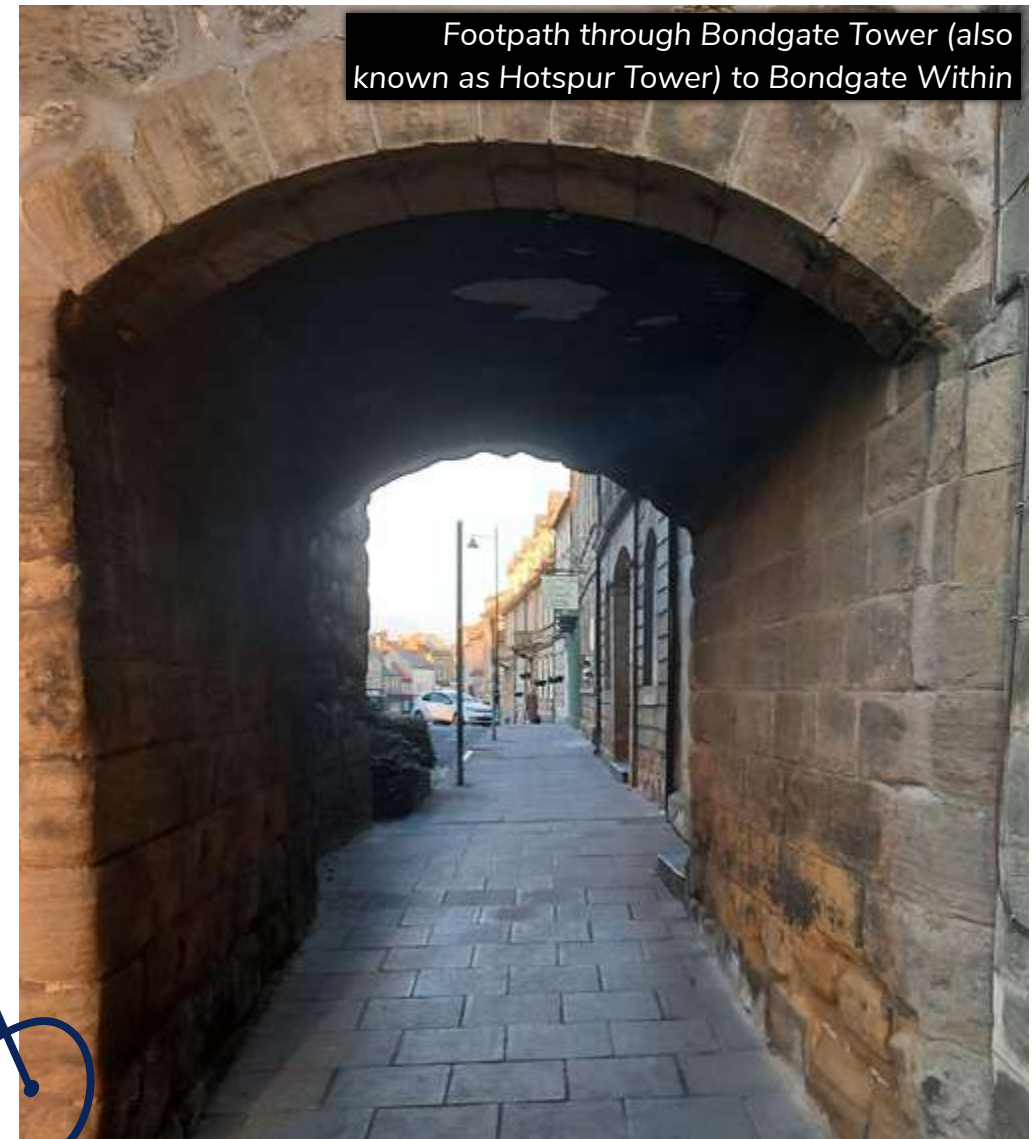
- **Community-led:** Putting communities at the heart of decisions about the solutions that the Place Programme brings to the challenges facing their towns.
- **Prevention and future proofing:** Investment and action directed towards preventing further deterioration in our towns and town centres, and ensuring they are equipped to respond to future change, including recovery from the impact of Covid-19 and Climate Change.

With inclusive growth at its heart, the Borderlands Place Programme, which forms a key component of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, aims to create and sustain economically vibrant towns and town centres where people and communities see the direct benefits of economic growth. This means investing in infrastructure in a way that supports the sustainability and growth of local businesses, stimulates business investment, attracts visitors and spending, safeguards and creates secure, well-paid jobs for local people, and provides opportunities for people from all backgrounds to engage in employment, skills development and beneficial cultural and social activities.

The plan considers Alnwick's economic context, its unique needs and challenges as well as identifying the town's assets, strengths and opportunities to embrace and build on. With significant community and stakeholder input a new vision has been established to set out the aspirations and objectives to deliver sustainable growth in our town. Potential interventions and project ideas have also been developed to create a pipeline of investments that will meet this ambition for growth and may be eligible, once developed, for Borderlands, UK Shared Prosperity Funding and a wide number of other funding streams.



Funding through Borderlands will be limited to economic growth capital projects that contribute to addressing the three challenges of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal: growing the working age population; boosting productivity; and delivering inclusive economic growth.



Our vision for Alnwick

We have worked with stakeholders and the community to develop a vision incorporating the key ingredients that will combine to secure economic growth for Alnwick. This reflects the current role of the town in terms of its geographic and strategic context, the performance of the town centre, the socio –economic opportunities and challenges and the wider strategic developments that will generate jobs, investment and improved connectivity in the County, across the North of Tyne and the North East region.

The vision for Alnwick highlights a place of real distinctiveness for Northumberland: a vibrant, independent town with a community spirit that is seen through events, festivals and creativity. A town and locality where people choose to live, work and bring up families in a wonderful setting with access to glorious countryside and coast, with good connections to the wider region.

It aims to support not just the local community but also residents the wide rural hinterland for whom Alnwick is a service centre. Three investment themes have emerged which will help to develop the services and facilities available to residents and visitors to this unique town. They are inter-connected, each requiring the other to succeed, and which contribute to the over-arching story of Alnwick being a great place to live, work and visit.

Our vision

“Enhancing Alnwick’s long-term future as an outstanding place to live, work and visit.”

The vision, strategic objectives and priority investment themes presented in the Alnwick Place Plan are informed by discussion and debate at the place partnership group meetings, socio/economic data and consultation with residents. A full consultation report and drop-in report from the event can be found in the appendices.

Strategic objectives

Underpinning the vision are the strategic objectives, which for Alnwick have been identified as:

- **Vibrant town** - Improve the economic prosperity of Alnwick by increasing the sustainability of the visitor economy.
- **Inclusive town** -Safeguard Alnwick’s existing employment, delivering new jobs and opportunities, engaging with advanced technology as a catalytic driver for growth. Create a sustainable future for all residents including a focus on young people in Alnwick.
- **Connected town** - Maintain and raise the quality of the built environment in Alnwick town centre.

Our objectives will be further underpinned throughout by the priorities of:

- Fostering collaboration across the town
- Contributing to net zero 2030
- Capitalising on opportunities in technology
- Responding to the challenges of connectivity in a rural location



Introducing Alwick



The beautiful, historic market town of Alwick is one of the country's top tourist destinations. Located just 5 miles from Northumberland's heritage coastline and roughly in the centre of the County, approximately 30 miles from both Berwick upon Tweed to the north and Newcastle upon Tyne to the south, it makes a great base from which to explore the Northumberland National Park, the wider county of Northumberland and the Scottish Borders.

The town has a population of 8,561 and with its old buildings and cobbled streets regularly features highly in lists of the best place to live in the UK. The town's history, dating back to 600AD, is evident everywhere you look.

Alwick is easily accessible by car, being just moments from the A1, the main road that cuts through the County from North to South.

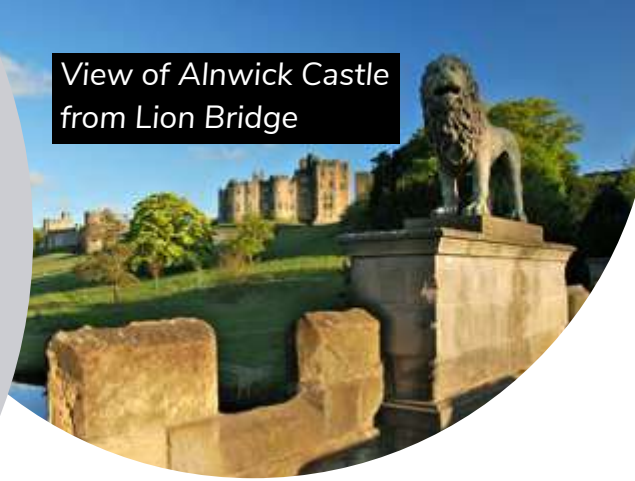
There is a bus station in the town centre, operated by Arriva. Alwick lies on the County's main bus route from Newcastle and Morpeth up to Berwick. The town is no longer served by rail, the nearest train station is Alnmouth, approximately 5 miles east. The original Victorian train station has now been converted into one of the largest second-hand book shops in the UK – Barter Books.

Alwick offers many attractions, museums and galleries including the stunning Alwick Castle, the Alwick Garden and Lilidorei, the world's largest play structure of its kind. There are opportunities for the attractions to secure more return visits by introducing a varied events calendar.



