



Northumberland  
County Council

# Haltwhistle Borderlands Place Plan

28th September 2022

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# Haltwhistle Borderlands Place Plan review

Today we will review:

- Place Plan context
- What the data tells us
- What the consultation told us
- What we know as a board
- Potential investment themes
- Next steps



# Place Plan - Context

Key sections within the place plan include:

- Introduction, strategic objectives and place programme approach
- Context analysis
- Our strategy
- Our approach to engagement and Governance
- Identifying Projects and Investment Themes
- Acknowledgments
- Appendices

# Introduction, strategic objectives and place programme approach (Section one of Place Plan)

As a reminder, The Borderlands Place Programme represents a fresh opportunity to invest in Haltwhistle to ensure its long-term sustainability and growth, underpinned by a 'whole town' approach

Haltwhistle was identified as experiencing a high level of need, while also offering opportunities for growth, and as a result has been prioritised for investment through an objective, evidence-based process, applying transparent socio-economic data

Place Plans that include Borderlands eligible projects will then go on to develop a 'Borderlands Town Investment Plan' (BTIP). The BTIP will be narrower in scope, focusing on a relatively small number of investments and projects that are eligible for Borderlands Inclusive Growth (BIG) Deal funding. This will be limited to economic regeneration-type capital projects that support inclusive economic growth objectives and contribute to addressing the three BIG challenges of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal:

- growing the working age population;
- boosting productivity; and
- delivering inclusive economic growth.

# Capital interventions

The Place Programme will support a range of capital interventions targeted at enhancing the economic infrastructure needed to ensure the sustainability and growth of our towns. This includes:

- Purchase and assembly of land and buildings.
- Remediation of vacant and derelict sites.
- Property development and enhancement, including schemes to encourage private, public and third sector investment in improving buildings, re-modelling business premises, and conversion of buildings to new uses to support the repurposing of towns (e.g., residential, leisure, community uses).
- Development of arts and cultural, visitor economy, community, and skills and education facilities.
- Enhancement of shop, business and commercial public facing fronts.
- Development of the upper floors of buildings for affordable housing and other uses.

# Context analysis (Section 2 of Place Plan)

- The preparation and development of the Plan has come about as a result of community participation and engagement and is intended to capture the energy and enthusiasm of the local community about their place.
- It articulates an ambitious vision for driving recovery improvements and prosperity and bring confidence that targeted investment interventions will result in meaningful change for the better.
- This Plan describes a Vision of Haltwhistle for the future, the creation of which is the result of collaboration of local and strategic organisations and structured input from the local community.
- This has been through engagement sessions both on-line, in groups and on a one-to-one basis seeking views, ideas and feedback to a series of questions.
- It also builds on the engagement undertaken as part of the other local strategic documents identified within the Place Plan.

HALTWHISTLE has been named one of the best places to live in the countryside by the Sunday Times.

The Tynedale town, described as “the place to be since AD122”, was hailed for its open-air swimming pool, £4.6m health centre and museums.

Its “buzzing” local community was also praised, with the prevalence of local businesses.



# Role of town (Section 2 of Place Plan)

- Set at very heart of more than 2000 years of history, Haltwhistle is the geographical Centre of Britain. Nestling beside the River South Tyne, Haltwhistle is the closest town to the stunning central section of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site and the Northumberland National Park, both of which are only about 2 miles (3kms) away.
- As a base to explore the magnificent surrounding area, Haltwhistle couldn't be better positioned. Within one hour's drive to the west are Carlisle, Gretna & South West Scotland. To the North are Kielder Water, Redesdale and the English & Scottish Borders. To the East are the historical attractions of the Northumbria Coast and the city of Newcastle. To the south are the wonderful open spaces of The Northern Pennines, an area of outstanding natural beauty.
- The expansion of Haltwhistle in the 18th and 19th centuries was due to coal mining in the area and to a lesser extent the use of Haltwhistle as a loading point for metal ores coming from the mines on Alston Moor.
- More recently, paint manufacture became a major commercial force in the town, but has now stopped major production. Current local employers include factories making plastic bottles and de-icing products.
- In present times, tourism dominates the economy, with Hadrian's Wall and the beautiful Northumberland countryside counting among the many attractions, with walking and cycling being extremely popular.