Alnwick Castle is one of the most stunning Castles you will ever see (it is the second largest inhabited castle in the country) and it has a rich history. Today it makes a great day out for the whole family, it has had a recent surge in popularity with the kids as it was the set for “Hogwarts” in the Harry Potter films. Next to the Castle is impressive Alnwick Garden with its magnificent water cascades, walled gardens, poison garden, rose garden, the world’s largest Treehouse and wonderfully inventive water sculpture. It is an interactive and educational space created by the Duchess of Northumberland and comes highly recommended.

View of Alnwick Castle from Lion Bridge



Bailiffgate Museum



The Alnwick Garden Treehouse

Bailiffgate is an award-winning people’s museum, where fascinating stories of the past are told about Alnwick and District. The area has a very rich history because it was a centre of conflict between Scotland and England for many centuries. Two floors house a permanent collection of artefacts, documents, photographs and audio visual content. On the Gallery floor are exhibitions which change throughout the year, and events for the whole family

The historic building is in the town’s Castle Quarter, very close to Alnwick Castle and Garden. It was previously a church, and provides a beautiful setting in which to celebrate 10,000 years of unique heritage.

Tourism is recognised for its positive contribution to the economy but its seasonal nature and the prevalence of low wage employment in the industry must still be considered.

One of Alnwick’s key assets is the natural and historic environment within which it sits. Indeed, this is important not just in tourism, but in attracting people to live in the town.

Attracting new investment is a key challenge for Alnwick and wider North Northumberland – the area does not benefit from the level of commercial returns experienced in regional centres or the south of England.

Although Newcastle provides the wide cultural offer of a regional capital, Alnwick, as a main town and significant service hub includes a rich and varied cultural offer to the people of north Northumberland and its visitors. In addition to a multiple-arts hub at the Playhouse, a grand Town Hall used for cultural events and a local museum (Bailiffgate), Alnwick has a Castle with a history dating back to the 11th century and an Assembly Rooms (Northumberland Hall) of cultural quality appropriate to a ducal town. It also has a heritage railway, the Aln Valley Line.

Alnwick – unique history and heritage

Alnwick, (a compound of the river name, Aln, and the Anglo-Saxon wic, meaning variously a dwelling place, farm, street or village), lies on the eastern fringe of low hills overlooking the north Northumberland narrow coastal plain. Sitting, on a major north-south route way, and at a crossing point of the River Aln, has given it an historically strategic significance for centuries, reflected by the presence of the baronial Alnwick Castle, the seat of the Percy family for 700 years and a major border stronghold for 900 years.

The town is dominated by the Norman castle, the seat of the dukes of Northumberland. It was rehabilitated in the 18th century under the direction of architect Robert Adam, and the surrounding park was landscaped by Capability Brown.

Today, the town serves as an important market centre for surrounding rural areas and is increasingly important as a tourist destination. Although there has been considerable expansion to the south and east (its development was historically constrained to the north by Alnwick Castle and its parks and gardens) the core of the town has maintained much of its early character.

Alnwick secured its position as a regional centre for a broad part of the county in the 17th century. It had extensive cattle and sheep markets, much of the livestock brought in on a droving route from Scotland opened after the Union of the Crowns in 1603. The importance of the town's position as a nodal point in the road system was also enhanced after 1603 with the increase in the movement of both goods and people across the region and nationally. Alnwick was a major staging point on the Great North Road and a junction on the Hexham-Alnmouth Turnpike - the Corn Road.



Pottergate Tower

The role of Alnwick Castle as a great Border fortress dwindled and died over the period. By the 17th century it was a decaying ruin; but during the second half of the 18th century was reborn as a stylish country seat surrounded with landscaped parkland. Alnwick became a significant centre of influence in the affairs of the region, reflected in the fact that many of the county gentry had town houses there.

By the 1820s, the sheep and cattle market had fallen into disuse, but there was a fortnightly corn market. The butcher's market was held in front of the shambles and there was a fish market held in front of the town hall, selling fish from Newton, Craster, Boulmer, and Alnmouth. The poultry, egg and butter markets were held at the west end of the shambles. The last of the market houses and the shambles was demolished in 1826 and replaced with the Assembly Rooms.

Alnwick is now a desirable place to live and visit – indeed, it is ninth in a list of the UK's most beautiful towns and villages, as ranked by Daffodil Hotel.

Former Mayor of Alnwick, Lynda Wearn, said:

“I’m really not surprised that Alnwick has made the top 10. If anything, I’m a little disappointed that we aren’t even higher in the ranking because some places have hills and mountains, some have coastlines and some have heritage. In Alnwick we have them all. We sometimes forget in these difficult times how lucky we are to live in such a wonderful place.”



Ariel view of Alnwick Castle

Retail & The Marketplace

The town centre is shaped by the geography of the old medieval town and the area comprises around 200 units with a relatively static vacancy rate of 11% well below the national average of 14%. This has changed little since before Covid and indicates that despite a drop in the number of national retailers trading on the high street, vacated units have gradually been occupied by local independents.

The mix of uses is similar to other market towns in Northumberland, which have all experienced a loss in anchor stores and reduced comparison offer eg; fashion, with increases in beauty, discount and charity shops. There is a high level of dependence in Alnwick on employment in retail and hospitality roles in the town centre and this needs to be factored into investment plans.

In terms of footfall, this is also steady with manual counts registering an almost identical level of activity from 2013 to 2023. Saturdays are significantly busier than midweek indicating the impact of day visitors and tourists on the town centre.



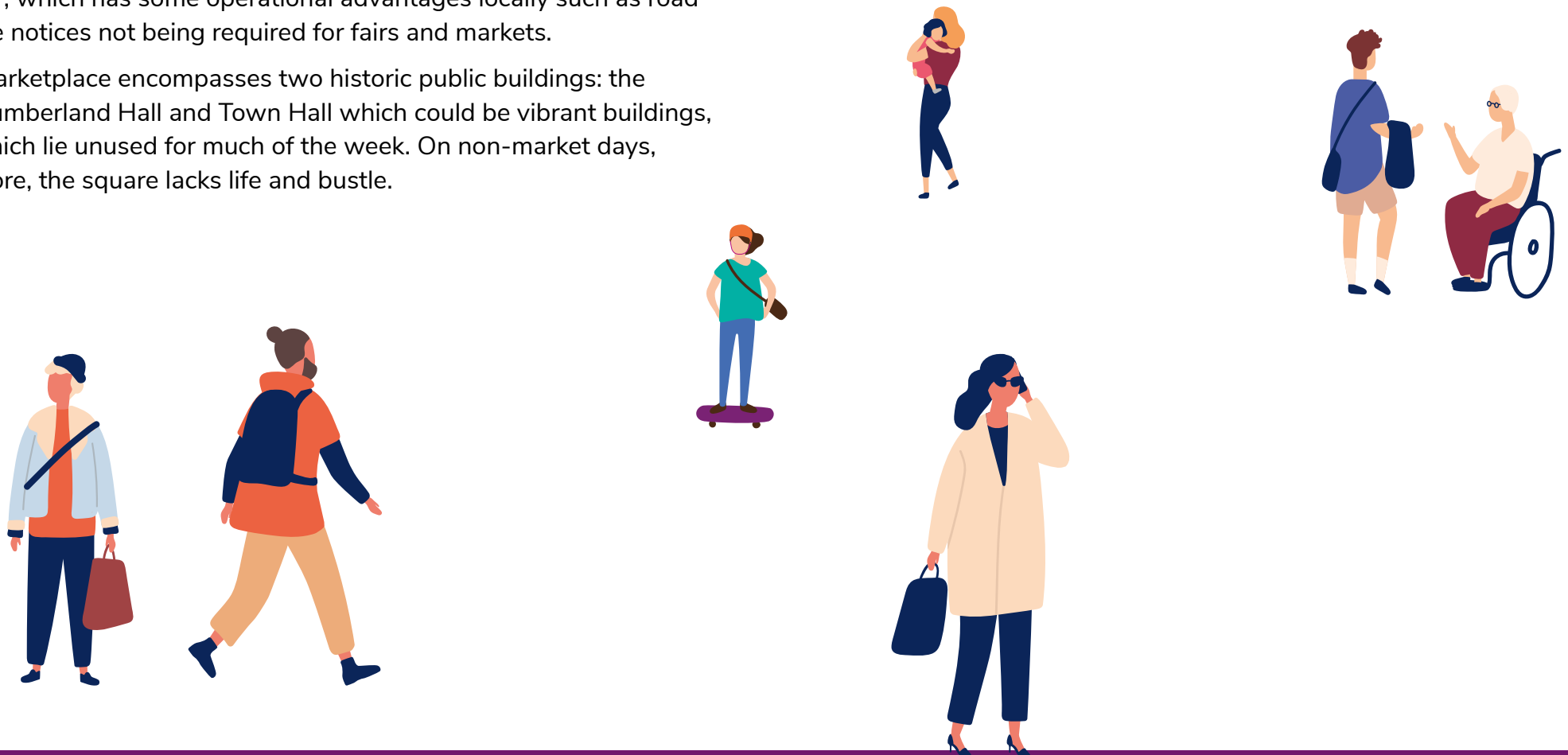
Alnwick Market Square featuring the Market Cross



Alnwick is fortunate to have an historic marketplace situated at the heart of the town but whilst most of Alnwick's streets, when busy with vehicles and pedestrians, have an innate vitality, this vitality is missing in the marketplace. Whilst the marketplace is used for regular street markets and seasonal festivals (Music Festival, Food Festival, Christmas Lights), it is only in use in this way for less than a third of the year. In the wintertime its use is very limited. It is rarely in use on Sundays, even during the tourism season. Perhaps uniquely, Alnwick's marketplace trading rights reflect the town's feudal heritage. These rights are owned by the Duke of Northumberland arising from a charter signed by Henry VI. Markets and fairs are governed by this charter, which has some operational advantages locally such as road closure notices not being required for fairs and markets.