# Challenges facing the town – Section 2

In this section we identify the key issues that need to be addressed to improve the situation and affect positive change in the town. These include:

## From data -

- 28% of population age 65+ (18% nationally)
- Percentage of population aged 16-64 has dropped 9% between 2011-2020
- 62% of households live in at least 1 of the 4 dimensions of deprivation (2011 Census)
- 29% of 16+ residents have no formal qualifications (23.9% average in Northumberland and 22.5% nationally)
- Only 18% of residents qualified to Level 4 (43.5% nationally)
- Median household income is £28,123, below the national average of £31,400

## From SWOT

Town doesn't advertise itself - Lack of consistent communications with residents - Lack of all-weather facilities - No central heritage/visitor centre - Residents can be insular/lack of aspirations - Lack of confidence in the town - Visitor spend lower than elsewhere - Shops closing and becoming holiday lets - Businesses not catering for visitors - Lack of diversity in retail - Lack of year-round economy

## From Consultation (cited by 40+ respondents)

Drugs/ASB - Lack of Retail/Restaurant - General lack of investment – Lack of Leisure Facilities – Lack of activities/facilities for young people – Opening Hours

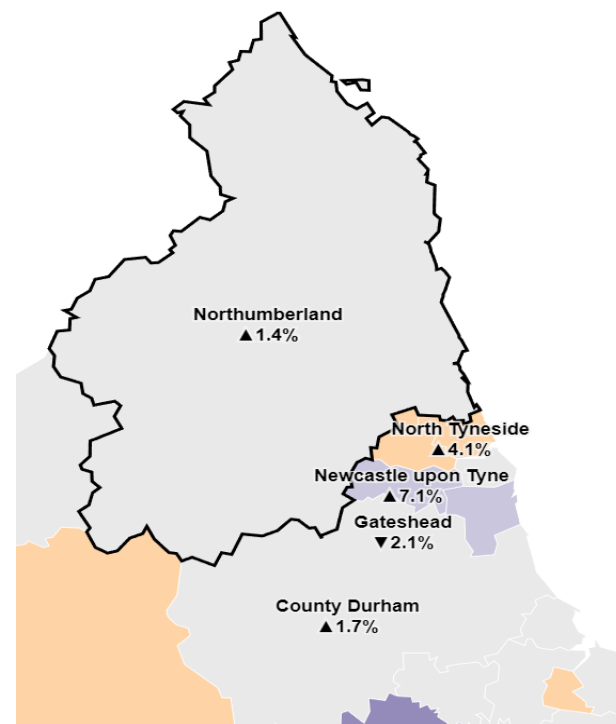


# Population and economy (what the data tells us) – Section 2

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 56,489,800.

In Haltwhistle, the population in 2020 was only +2 compared to 2011 (ONS Parish Populations data)

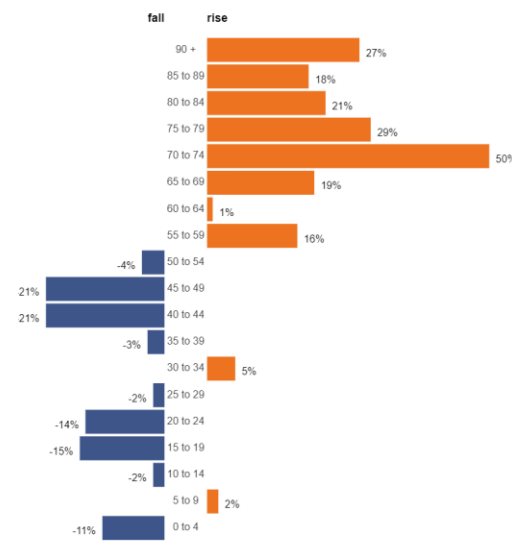
mid_2011	3,791
mid_2012	3,805
mid_2013	3,797
mid_2014	3,810
mid_2015	3,840
mid_2016	3,809
mid_2017	3,817
mid_2018	3,794
mid_2019	3,822
mid_2020	3,793



# Population and economy (what the data tells us) – Section 2

In Northumberland, there has been an increase of 28.9% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 5.9% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and a decrease of 3.4% in children aged under 15 years.

As we can see from the charts below, Haltwhistle's population (by age) is 9% lower than average at 16-64 and 10% above average at 65+.



age group	head-count	% share of population	% for Eng & Wales
0-15	52.1k	16.1%	19.1%
16-64	190k	58.8%	62.2%
65+	81.4k	25.1%	18.6%

Population 2020	% aged 0-15	% Age 16-64	% aged 65+
	20.5%	51.5%	28%

# Population and economy (what the data tells us) – Section 2

More than half of the households in Northumberland are affected by at least one of the four conditions of deprivation measured in the last Census.