The marketplace encompasses two historic public buildings: the Northumberland Hall and Town Hall which could be vibrant buildings, but which lie unused for much of the week. On non-market days, therefore, the square lacks life and bustle.

The marketplace is designated as a highway and is regulated to provide 12 parking bays. The marketplace offers the potential to become a natural focal point for commerce, for entertainment, for festivals and as a place to meet. Achieving this would be fully in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework which requires planning policy to: "Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive." It would also be in line with the Mary Portas report on town centres, which sees vibrant markets as part of the solution to the decline of our town centres.



Our community

Population

In Northumberland, the population size has increased by 1.4%, from around 316,000 in 2011 to 320,600 in 2021. This is lower than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,490,000.

Census 2021 reported around 8,500 people living in the parish of Alnwick. This is a 6% increase since 2011. Since 2011, the 65+ age group has grown by 43%, but both the working age population and children under 16 have declined (by 3% and 8% respectively). Alnwick has a significantly higher proportion of 65+ residents than both the county and national averages at 29%, compared with 25% and 18% respectively.

Unemployment

In July 2023, DWP recorded 3.2% of the working age population claiming unemployment benefits in Northumberland and 3.4% in Alnwick. A higher proportion of 18–24-year-olds are JSA/UC claimants (6% in Northumberland, 7% in Alnwick).

Income

The median household income was £35,427 in 2022 compared to £20,660 in 2011. The median household income in Northumberland was £34,573, nationally it was £37,436 (CACI Paycheck data).



Housing

Census 2021 reported 4,000 households in Alnwick, of which, 58% were home-owned, 26% social rented and 16% privately rented.

The average sold house price in Alnwick over the 12 months to September 2023 was £267,960, according to Zoopla. The national average over this period was £369,614 compared to the county average of £235,372 in Northumberland.



Education

Whilst the 2021 census revealed that a slightly higher proportion of Alnwick residents reported holding no qualifications (19%) than county and national (averages (both 18%), the proportion of residents holding Level 4 or higher qualifications (31%) was similar to the county average (31%) but 2% lower than the national figure (34%).



Crime and anti-social behaviour

The Crime Survey of England and Wales (ONS) reported a crime rate per 1,000 residents for the year ending March 2023 across Northumberland of 76. Using the Police.UK crime map data for Alnwick for the same 12 months, we can estimate a crime rate of 114 for Alnwick.



These figures refer to reported crime not criminal convictions. Many relate to anti-social behaviour reports and domestic incidents and residents and visitors regard Alnwick as a safe place to live, work and visit.

Economic exclusion and deprivation

Alnwick displays contrasts in deprivation – the index of deprivation shows a declining picture between 2015 and 2019 in some parts of Alnwick which are ranked amongst the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Other parts are in the 20% least deprived in the country and have shown improvement over the same period.



In the Census, the dimensions of deprivation used to classify households are indicators based on four selected household characteristics, education, employment, health and housing. In 2021 Alnwick had almost half (48%) of households not deprived in any dimension, this is similar to the county average (48.5%). 3% of Alnwick's houses were classed as being deprived in three deprivation dimensions, and a handful were deprived in four dimensions, again, like the county average of 3.5% and 0.1% respectively.

48% of Alnwick's residents were economically inactive on Census Day 2021, of those, almost three quarters were retired, this is higher than the county average of 45% economically inactive of which 68% were retired. The England average for this measure was significantly lower, just under 40% of the working age population were economically inactive at this time, of those, 55% were retired. This data was gathered during a period of rapid change due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is important to note, but it does show contrasts in the working age population with this taken into account.

Assets, strengths and opportunities

Community buildings

There are a wide variety of buildings in Alnwick available for use by the community, which are owned, managed and run by different organisations, including the Alnwick Community Centre, St Michael's Parish Hall, St James's URC and the Lindisfarne Centre.

Sports facilities

Alnwick is the centre for a wide range of sporting and recreation facilities which serve the town and the wider area. Many of these sports have club facilities based to the south of Alnwick. These include Alnwick Rugby Football Club, Alnwick Cricket Club, Alnwick Castle Golf Club and Alnwick Town Football Club. All these clubs are thriving and have strong adult and junior sections.

The major provider of indoor sports in the area is the Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre, which was built in 2003 and is run by Active Northumberland. This is a quality venue with high levels of user satisfaction. The centre is the base for the local swimming clubs and the Alnwick Harriers running club.

In other parts of the town there are several sports clubs including boxing, bowls and tennis. However, some popular sports such as athletics and hockey are not catered for.

Parks and recreation

There are seven existing children's play areas in the town, the most modern of which is at the Alnwick Community Centre playground.



Heritage & Culture

With many jobs and enterprises depending on heritage, the link between the historic environment and economic activity is well-understood in Alnwick. Visitors are attracted by the architecture, authentic experiences associated with the past, family history and local culture. Heritage contributes to the pride that people feel in their hometown, and through shared interests, heritage helps to strengthen connections across the community.

The town's historic assets include Alnwick Castle, Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery and other museums, the Marketplace, Northumberland Hall, Town Gates, places of worship, the town's medieval layout and a substantial proportion of the housing stock. Many of the town's historic buildings benefit from statutory protection, almost all are in use and well-maintained. However, some have become redundant or neglected. With a substantial stock of historic buildings, skilled local trades with conservation experience, and a northern climate the town is well-placed to show-case best practice in capitalising on embedded carbon, extending the life, and improving energy efficiency of built heritage.

Culture plays a significant role in the lives of the townspeople and those from the wider district. With a diverse program of theatre, cinema, live music of all genres, visual arts and now a newly built outdoor theatre space in the Alnwick gardens there is a considerable amount of creative activity. The local musical societies and creative groups are engaged in live performance, exhibitions and events throughout the year. The Bailiffgate and Playhouse galleries have a large footfall and an engaging program of work from both professional and non-professional artists.

There are dance groups, youth theatre sessions and a young person's filmmaking group as well as a multitude of choirs, bands and each year the eagerly awaited Duchess' High School musical and drama



productions. Dance classes for all age groups, yoga sessions, rug making, lace making, local history groups. There are various festivals including a green festival, What A Wonderful World, Storyfest, Alnwick International Music Festival, Alnwick Food and Beer Festivals.

Many of the events are made possible by the large number of volunteers, carrying out a wide variety of roles at Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery, Alnwick Playhouse, Alnwick Gardens, Aln Valley Railway, public gardens, and elsewhere. The role of volunteers in bringing vitality to the town is possibly best represented by the Alnwick Christmas Lights Committee. A group of about 20 local volunteers that for 30 years has worked from May to November to produce arguably the finest town lights display in the Northeast, mostly hand crafted rather than bought in. This is supported financially by private donations and the town council and reflects enormously on the powerful local sense of pride and identity in Alnwick.

Significant cultural attractions include Alnwick Playhouse a large theatre and cinema space with two screens also housing the Library and Visitor Information, the Alnwick Garden, the Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery hosting national, regional and local exhibitions, Barter Books, the Northumberland Hall, Alnwick Castle, and now the magical creative play space of Lilidorei. Alnwick hosts the unique Shrove Tuesday Football at Alnwick Castle and many events are enhanced by the presence of Jolly Roger, the Alnwick town crier.

There is a strong ideology of partnership in delivering events and activities. The amount of commitment to active cultural engagement is a testimony to the physical and mental health of the community. Residents want to engage with each other and visitors. Through all their activities they want to define their community as being imaginative, open and creative.



Visitors and the tourism economy

Alnwick, as well as being situated in an attractive environment, has several major attractions that will continue to draw tourists for day trips and longer stays. This must be encouraged but also managed to achieve a balance that sustains local employment but does not have a negative impact on the features that make the town and hinterland so attractive.

The facilities and infrastructure tourists require struggle to cope at peak times in summer, but visitor numbers fall away sharply from October until Easter. Attractions such as the Alnwick Garden and Barter Books still attract many thousands of off-peak visitors, but trading in the town centre is generally slower in the winter months. There is an increasing trend towards niche shops, often with marginal profitability, and cafes, which, though offering a year-round service to residents, depend principally on summer tourism.

High street conditions reflect the changing shopping patterns that afflict high streets everywhere, but the benefit of tourism is that many businesses and services survive that would otherwise be unviable. The challenge facing the town is to improve the appeal of the town centre outside the peak tourist season.



Barter Books

Challenges and issues facing Alnwick

Growth

A central issue for Alnwick, and many other historic market towns, is space. Historically the town would have been similar in scale to other large market towns such as Hexham and Morpeth, but growth in Alnwick, particularly in the post war years has been slower, partly due to its location at the extreme of the Tyneside commuter belt.

Employment land has in the post war years been provided on a range of small-scale industrial estates, generally comprising a variety of rural and service industries and suppliers.

The capacity for the centre to provide for new employment opportunities is relatively limited, due to the historic layout of the town, the lack of availability of larger sites and buildings and issues associated with transport and car parking. There is very limited scope for new development and major opportunities would depend on redevelopment of existing buildings and underused areas to their rear. Many of the retail premises are small, with a limited shop-frontage. The whole of the town centre is a designated conservation area and many of the retail units are located in listed buildings.

Retail and service sector growth has in the recent past, been an important component of overall economic and employment growth and this is likely to continue in the future. Any major expansion of retail and commercial capacity in Alnwick might need to be accommodated on the edge of the town centre, out of town to the south or as part of the further commercial development along the line of South Road.