The four conditions are:

- unemployment or long-term sickness;
- no person in the household having at least a level two qualification (eg, a GCSE at grade A to C);
- one person in the household having a bad/very bad health problem;
- or the household being overcrowded.

As we can see from the table below, 62% of Haltwhistle's households meet at least one condition of deprivation but only 3 (0.2%) are deprived in all 4 dimensions

<b>% Households deprived in 4 dimensions</b>	<b>% of Households deprived in at least 1 dimension</b>	<b>% Households not deprived in any dimension</b>
0.2% (3 households)	62%	38%

## Population and economy (what the data tells us) – Section 2

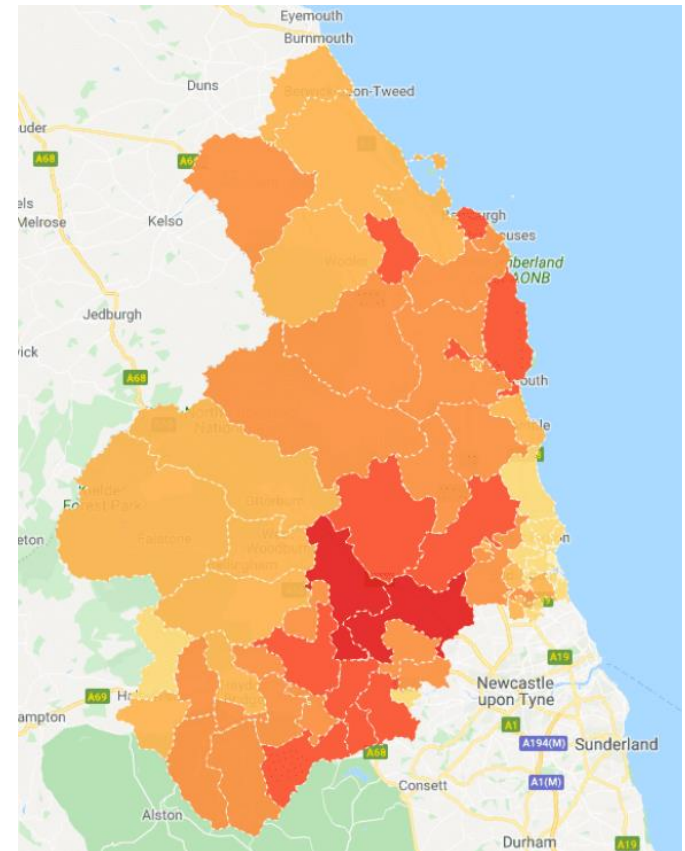
As of December 2021, there were 133,900 individuals of working age in Northumberland and 8,100 were classed as unemployed, an unemployment rate of 6.1%.

We can see from the latest figures (below) that the unemployment rate for 16-64-year-olds in Haltwhistle is lower than the county average at 3.3% with 68% aged between 16-74 economically active (this includes students and people claiming a pension).

JSA (and UC work related) claimants as proportion of 16-64 (Mar 22) -	Age 18-24 (2020)	JSA (and UC work related) claimants as number of 18-24 (Mar 22)	JSA (and UC work related) claimants as proportion of 18-24 (Mar 22)	Economically active residents as a proportion of all residents aged 16-74
3.3%	215	15	7%	68%

# Population and economy (what the data tells us) – Section 2

- 29% of Haltwhistle's 16+ residents have no qualifications. Only 11.1% of England's 16-64 population have no qualifications (2011 Census data)
- 18% are qualified to level 4 or higher compared to 43.5% nationally (2011 Census data)
- The median household income is £28,123 in 2021, a growth of 20% from 2011. Nationally, the median household income is £31,400
- 63% of residences are home owned, 20% social rented and 16% privately rented
- The average house price in 2021 was £137,668. Nationally it is £278,000 and £211,000 in Northumberland.
- The average commuting distance is 25.5 km (16 miles). The average nationally is 18.4 km (11.5 miles)



*Average house prices (Northumberland) 2021*

# Consultation (what the data tells us) – Section 2

Our consultation ran from 4 – 25 April 2022 and we received 344 responses. Alongside the general consultation, a young persons' consultation was facilitated by the Rainbows, Brownies and Young and Sweet which gathered the opinions of 100 5-18 year olds. Furthermore, a Business Focus Group was held.

As well as demographic questions, we asked three questions; what are the best things about Haltwhistle, the worst things and the things you'd like to change. We also asked for feedback on our vision and strategic objectives.

- Only 22 people (6.39% of total respondents) were aged below 30 in the general consultation.
- Nearly 41.86% of respondents were aged over 60 – only 28% of Haltwhistle's population is aged 64+
- 63% felt that Haltwhistle's greatest asset was its **community spirit**; 38% loved the **Local Businesses and Traders** with 35% commending the town's **Natural Environment**
- 37% felt that Haltwhistle's worst aspect was the **Drugs/ASB**. 28% were disappointed with the **lack of retail/restaurants** whilst 23% cited the **General Lack of Investment**
- In economic terms, the changes most respondents would like to see are an **enhanced culture, leisure and retail offer** (47%), followed by **Business Growth and Jobs** (28%) and **Development of Exiting/Unused Sites** (26%)

## Consultation (vision) – Section 2

Despite 88.66% of respondents supporting the vision put to them in the consultation, the Town Board chose to revise the vision to reflect the public's feedback.

### Vision put to consultation

By 2031 Haltwhistle will be a vibrant, growing town recognised as a 'must see' destination by Hadrian's Wall visitors. Attracting day trippers, vacationers and new residents, the town will offer day and nighttime activities for all age groups. New innovative businesses will be drawn to the town, both on the high street and out of town industrial parks, by the combination of improved connectivity to the east and west coasts and the natural beauty of the region based in the centre of Britain.

### Revised Vision

By 2031 Haltwhistle will be a vibrant, growing town recognised as a 'must see' destination by visitors to the area. The town will offer day and night-time activities for all age groups and be attractive to residents and visitors. New innovative businesses will be drawn to the town, complementing and developing existing businesses

## Consultation (strategic objectives) – Section 2

98% of respondents agreed with the objectives and the board felt that the objectives should, therefore, remain as proposed.

1. Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to Haltwhistle town centre and out of town industrial parks
2. Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in Haltwhistle
3. Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in Haltwhistle



# Board feedback – SWOT analysis

## Internal Town Factors

### Strengths of the town

- Very close-knit community
- Location – proximity to cycling and walking
- Good rail links
- World Heritage Site and landmarks
- Sports & leisure facilities – heated swimming pool
- Private sector/large employers
- Cheap rents for shops

### Weaknesses of the town

- Town doesn't advertise itself
- Lack of consistent communications with residents
- Lack of all-weather facilities
- No central heritage/visitor centre
- Residents can be insular/lack of aspirations
- Lack of confidence in the town
- Visitor spend lower than elsewhere
- Shops closing and becoming holiday lets
- Businesses not catering for visitors
- Lack of diversity in retail
- Lack of year-round economy

## External Factors

### Opportunities for the town

- Proximity to Hadrian's Wall
- Visitor economy
- Heritage Centre
- Cater for visitors e.g. Made in Northumberland products
- Entrepreneurship
- Retail strategy
- Local community store
- Seasonality – year-round economy
- Increase aspirations
- Attract tech companies

### Threats for the town

- Negative perception of town by residents
- Focus only on visitor economy – not all residents want this
- NCC – not working with residents
- Inflation
- Young people moving away
- Young people having low aspirations

# Current and Planned Investments

## Current

- Housing project
- Redevelopment of First School site
- Church Hall redevelopment
- Park Road housing
- School refurbishment
- Burn Field project (Football)
- Renewal of bike track surface
- Haltwhistle hospital
- Station refurb
- Town Centre Redevelopment

## Pipeline

- Youth Centre – dedicated/other community + community allotment, Zig Zag
- Leisure facilities – outdoor heated pool, several activities for all ages
- Village Green – bike track, football pitch and facilities, open space
- School improvements
- Late night shopping
- Cycle route improvements
- Church Hall – proposed Residential Home
- Railway station studios
- Railway station EBike Hub
- Community energy PV on Berry roof, leisure centre and Young & Sweet
- Karbon Homes investment community projects
- Haltwhistle retail strategy
- Walkers/cyclists welcome schemes
- Mechanics Institute developments

# Example investment themes -

1

## A Community to Cherish

This theme focusses on creating a heart for Dalton, through investing in a mix of renewed public space, and public realm which reflects the historic character of the town. It recognises Dalton as an enterprising town that can act as a draw for residents and visitors alike, as well as bringing back into use redundant and derelict sites. Interventions through this theme can build on the local heritage and assets of the town that will increase footfall and promote long term green and inclusive growth.