Transport & wider connectivity

The neighbourhood plan states that ‘the provision for cycling is often of inadequate quality in Alnwick’ and that ‘Suitable routes linking the main facilities are inadequately developed and signed’. Developing safe and attractive opportunities to walk around Alnwick will also fit the Neighbourhood Plan Framework, improve the vitality of the town, enhance the ability to appreciate the fine historic environment and to benefit the health & quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

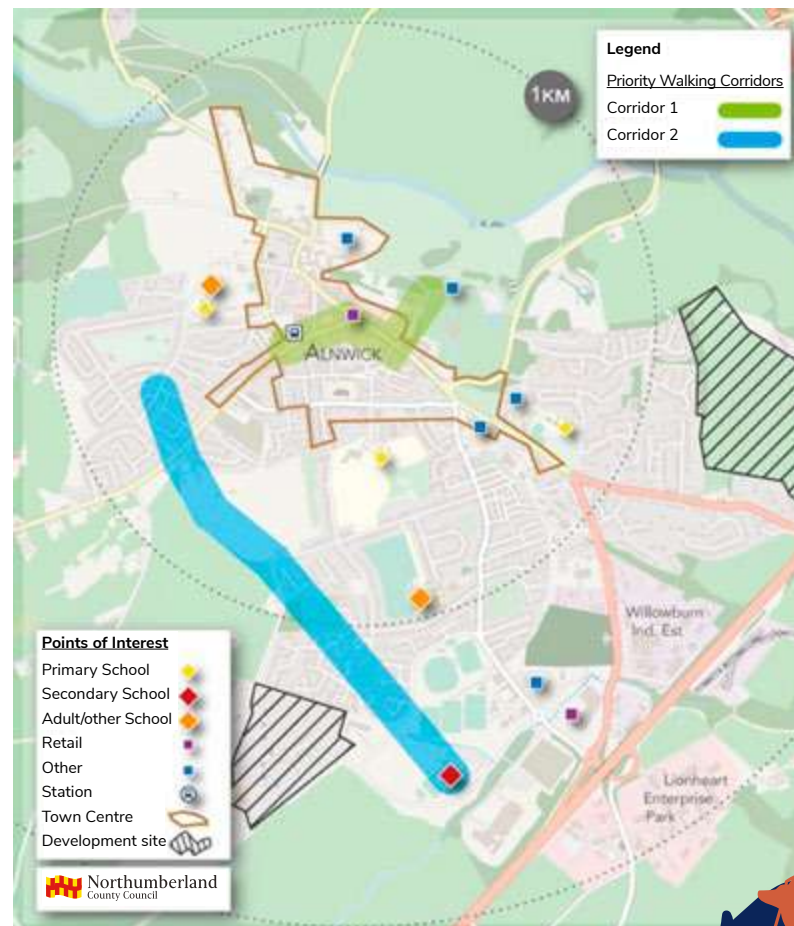
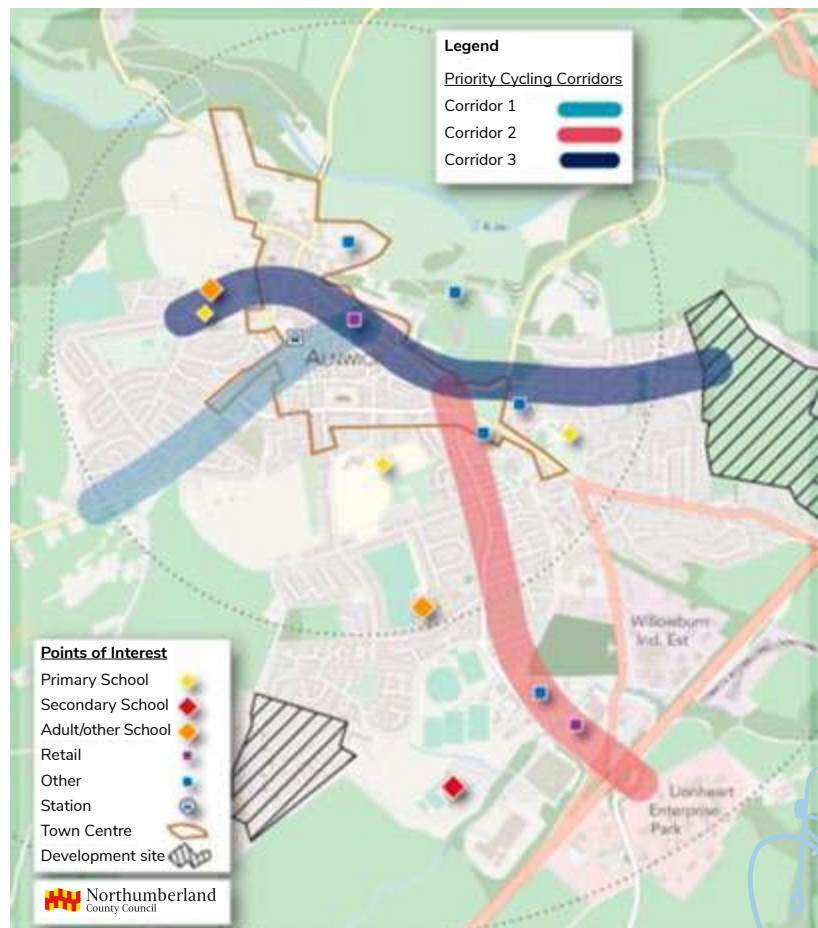
The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Alnwick developed by NCC in 2022 identified the town’s strategic walking and cycling network as requiring improvements including the dropping of kerbs, installing of tactile paving and improvements in crossing facilities.



The LCWIP identified priority walking and cycling corridors as:

Cycle corridors:

- Alnwick East Corridor 1 (ALN-A1): This corridor provides a link to the West of the town.
- Alnwick South Link Corridor (ALN-A2): Provides a link from the centre of the town to the south towards Lionheart Enterprise Park but also serving the secondary school and Willowburn Industrial Estate.
- Alnwick Town Centre Corridor (ALN-A3): Links new residential development to town centre and serves 2 schools.



Walking corridors:

- Alnwick Bus Station to Gardens Corridor 1 (ALN-PW1) would serve town centre with a connection to the bus station and connect to an important visitor attraction.
- Providing a north-south link, Corridor 2 (ALN-PW2) serving residential area and secondary school.





Car parking in Alnwick town centre is limited, in part due to the historic market town nature of its footprint. Parking spaces in close proximity to the town centre are used by both visitors to the town centre and to the town's attractions, such as Alnwick Castle and gardens, limiting availability, particularly during the summer months.

The town has limited public transport links which is also an obstacle to people accessing employment opportunities, particularly young people who may not have access to a vehicle. Bus services to and from the villages serviced by Alnwick are limited.

The east coast London to Edinburgh train line which links Alnwick to Morpeth and Newcastle Upon Tyne, is joined at Alnmouth, 4.5 miles from Alnwick.

The A1 is dual carriageway as it passes the two Alnwick junctions but reverts to single carriageway travelling north immediately after the northern Alnwick junction, remaining so for the majority of the journey to Edinburgh, and is single carriageway travelling south from Ellingham to Morpeth, a 13-mile stretch of the journey from Alnwick to Newcastle Upon Tyne. A decision to fund the dualling of the A1 stretch between Morpeth and Ellingham awaits formal ministerial confirmation.

Skills and education

The problem of attracting and retaining working age people in Alnwick is common to other rural areas. Addressing this requires action across a number of areas including providing not only employment, but also further education, training and apprenticeship opportunities, and the range of housing, social, leisure and service facilities which people aspire to have access to. The Northumberland Skills Adult Learning Centre, opened in Spring 2023, goes some way towards improving the employability levels of residents, however, access to most vocational courses requires travel to either Northumberland College, Ashington (19 miles) or Newcastle College (37 miles).

Employment in the tourist industry, which features highly in the job market in Alnwick, is often seasonal and low paid. One in three people employed in Alnwick is on a part-time basis.

Community buildings

The quality of some community buildings is poor in terms of physical accessibility, energy efficiency, comfort and general repair and maintenance. In particular, the Northumberland Hall, established for public benefit, is underused and in need of substantial investment. This building is the key to successful regeneration of the marketplace.



Overview of the public consultation

The public consultation was launched in March 2022, both as an online survey and via hard copy forms and received 395 responses, of which 91% supported the vision and 93% supported the strategic objectives. Unusually for such consultations, over 25% were submitted by residents under the age of 16 ensuring that there is a greater representation in this plan of the views of younger people in the community. A full copy of the consultation report can be found at Appendix 2.

In response to the question ‘What is the best thing about Alnwick?’ the most popular responses were;

- Local businesses and the retail offer
- Attractions such as Alnwick Castle and gardens
- The natural environment
- The town’s location

In response to the question ‘What is the worst thing about Alnwick?’ the most common responses related to;

- Lack of retail and restaurant options
- Lack of activities for young people
- The bus station
- Transport connections

When asked ‘What changes would you like to see in Alnwick?’ the most favoured changes related to;

- Enhanced culture, leisure and retail offer
- Town centre improvements
- Transport connectivity



Summary

Alnwick is a popular place to both live and visit. It is located in an outstanding natural environment and is steeped in history and heritage.

The development of new attractions such as the Alnwick Garden and Lilidorei over recent years and improvements to existing attractions such as Barter Books has seen visitor numbers increase.

However, there is a disconnect between the number of visitors to these attractions and visitors to the town centre. More visitors to the attractions could be encouraged to also visit the town.