### Theme 1, Concept 1:-

#### Highstreet Enhancements to repurpose town centre buildings

A package of activity that could support the repurposing of some town centre buildings to bring forward a more diverse offer and a better mix of facilities. The concept has the potential to reinvigorate the streetscape of the town centre through a shop front heritage improvement scheme and capital grant scheme that would bring forward private sector investment and support a wide range of end uses. Coupled with associated public realm and signage there is an opportunity to revitalise the Highstreet and fully embrace the community to cherish theme.

# Example investment themes -

## Concept 5a) Improved Physical Environment

Introduction	<p>If Egremont is to become a destination of choice, it is vital that the local environment is safe, secure, clean and welcoming. In order to reduce the prevalence of anti-social behaviour, local residents need to be able to access leisure facilities that underpin positive and active social interactions.</p>
Project Idea	<p>Interventions could focus on making physical improvements to those locations in the town where people have caused vandalism. Some of these locations would be improved through the other Themes of our Plan such as creating a quality public realm and enhancing the Castle and its associated infrastructure. The pedestrian underpasses beneath the A595 main road could be made more inviting with improved lighting in order to deter anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Creating an integrated network of clean and well-lit footpaths connecting together the assets in our town would provide our town's residents with sustainable and safe access safe to those facilities.</p> <p>Enhanced floodlit all weather sports facilities would increase participation in organised physical activities and help to keep kids off the street corners, particularly in the winter months.</p>
Outcomes and Benefits	<p>Improved physical conditions such as clean, inviting and well-lit footpaths and pedestrian underpasses would enable residents, workers and visitors to feel safe and secure which is a pre-requisite to enabling the footfall in and around the town to be increased.</p>

# Vision and Strategic objectives - reminder

By 2031 Haltwhistle will be a vibrant, growing town recognised as a 'must see' destination by visitors to the area.

The town will offer day and night-time activities for all age groups and be attractive to residents and visitors.

New innovative businesses will be drawn to the town, complementing and developing existing businesses

- ❑ Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to Haltwhistle town centre and out of town industrial parks
- ❑ Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in Haltwhistle
- ❑ Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in Haltwhistle

# Identifying investment themes – data, consultation, vision & strategic objectives

A number of themes have emerged as a result of the data & consultation. These themes would largely support the feedback received from stakeholders at each stage. They include:

Changes most requested in consultation

Enhanced Culture, Leisure & Retail Offer

Business Growth & Jobs

Development on Existing/Unused Sites

Themes arising from data

Educational Achievement (all ages)

Retaining Working Age Population

62% of households live in at least 1 of the 4 dimensions of deprivation

Themes arising from board activity

Maximise Strengths of the town to attract tourist spend

Attract non-tourist related industry

Better advertise the town and enhance its reputation

**Can we identify 3 key themes?**

**These will be the strategic priorities to guide future activity for developing and promoting the town and should reference our vision and strategic objectives.**

# Investment Themes

In groups:

Please identify up to **THREE** investment themes for the Haltwhistle Borderlands Place Plan

We will then come back together as a board to decide on the investment themes to be taken forward.

# Strategy – what will success look like?

The Place Plan aims to provide lasting benefits for all residents and supporting inclusive and sustainable growth for Haltwhistle's community.

The monitoring of the Place Plan will measure the impact of the activities and interventions brought forward against the baseline indicators for inclusive growth such as deprivation, workless households, access to services, qualifications and population/depopulation.

**These will be the strategic priorities to guide future activity for developing and promoting the town and should reference our vision and strategic objectives.**



# Strategy – what will success look like?

## How can we quantify success?

- New Businesses Created
- Businesses Safeguarded
- New and Improved Floorspace
- Derelict and Vacant Land Remediated
- Private Sector Leverage
- Increased GVA
- Additional Visitors Attracted
- Increased Footfall
- New Jobs Created and Supported
- People into Training and Employment
- Increased Health Outcomes
- Create New Social Enterprises to support green jobs and green economy

# Next Steps

## Haltwhistle Borderlands Place Programme

- Develop call for projects
- Place Plan Development
- Next Meeting 9 Nov 22