Whilst the population is growing, it is an aging population, with over 40% of residents over the age of 65. The proportion of residents of working age has fallen and the number of under 16-year-olds has fallen significantly.

The vision and strategic objects developed by the Alnwick Place Development group received strong public support during consultation and the town is well supported by community organisations and volunteers keen to achieve a positive future for its residents.

Whilst Alnwick is proud of its history and heritage, it is a forward-thinking town and is keen to embrace modern thinking and technology in a sustainable manner to enhance its vibrancy, inclusivity and connectivity.

Investment themes

The investment themes establish a focus in terms of how we will aim to deliver the vision and objectives of the Place Plan. A strength of the Borderlands Place Plan process has been the ‘whole-town planning’ approach, which has informed our investment themes. The themes reflect the feedback given by community members and stakeholders throughout the process; from stakeholder mapping exercises to public consultation, we have developed the themes around the key topics identified by the people and businesses of Alnwick.

There are three investment themes linked to the three strategic objectives of the Place Plan to create a vibrant, inclusive and connected town.

Investment theme 1 – Vibrant town

Investing in retaining both spend and activity in the town to drive the regeneration of Alnwick’s town centre and improve the resident and visitor experience, bolstering daytime activity and encouraging increased footfall and spend by:

- attracting people to live, work and visit Alnwick
- providing an energy and vibrancy to the town centre.
- Creating a sense of enthusiasm towards the town centre
- Creating a flow through the town centre
- Adding to the cultural offer of the town centre
- Offering residents and visitors a unique experience



Investment theme 2 – Inclusive town

Investing in people and prioritising improvements to leisure, community, culture and heritage facilities and services by working in partnership to provide residents with wider opportunities to get active, learn, participate and enjoy their local town by:

- Supporting and enhancing the strong sense of community that exists in the town.
- Providing opportunities for active participation by the community
- Retaining and attracting young people to live and work in the town.

Investment theme 3 – Connected town

Investing in the connectivity of the town and prioritising improvements to the flow of vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians arriving in and leaving the town and within the town by:

- Developing safe and attractive access through the town centre and between the town centre and out of town attractions for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Encouraging tour operators to include Alnwick town centre on their itineraries.
- Enhancing access to Alnwick via public transport.

Part 2: Development and implementation

Development of the Place Plan

There are more than 100 towns across the Borderlands area with different and distinct characteristics. Alnwick's inclusion as one of Northumberland's seven towns on the Borderlands Place Programme was assessed using the Unified Borderlands Town Index, developed to facilitate the town prioritisation process. It was critical that the framework was:

- evidence based
- robust in its justification
- transparent for our stakeholders and communities

The index was based on a two-stage gateway process:

- A quantitative assessment of a generic range of published indicators that defined the relative "economic health" of the towns in scope
- The progressive application of a range of qualitative factors that correlated to the broader "levelling up" aims of the Programme



Market Place and Market Cross



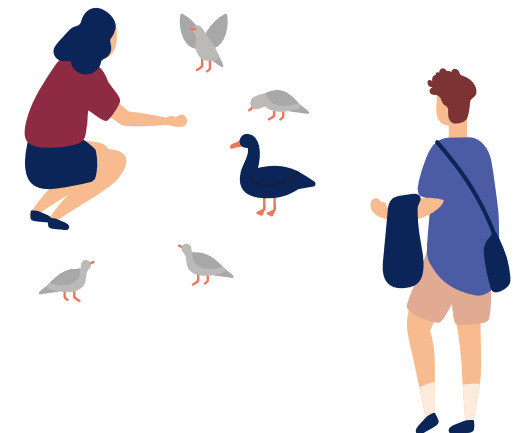
Bondgate Within

The officer team then developed a framework to inform the process, as demonstrated in the diagram below:

Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish the local Place Development Group• Develop the TORs• Appoint Chair• Agree Stakeholder List• Invite representatives of key stakeholders to form Place Development Group
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish baseline of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats• Draft vision and strategic objectives• Consult residents on vision and strategic objectives• Review vision and objectives
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify priority investment themes• Develop implementation plan• Invite project proposals• Assess project eligibility• Eligible project proposals included in place plan• Submit place plan to Borderlands Programme• Assessment and endorsing of place plan• Feedback from Place Programme Board on place plan
Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortlist schemes for BTIP (including consideration of Place Programme Board recommendations)• Strategic Outline Business Case development of Borderlands schemes with scheme sponsors• BTIP completion and submission to Borderlands Programme• Assessment and Approval of BTIP• Accountable Body due diligence and contracting with Borderlands Programme

The local Place Development Group in Alnwick was created following a stakeholder mapping exercise (the full exercise is outlined in Appendix IV) with local councillors and consists of public, private and community sector representatives. This includes two county councillors, two town councillors, and nine business and community sector representatives. The group is facilitated and managed by the County Council's Economy and Regeneration Service. The purpose of the group in the first instance is to support and advise on the development of this document for the town, working with local community stakeholders in Alnwick and providing a 'whole town approach'. Full terms of reference have been published on the town's webpage together with a summary of declarations of interest.

Board Member (Organisation)	Board Member (Name)
Alnwick Civic Society	Peter Reed (Chair)
Northumberland County Council	Cllr Martin Swinbank
Northumberland County Council	Cllr Gordon Castle
Alnwick Town Council	Cllr Geoff Watson
Alnwick Town Council	Cllr Martin Harrington
Alnwick Town Council	Peter Hately
Northumberland Estates	Catherine Neil
Alnwick Garden	Mark Brassell
Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery	Jean Humphrys
Metrology Software Products Ltd (MSP Ltd)	Marianne Whitfield
Karbon Homes	Zoey Hawthorne
Alnwick Chamber of Trade	Lisa Aynsley
Gallery Youth	Susan Patience
Alnwick Playhouse	Damian Cruden



Interventions and investments

Central to the development of the Place Plan are the five core principles underpinning the design and delivery of the wider Place Programme:

- **Place-based:** Assessing investment needs and solutions for each place on its own terms: what the place wants to be in the future, what it needs, and what it offers.
- **Collective:** Looking at the contribution of each part to the whole: the added value to the place, the area, the region, and the country.
- **Systemic:** Bringing public, private, third sector, and community assets together as part of a single, integrated system supporting communities, services and the economy.
- **Community-led:** Putting communities at the heart of decisions about the solutions that the Place Programme brings to the challenges facing their towns and town centres.
- **Prevention and future proofing:** Investment and action directed towards preventing further deterioration in our towns and town centres.

Our process in Alnwick, and subsequent call for project proposals, has been informed through collaboration and consultation with the community. We have developed a local Place Development Group comprising public, private and voluntary sector partners, driven by the stakeholder mapping sessions. Our consultation has helped to shape our investment themes, vision and strategic objectives and will also determine potential investment. Through every step of the process to date, we have attempted to involve and engage the wider community. Through use of consultation software, business focus groups and in-person showcase events, the community has been pivotal in shaping the Place Plan. These thoughts and ideas have been central to our strategic objectives and ensure that they align accordingly with all seven Borderlands Place Programme strategic objectives:



Borderlands Place Programme investment objectives	Alnwick Place Plan strategic objectives
<p>SO1: Empower local communities to imagine and then build a long-term future for the towns they live in.</p>	<p>Inclusive town - Prioritise improvements to services by working in partnership to provide residents with wider opportunities to get active, learn, participate and enjoy their local town.</p> <p>Connected town - Integrating Alnwick with regional economic prospects, public transport connectivity and ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable public transport network.</p>
<p>SO2: Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to our towns and town centres.</p>	<p>Vibrant town - Enhance the physical environment and condition of the town centre, encouraging new uses of existing properties to attract investment, increase footfall and spend from residents and visitors.</p>

Borderlands Place Programme investment objectives	Alnwick Place Plan strategic objectives
SO3: Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in our towns and town centres.	Vibrant town - Rejuvenating the town centre. Inclusive town - Delivering recreation initiatives.
SO4: Safeguard existing employment and deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation.	Inclusive town - New retail enterprises, business growth. Embrace the benefits of the Northumberland Line and future walking and cycling infrastructure improvements so that residents and businesses can access work, shopping, leisure and culture opportunities.
SO5: Maintain and increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres.	Vibrant town - Rejuvenating the town centre.
SO6: Retain and increase the working age population in towns.	Inclusive town - Safeguard existing employment and work collaboratively to create a skilled workforce able to access learning and training opportunities and jobs in growth sectors across Northumberland and the North East.
SO7: Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in our towns and town centres.	Vibrant town - Rejuvenating the town centre. Connected town - Supporting decarbonisation measures.

The Alnwick Place Development Group agreed to prioritise three Borderlands Place Programme strategic objectives based upon their experience of the town and feedback from residents, visitors and businesses. The three strategic objectives chosen to develop are highlighted in bold. They were then adapted following public consultation to reflect the outcomes and change people wished to see:

- Vibrant town
- Inclusive town
- Connected town

These three strategic objectives and three investment themes, as applied to Alnwick, and the wider Borderlands Place Programme strategic objectives created the matrix and criteria required to appraise

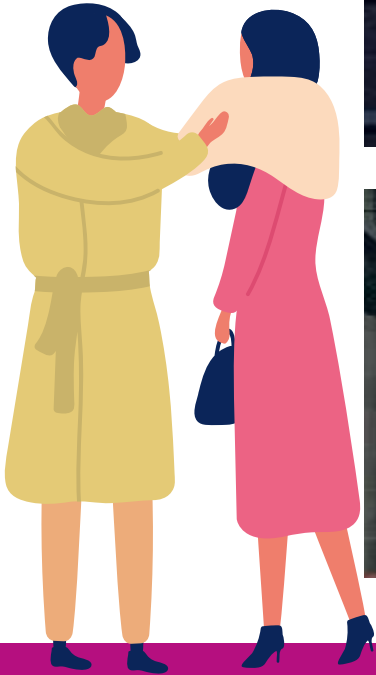
the expressions of interest received from project sponsors. A range of nine critical success factors (CSFs) were used to assess the EOIs.

- Priority investment themes
- Opportunities and challenges facing the town
- National and regional strategic/funding objectives
- Priorities of local people, communities, businesses
- Additionality to the town's major strategic investments
- Need for funding and evidence of market failure
- New and innovative approaches
- Deliverability
- Value for money

Our Place Plan delivers on the Government's levelling up agenda, aimed at tackling geographical disparities across the UK. Aligned to the missions of the levelling up agenda, the Place Plan will help Alnwick to close the prosperity gap with other parts of the UK by creating new, skilled jobs, boosting household incomes, improving public transport connectivity and boosting pride in place, including improved satisfaction with the town centre.

Clean growth is at the heart of our plans, in line with Government net zero carbon reduction goals identified in the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the Energy White Paper, and Sixth Carbon Budget. These plans highlight significant clean energy investment in the coming years (including wind, carbon capture, and hydrogen), quadrupling the UK's offshore wind capacity by 2030, bringing jobs and growth to ports and coastal towns. Our Place Plan demonstrates how Alnwick will play a significant role in the clean growth agenda, attracting new jobs and investment, and supporting the UK's net zero carbon goals.

Covid-19 economic recovery is at the forefront of our investment planning. We will deliver new jobs and education places, creating new opportunities to stimulate economic recovery.



Pedestrianised area of Narrowgate

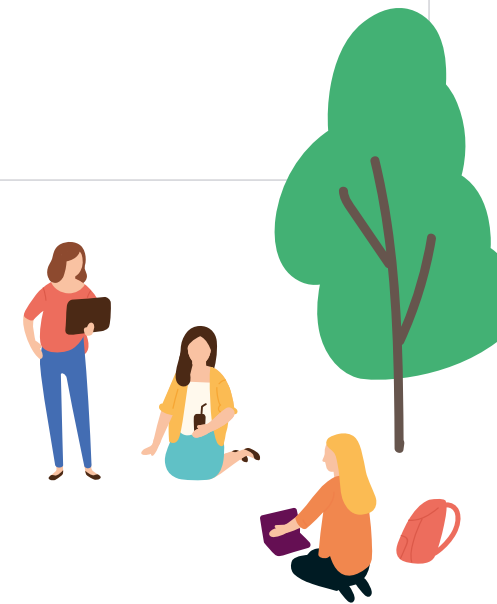


Bondgate Within

Complimentary initiatives - economic development

The following table illustrates several key investments already underway in Alnwick which are linked both directly and indirectly to the proposals received under the core investment themes. It is intended that the projects below will complement and align with the proposals received for both investment through the Place Programme and those developed with partner organisations and other funders.

Project and lead sponsor	Description	How it supports the Place Plan investment themes
Lilidorei Play Village The Alnwick Garden	The world's biggest children's play park - part funded by the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.	Vibrant town
Hotel Northumberland Estates	Boutique hotel being developed on site of former high school within 50m of Alnwick Castle entrance.	Vibrant town
Housing Developments Northumberland Estates	Developments at Greenfields and Windy Edge.	Inclusive town
Pedestrianisation of Narrowgate Alnwick Town Council	Closure of Narrowgate to traffic.	Vibrant town
Employability Hub Northumberland County Council	NCC Employability and Inclusion are developing Employability Hubs around the county, including Alnwick. The hubs will provide a 'one-stop-shop' for residents to access all employability related needs.	Vibrant town



Building our future

As described earlier in the Vision section, three key themes have been identified and agreed locally which have informed the consideration of potential projects, interventions and investments. As a result, the Place Plan will focus investment on where it is really needed in Alnwick, drawing upon on all of the feedback received at public consultation, throughout the showcase events and recognising the importance of the whole stakeholder engagement process.

Project ideas have been identified from the engagement work carried out throughout the place planning stage, and the place plan draws upon existing action plans from the County Council, Town Council and Parish Council together with wider community engagement.

Proposal submission process

Project proposals were invited to identify potential projects that would help Alnwick achieve its vision, objectives and investment themes outlined within this Place Plan. It was emphasised that a small number of larger capital projects which would have significant impact on the town were being sought for Borderlands Place Programme funding. The project value was advised to be between £300K and £1.5m.

Additionally, projects which were considered to have potential to have

a large impact and meet the vision and objectives of the Place Plan, but which were not eligible for Borderlands funding, would be included in the town's place plan and developed separately to the Place Programme process. Whilst there was no minimum funding requirement on such projects, they needed to demonstrate significant impact.

Projects were assessed against the criteria on the Project Proposal Proforma, and eligible projects then formed a 'long-list' to be considered by the Alnwick Place Development Group for inclusion in the Alnwick Borderlands Place Plan.

The completed Place Plan would then be assessed by the accountable body before being submitted to the Borderlands Place Programme Board.

Project sponsors were reminded that this was a two-stage application process; if the Alnwick Place Plan was approved at this first stage by the Borderlands Place Programme Board, officers would work with the sponsor to develop the project further for inclusion in the Borderlands Town Investment Plan (BTIP) for the town. The final BTIP will form the basis of the final application to the Borderlands Programme Board and forms a second stage in the application process. The timeline for Alnwick's EOI process is detailed below.

Alnwick's EOI timeline



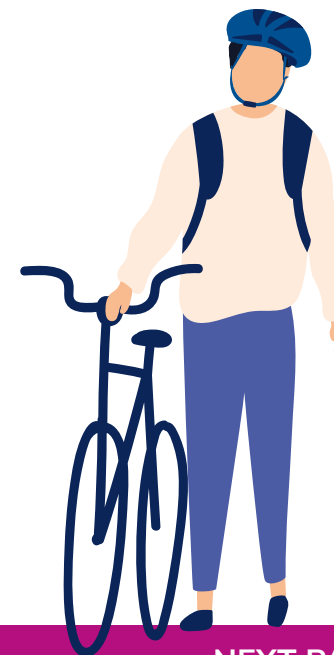
Proposal summary

The following section details the proposals received throughout the call-out process for expressions of interest to the Borderlands Place Plan. The eligibility of the proposals for inclusion in a Borderlands Town Investment Plan will be determined at the next stage of the process. Proposals not eligible for inclusion in the BTIP will be supported by the Place Development Group to seek funding from other sources.

This Place Plan has taken a whole of town approach to identifying the key priorities which are important to the creation of a thriving community over the next 10 years – these come in the form of the infrastructure, assets, economic activity, community services and connections needed to sustain and nourish the population, support their aspirations and ensure a cohesive community with a strong sense of civic pride and community spirit. The table below sets out a monitoring framework for the Place Plan, identifying under each theme and strategic objective, the key activities which will be delivered (outputs) to initiate the positive changes and developments (outcomes) we want to bring about in the community, together with some of the key metrics which will be used to evidence the impact of the Plan. These outputs and outcomes are consistent with those detailed within the Borderlands Place Plan Guidance.

However, the guidance recognises that this is not an exhaustive list, and that additional project specific outputs and outcomes may be agreed as appropriate. In addition, as some of the priority projects identified within the Place Plan will not be funded through the Borderlands Place Programme, we have included additional measures where appropriate to capture the potential contribution of projects of this nature. All of these are defined at Place Plan / Innovation Team level - however, as part of the management and governance arrangements for the delivery of the Plan, each prioritised project will have its own project specific outputs and outcomes which demonstrate their intended and agreed contribution to these higher-level objectives and against which they will be required to measure and report progress on a regular basis.

The projects have been ordered in accordance with their strategic fit within the identified investment themes.



Project Ideas (Grouped in primary investment theme met)

Investment theme 1 – Vibrant town - To achieve a vibrant, connected place to live, work, relax and visit. Improving the public realm, creating space for walking, cycling and socialising

Project Title Sector Sponsor	Initiative	Strategic objectives	Potential outputs/ Outcomes
Playhouse Link Building Third Sector	To create a new gallery for Alnwick and a creative engagement/event space, improve theatre accessibility and access to existing workshop space and develop accommodation for artists and participants.	Vibrant town	Floorspace Visitor numbers Jobs created
General Lambert's Town House Private sector	A project to bring back into mixed use the Grade 2* listed landmark building, General Lambert's Town House in Narrowgate, Alnwick which has been empty and unused since 2003.	Vibrant town Inclusive town	Remediation of vacant site Floor space brought back into use Jobs created Training opportunities created
Alnwick Transport Hub Public sector	A new Bus Station which, when operational, will encourage bus operators into Alnwick, make public transport easier and faster to use. Linking with the mainline train station at Alnmouth is a major component of the Hub.	Vibrant town Inclusive town Connected town	Increased visitor numbers Footfall
Relocation of Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery Third sector	Relocation of museum and gallery to Grade 1 listed Northumberland Hall in the town centre marketplace.	Vibrant town Inclusive town	Increased visitor numbers Footfall
Bailiffgate Digital and Green Technology Third sector	Use of new and innovative technology to improve the energy efficiency of the building, and to transform the visitor experience.	Vibrant town	Increased visitor numbers Footfall Jobs Reduction in emissions

Project Title Sector Sponsor	Initiative	Strategic objectives	Potential outputs/ Outcomes
Alnwick Town Centre Transformation Private sector partnership	Transforming the current town centre into a vibrant event space that will be the hub of year-round events that compliment and capitalise on the other visitor attractions Alnwick has to offer.	Vibrant town Inclusive town Connected town	Business secured New businesses created Jobs secured Increased visitor numbers
The Cobbles Public sector	Replacement of the current surface which is difficult to walk on and inaccessible to elderly and disabled people. Enhancing the streetscape with natural materials and creation of additional pedestrian space.	Vibrant town Inclusive town Connected town	Public realm improved
The Quarter Private sector	Transforming a derelict site in the town centre into an innovating mix of commercial and residential units that will enhance one of Alnwick's biggest eyesores and underdeveloped sites to create a leisure boost and additional housing for local people.	Vibrant town	Remediation of vacant site Houses created Vacant buildings occupied Jobs created
Alnwick Station Estate Private sector	Replace mixed usage units currently housing light industrial companies with leisure and tourism attractors to compliment Barter Books.	Vibrant town Connected town	Leasable floor space Structures made safe Jobs created
Bike Track and Skate Park Third sector	To further develop an existing Bike Track by adding a medium sized, permanent, skate park freely accessible to all ages.	Vibrant town	Increased visitor numbers Footfall



Investment theme 2 - Inclusive town - Maximising the benefit for Alnwick from wider strategic initiatives that will create jobs, encourage investment and drive productivity across the County and beyond

Project Title Sector Sponsor	Initiative	Strategic objectives	Potential outputs/ Outcomes
Heritage Trades Capacity Building Sponsor required	To build capacity in local construction trades through both skills development and an increase in the size of the workforce. The project focuses specifically on the skills required in the conservation, maintenance and adaptation of heritage properties.	Vibrant town Inclusive town	Job creating Training opportunities
Alnwick Community Led Housing Sponsor required	Construction of new and restored affordable dwellings with focus on young people in Alnwick.	Vibrant town Inclusive town	Land developed Residential floor space Jobs created Businesses supported
Expansion of business premises and provision of small business units Private sector	The redevelopment of buildings into a new, state-of-the-art facility and the development of a number of flexible small business units.	Inclusive town	Businesses supported Jobs created
STEM Centre Private sector	Creation of a regional STEM centre.	Vibrant town Inclusive town	Jobs created Training opportunities
Storage Express Building and Outbuildings Redevelopment Private sector	Redevelopment and possible extension of derelict building to create leasable floor space.	Vibrant town Inclusive town	Leasable floor space Structure made safe Reduction in emissions Jobs created
Solar Farm Private Sector	A solar farm directly connected to a significant employer's premises.	Inclusive town	Jobs secured

Investment theme 3 – Connected town - Improving movement and connectivity between residential areas, the town centre and employment sites so that it is easier and safer to walk, cycle and use public transport

Project Title Sector Sponsor	Initiative	Strategic objectives	Potential outputs/ Outcomes
Aln Valley Railway extension to Alnmouth Third Sector	Extension of the Aln Valley Railway from Greenrigg to Alnmouth mainline station, along with completion of the cycling/walking route and the development of visitor facilities/attractions at Alnmouth.	Vibrant town Connected town	Increased visitor numbers Increased footfall
Aln Valley Railway Connection, Alnwick Loop and Edlington Link Third Sector partnership	Improvement to the 1-mile cycle/walking link between Aln Valley Railway Path and start of the Alnwick to Cornhill disused railway track (DRT) at Alnwick Greensfield; The renovation of the former DRT to create a new permissive greenway path to Mossy Ford; The renovation of the former DRT from Mossy Ford to Edlington Village.	Vibrant town Inclusive town Connected town	Increased visitor numbers Increased visitor spend Improved activity rates for residents
Pedestrianisation, Narrowgate, Alnwick Public Sector	Pedestrianisation of the narrow section of Narrowgate in the town centre. The project aims to improve road safety and enhance the town centre environment by removing traffic from a narrow section of road and providing increased pedestrian space to allow shoppers and visitors better access to local shops and services.	Vibrant town Inclusive town Connected town	Public realm improved Increased footfall
Alnwick Link Greenway Public Sector	To construct a Greenway (accessible route open to all non-motorised users) to link Alnwick Town Centre with the southern part of the town. The route would start at the bridge on Bridge Street and follow the route of the former Alnwick to Cornhill Railway for around 750m to the junction with Willowburn Avenue by St James roundabout.	Vibrant town Inclusive town Connected town	Increased footfall
Town Centre Travel Scheme Sponsor required	To create an out of Town Park & Ride scheme. Using electric buses.	Vibrant town Connected town	Increased footfall

Investment themes outputs and outcomes

As described earlier in the Vision section, three Themes have been identified and agreed, which have informed the consideration of potential projects, interventions and investments. It is critical for this Plan that these contribute to the achievement of the overall Vision and work together with each other to form a coherent Plan which knits together and drives the change needed.

Project ideas have been sought locally and from the broader engagement work undertaken with regard to existing Action Plans and Local Plans prepared by the Town Council, Parish Council, Northumberland County Council, North of Tyne Combined Authority and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. The following are illustrations of development proposals under each theme which are designed to support the town achieve its Vision of the future as well as address the headline Strategic Objectives referred to earlier.

Investment theme 1 – Vibrant town - To achieve a vibrant, connected place to live, work, relax and visit. Improving the public realm, creating space for walking, cycling and socialising

Theme 1 will aim to invest in retaining and increasing both spend and activity in the town as a whole to drive the regeneration of Alnwick's town centre and improve resident and visitor experience, supporting the daytime and night-time economy and encouraging increased footfall and spend.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>To achieve a vibrant, connected place to live, work, relax and visit. Improving the public realm, creating space for walking, cycling and a thriving street market.</p> <p>Supporting the arts and cultural sector by positioning Alnwick as a primary tourist destination through stronger collaboration, joint marketing and providing a distinctive welcome.</p> <p>By ensuring that the physical infrastructure of the town evolves to better serve the access and movement needs of an ageing demographic. At the same time ensuring that the expectations and needs of a wide range of visitors are considered.</p>	<p>Increasing the number of commercial buildings developed or improved.</p> <p>Increasing the amount of rehabilitated land.</p> <p>Increasing occupancy rates in the town centre.</p> <p>Creating and improving public realm to improve health and wellbeing and connectivity.</p>	<p>Census data on population, economic activity, education & income.</p> <p>Footfall monitoring.</p> <p>Town centre occupier surveys.</p> <p>Employment/training statistics.</p> <p>Business records & support accessed.</p> <p>Government business data.</p>

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>Investing in supporting collaboration between businesses, arts and culture organisations, and local authorities to better develop the cultural and retail offer of the town and attract new audiences.</p> <p>Management of place and quality of the environment - visitors expect an attractive and easy to use environment; they expect good public toilets, cafés, shops, clear signs, maps and other information, good public transport and easy parking. If we aspire to have world-class visitor destinations, then all of these activities need to be integrated and managed.</p> <p>Spreading the benefits of tourism to local people - the wider ambition of the strategy is to generate wealth and create a sustainable and cohesive community. That means increasing profit and higher wages.</p> <p>Better, higher quality, more productive businesses, that generate more profit, require higher skilled staff and are able to offer better pay and conditions to secure them with more attractive careers that both retain local people and attract people to live and work in Alnwick.</p> <p>Developing and promoting Alnwick's unique independent retail sector. Alnwick is renowned for its niche independent retailers, particularly along Bondgate, Narrowgate and Pottergate. A thriving independent sector alongside high quality brands is a powerful combination, especially in a town of distinctive character.</p>	<p>Increased quality of local events and cultural offer.</p> <p>Increased footfall (% increase).</p> <p>Increased day visitors (% increase).</p> <p>Completion of feasibility and demand studies to enable future investment.</p>	<p>Physical project data, plans and photographs.</p> <p>£ Funding leveraged.</p> <p>Visitor/ Resident survey work.</p> <p>Housing Needs and Demands Survey.</p>

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>Exploring opportunities for promoting culture-led regeneration and community development – for example investing in culture focused feasibility studies and community facilities to attract people to places.</p> <p>Improving green spaces and preserving important local assets – for example enhancing natural assets, including green spaces in neighbourhoods and housing estates, to enhance quality of life to attract and retain talent, and attract tourism.</p> <p>In addition to the daytime offer, enhancing the evening economy as a key role to generate further revenue opportunities.</p>		

Investment theme 2 – Inclusive town - Maximising the benefit for Alnwick from wider strategic initiatives that will create jobs, encourage investment and drive productivity across the County and beyond

Theme 2 will aim to Invest in People and bridging the skills gap between residents and employment.

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>To equip people with the skills and confidence to be active agents in transition to a net zero future – Helping young people, in particular, to achieve their potential, strengthen their progression and pathways through education, employment, self-enterprise and raise their aspirations and income levels. Skills development is significantly cheaper than physical capital but remains a missing piece of business investment.</p> <p>To connect local business to learning opportunities to create more skilled jobs, new and adapted businesses, and increased enterprise start-ups.</p>	<p>Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services.</p> <p>Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following intervention.</p>	<p>Census data on population, economic activity, education & income.</p> <p>Footfall monitoring.</p> <p>Town centre occupier surveys.</p> <p>Employment/training statistics.</p> <p>Business records & support accessed.</p> <p>Government business data.</p> <p>Physical project data, plans and photographs.</p>

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>Through programmes of skills and mentoring to prepare young people, in particular and residents, more generally, for a net zero future.</p> <p>To bring together key stakeholders from local businesses and organisations to design and deliver programmes of skills training sessions and creating more apprenticeship opportunities within the Alnwick area.</p> <p>Working with key landowners and stakeholders such as Northumberland Estates to improve work-space availability for creative industries and enterprise start ups.</p> <p>Developing innovative approaches to ensure young people starting new retail enterprises have access to low-cost retail outlets, through innovative access to market stalls and empty shops.</p> <p>Developing excellence in skills - a well-trained workforce is paramount with key priorities being chef training, leadership and customer service. Challenges to overcome include retention of workforce, training fatigue and the image of hospitality as a career. A key issue is the lack of consistency in skills training and independent businesses must have access to the same high-quality advice that larger businesses have as a matter of course. This is relevant to all sectors of the service economy, particularly retail and is a crucial part of Theme 2.</p> <p>Targeted support for the long-term economically inactive, who do not respond to job-matching services, as their transition to work will have the greatest impact on household incomes and lift more children out of poverty.</p>	<p>Number of people in education/training.</p> <p>Number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL).</p> <p>Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision.</p> <p>Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills.</p> <p>Completion of feasibility studies to enable future investment.</p> <p>Number of new businesses created.</p> <p>Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity.</p> <p>Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support.</p> <p>Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready.</p> <p>Number of socially excluded people accessing support.</p> <p>Number of people accessing mental and physical health support leading to employment.</p>	

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>Retraining, upskilling or reskilling members of the workforce – for example support for relevant training where the local workforce may require new skills to meet the needs of a local employer or sector.</p> <p>Promoting the advancement of digital skills and inclusion – for example supporting the development of digital skills for digitally excluded individuals.</p> <p>Supporting entrepreneurs and helping businesses with potential to create more job opportunities for current employees or take on new employees – for example enabling access to specialist support. such as investor readiness schemes.</p> <p>Supporting decarbonisation measures – for example encouraging local businesses and organisations to reduce greenhouse gases through investment in new technology or energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>Projects that foster knowledge transfer activity. This may include nurturing further join up between higher education institutions and small businesses, leading to new product development, commercialisation, diversification and productivity benefits.</p> <p>Supporting employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Projects that support disadvantaged groups such as ex-offenders, veterans and the homeless to move closer to the labour market by providing wrap around support to address the multiple barriers they face. This should include the opportunity to gain basic skills, employability support and pastoral support to address other barriers such as health, finance and housing.</p>	<p>Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support.</p>	

Outcomes

Investment theme 3 – Connected town - Improving movement and connectivity between residential areas, the town centre and employment sites so that it is easier and safer to walk, cycle and use public transport

Theme 3 will aim to Invest in better connections for opportunities in Alnwick:

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>Examine whether there is a requirement to improve the town centre environment for visitors through further traffic restraint. This may include further town centre pedestrianisation, removing through traffic from the town centre, examining the implications of the introduction of a low emissions zone.</p> <p>Re-connecting Alnwick: improving accessibility to key residential and business areas for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Better journeys for all: ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable public transport network.</p> <p>Continue investment in public transport connectivity by boosting connections across our key centres and corridors.</p> <p>Measures aimed at encouraging more active travel and reducing the volume of trips made by car to improve health and reduce environmental impacts.</p> <p>Strengthening the links of cycling and walking paths to public transport and other transport hubs to encourage modal shift from private vehicles to active modes of travel.</p> <p>Decarbonising the largest sources of carbon emissions on the road, focusing on research and development, building a robust supply chain for zero emission technologies, and delivering supporting infrastructure to build consumers' confidence in zero-emission vehicles.</p>	<p>Number of decarbonisation plans developed.</p> <p>Improved journey times to key strategic employment, learning sites.</p> <p>Cleaner ways to access employment, learning and leisure.</p> <p>Completion of feasibility studies to enable future investment.</p> <p>Smarter streetscapes with access to electric charging points.</p> <p>Reduced traffic in the town centre.</p> <p>Greater access to opportunities for residents.</p> <p>Increased visitor opportunities.</p> <p>Increased footfall.</p>	<p>Transport data on green space, travel patterns.</p> <p>Reports from employers in the region.</p> <p>Decarbonisation measurements.</p>

Outputs	Outcomes	Measurements
<p>Investment to unlock development around public transport hubs, catalyse economic activity in our centres, and provide residents with the same levels of opportunity to access employment, health, education and leisure opportunities.</p> <p>Reducing barriers to active travel by making our roads safer to use, and address congestion and capacity constraints.</p> <p>Provision of EV charging points to build consumers' confidence in adopting EVs.</p> <p>Train station development improving connectivity and integrating Alnwick with regional economic and housing opportunities.</p> <p>Bus station redevelopment and regeneration.</p> <p>Enhancements of the single lane A 1, addressing carriageway bottlenecks, public transport operation and active mobility both north and south of Alnwick.</p> <p>Improvement of the cycling infrastructure with the creation of segregated tracks, priority crossing points and connections to existing cycling routes including Alnmouth station.</p>		

Performance monitoring

The Alnwick Place Plan has been developed to meet evidenced local needs and a clear baseline has been set to enable monitoring of progress and achievement of outputs, outcomes and other benefits. Any gaps in data or baselines will be progressed during the Borderland Town Investment Plan (BTIP) development process to underpin the prioritised projects and the programme overall.

The lead authority, Northumberland County Council will undertake monitoring of the overall investment programme as outlined in the Place Plan and the subsequent BTIP in conjunction with the Alnwick Place Development Group in line with the approach used for other place-based programmes as set out below:

- Demonstrate clearly how the scheme objectives will be achieved including intended changes and demonstrating the links between the interventions and benefits & outcomes within the community.
- Agree the baseline (current context and data both quantitative and qualitative) and progress stages to keep the Place Plan and the BTIP focussed and resources aligned.
- Identify gaps in data, baselines, comparators and collection methodology and create solutions, this will lead to refinement of what will be monitored, why and how.
- Enable accurate reporting generating confidence with funders, setting out monitoring of KPI's and change milestones throughout, supporting dynamic risk management.
- Create clear messages about the outputs and outcomes for a range of audiences to widen understanding about the scope and ambitious impact of the Alnwick Place Plan.
- Assess the additionality of activities (and impacts) and demonstrate VFM.

Once the Borderlands Place Partnership Board and the Programme Board approve the Alnwick Place Plan, the Place Development Group and NCC will be invited to create an Alnwick Town Investment Plan. The monitoring and evaluation approach will be a key component of this as it will be fully incorporated into the overarching business case for the Alnwick interventions and the individual projects that will combine to deliver the vision and strategic objectives.

NCC as lead authority will be responsible for monitoring project and programme delivery and reporting to the Borderlands PMO. Grant funding agreements will be issued to individual project sponsors once the BTIP is approved by the Borderlands programme, which will incorporate all monitoring and reporting requirements and any special conditions that might apply such as compliance with subsidy control.

Appropriate systems, processes and records will be established to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements such as eligibility, record keeping, document retention, financial output and milestone monitoring and reporting requirements, publicity requirements, subsidy control, procurement and audit purposes.

The Place Development Group will receive regular updates on the progress of BTIP projects and provide ongoing community oversight of these and the wider package of interventions that are not Borderlands eligible but continue to meet the vision and investment priorities outlined in this Place Plan.

Management and governance

The Alnwick Place Plan has been developed with the local community and it represents their vision and aspirations for the town. The Place Development Group will continue to meet regularly to develop the Town Investment Plan and the prioritised projects and will support the wider pipeline of interventions that may be eligible for a range of other funding.

The remit of the Place Development Group will be reviewed regularly to ensure that representation is diverse and inclusive to provide strategic oversight, influence and direction to implementation of the Place Plan. This group is vital as the interventions are shaped to ensure strong community engagement and consultation and to encourage maximum collaboration with project sponsors across the investment themes.

In terms of approvals and assurance, the role of the group is to guide, input to and agree the projects that are identified as priority for Borderlands funding during the BTIP process from a collective community perspective. The group will provide local endorsement for the final BTIP, which will then require approval from NCC prior to submitting to the Borderlands PMO and being subject to full appraisal. With the support of NCC the group will fully consider any queries that result from this process and respond through regular meetings to ensuring that the final BTIP is ambitious and deliverable.

Subject to BTIP approval, it is anticipated that the Alnwick Place Development Group will become an active champion of the investment plan and support ongoing communication and engagement activities as projects develop using their local connections and collective voice.

There has been significant momentum gained and the group will continue to be supported by council officers with meeting co-ordination, progress reporting and advice for members and project sponsors on external funding opportunities. This will ensure that the Place Plan has the widest impact possible and will incorporate best practice through the network of Borderlands place programme officers and the Borderlands PMO.

The role of NCC as lead authority is established through guidance from the Borderlands Place Programme and includes formally approving the BTIP for submission to the Borderlands PMO. NCC will implement an internal assurance process prior to submission to ensure the plan is compliant with guidance and the business case for the Alnwick programme and the local package of projects are viable, deliverable and will lead to delivery of the vision, objectives and intended outputs and outcomes.

Once the BTIP is approved by the Borderlands Programme, NCC will be responsible as accountable body for issuing grant funding agreements to individual projects as well as monitoring spend, progress and performance. The council's Economy & Regeneration Service will support co-ordination of the Place Development Group keeping them updated with progress.

Appendices

[Appendix 1: Data Tables](#)

[Appendix 2: Consultation Report](#)

[Appendix 3: Stakeholder Mapping](#)

This document is also available in an accessible format.

Contact us

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Front cover images, from left to right: *Main market place,*
View of Alnwick Castle from bridge