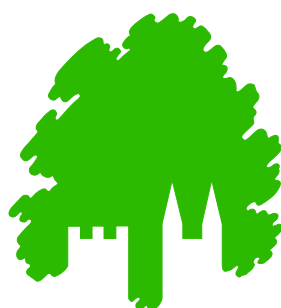


The International Awards for Liveable Communities 2009



Newark-on-Trent
Nottinghamshire
England



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction

The town of Newark-on-Trent is situated in the county of Nottinghamshire. Situated at the intersection of the ancient highways of the Great North Road and the Fosse Way, Newark originally grew around Newark Castle and a large market place which is now lined with historic buildings. It currently has a population of approximately 26,000.

Newark's position as one of the few bridges on the River Trent in the area, its location along the Great North Road (the A1), its position at the junction between the main east coast rail link to London and the route from Nottingham to Lincoln, plus its situation on a man-made navigable section of the River Trent have all enhanced its growth and development. Newark became a substantial inland port, particularly for the wool trade, though it industrialised to some extent during the Victorian era, and later with an ironworks, engineering, brewing, and a sugar refinery. It was a major town standing for the Royalist cause during the Civil War and was besieged on three occasions before finally surrendering only when ordered to do so by the King after his own surrender.

Although Newark has a rich history and one worth remembering and celebrating, a town cannot stand still. Over recent years Newark has invested in both its past and its future. Development schemes have been introduced to maintain the historic feel of the town whilst ensuring that it continues to offer modern day facilities accessible to all.

Newark, like many other regions of the world, has experienced extreme climatic events over the past few years. These have mainly manifested themselves as flooding incidents. This means that there is a raised awareness of flood protection issues during the planning and consideration of development proposals.



1. The Trent Bridge approach into Newark. 2008

Heritage Management

Newark-on-Trent is one of England's most historic towns, identified by the Council for British Archaeology as 'splendid and precious'. It has a medieval street plan, a fine collection of timber framed buildings, a twelfth-century Castle, one of England's grandest parish churches, what is believed to be the finest Market Place in the country and is surrounded by the best-preserved collection of Civil War defences to be found anywhere.

All local planning policies, development briefs and development control measures give due regard to maintaining the historic physical character, appearance and architectural coherence of the compact medieval street network in the main historic core. The conservation area has been extended a number of times since its original designation in recognition of the contribution that other significant and diverse architectural styles have on the overall character and appearance of the town.

New policies are designed to build upon previous grant aided and partnership delivered successes in maintaining the structural fabric of the conservation area in good order, and to continue to strive to deliver environmental enhancements where appropriate to the highest standards which will help maintain the town's historic credentials

Newark Castle

The Castle has been at the heart of social and economic life in Newark for over 850 years since it was built around 1130 by Bishop Alexander of Lincoln. It continues to be the focal point for celebrating Newark's heritage.



2. Newark castle overlooking River Trent. 2007

The Castle is now in the ownership of the District Council and a programme of improvements has allowed parts of the structure to be opened to the public. Over the past ten years a volunteer group 'The Friends of Newark Castle' has, with the help of the Council, raised and invested over £1 million pounds. Civil War re-enactments and guided tours take place around the Castle to allow the town's population to gain experience of the local heritage and history. In 2008 there were in excess of 25 community events centred around the Castle and its gardens.



3. Event at Newark Castle. 2007

The Romanesque Arch

A recent project undertaken within the town has been the reconstruction of an arch believed to have once been part of a chapel at Newark Castle. The arch, which dates back from 1141, was discovered in the undercroft of the Castle and has been rebuilt. The project to rebuild the arch has taken over three years and was finally completed in May 2009 at a cost of £35,000. The project was managed by the Friends of Newark Castle. The arch is now available for public viewing in the visitor centre adjacent to Newark Castle.



4. The Friends of Newark Castle at the opening of the Arch. 2009

Industrial Heritage

Newark's principal industries in the late 19th century were malting and brewing, engineering, flour milling, tanning and textiles. Newark's prosperity during this period is embodied in the fine Victorian buildings around the town, such as the Corn Exchange, the Gilstrap Library and the Ossington Coffee Palace. Many of these fine buildings have since been put to alternative uses such as cafes, restaurants, shops and flats but their facades have been maintained for future generations.



5. Newark Castle Brewery recently converted to residential accommodation. 2008

During the 18th century, throughout the 19th and until the second half of the 20th century, Newark was the centre of the English brewing and malting industries. Newark's brewing tradition has been maintained by the development of a 'Malting and Brewing Trail'. This is a short walk that takes in the buildings and sites that relate to malting and brewing. Similar trails relating to Newark's Medieval timber framed buildings, Newark's Art Deco past and the Civil War have now been developed.



6. Historic centre of Newark. 2007

Newark's Travelling Community

There is reported to be strong evidence of the existence of a large Romany population in Newark going back over hundreds of years. Inevitably some families have, over time, integrated with the local population and lost their cultural distinctiveness, though it is interesting to note that the local 'Newark slang' contains many words of Romany origin.

The Tolney Lane area of Newark has developed as the 'Travellers Quarter' of Newark and it is here that the culture and heritage of two distinct groups, the English Gypsies and the Irish Travellers can be found. The Tolney Lane area provides a range of sites and accommodation to allow the travellers to live their nomadic life whilst still providing a link to the organisations and services to which a community needs access. In 2007 an event was organised to promote the culture and crafts of the travelling community. This community also has its own traditions relating to food and a local food group is now working with local schools to raise awareness of their different food heritage and cultures.

Newark Museum Service

Newark Millgate Museum, along with the Resource Centre and Gilstrap Centre, make up Newark and Sherwood Museum Service which has over 70,000 objects in its collections. The museum service runs a successful education and outreach programme, has a popular research/resource service and enjoys good community support via its partnerships, Friends group and volunteers.



7. Newark Torc. 2007

Enhancement of the Landscape

The town of Newark takes great pride in the enhancement of both its natural and built landscape. It has sympathetically blended new buildings within the fabric of the town to ensure that it maintains its historic heritage. The main consideration during the improvement of the parks and public open spaces is to ensure that indigenous species of plants are introduced and that the horticultural practices used will enhance biodiversity.

The Built Environment

Newark-on-Trent has a history of providing a market dating back to the award of its Market Charter by King John in 1131. It is one of the largest and most impressive Georgian cobbled market squares in the country. For many years the impressive scale and grandeur of the square was lost due to the permanent erection of large, visibly unattractive market stalls. This meant that the historic buildings around The Market Place could never be fully appreciated, as there was no uninterrupted view across the square.

In 2005 the vision for Newark market square was developed. The vision for Newark market was to put it back as the retail centre of the town and to produce an environment that met the needs of the traders, the residents of the town and its visitors.

There have been changes to the physical environment, these have included replacing the uneven surface with granite sets, new lighting columns have been introduced and, most importantly, the market now has removable stalls that are only erected on market days. These changes have dramatically improved the environment of the market square and they have also allowed the square to be used as a centre for public participation events. Each year there is an increasing number of events that now take place in the market square. These include Newark Day (a celebration of Newark's past) and the annual Food Festival.



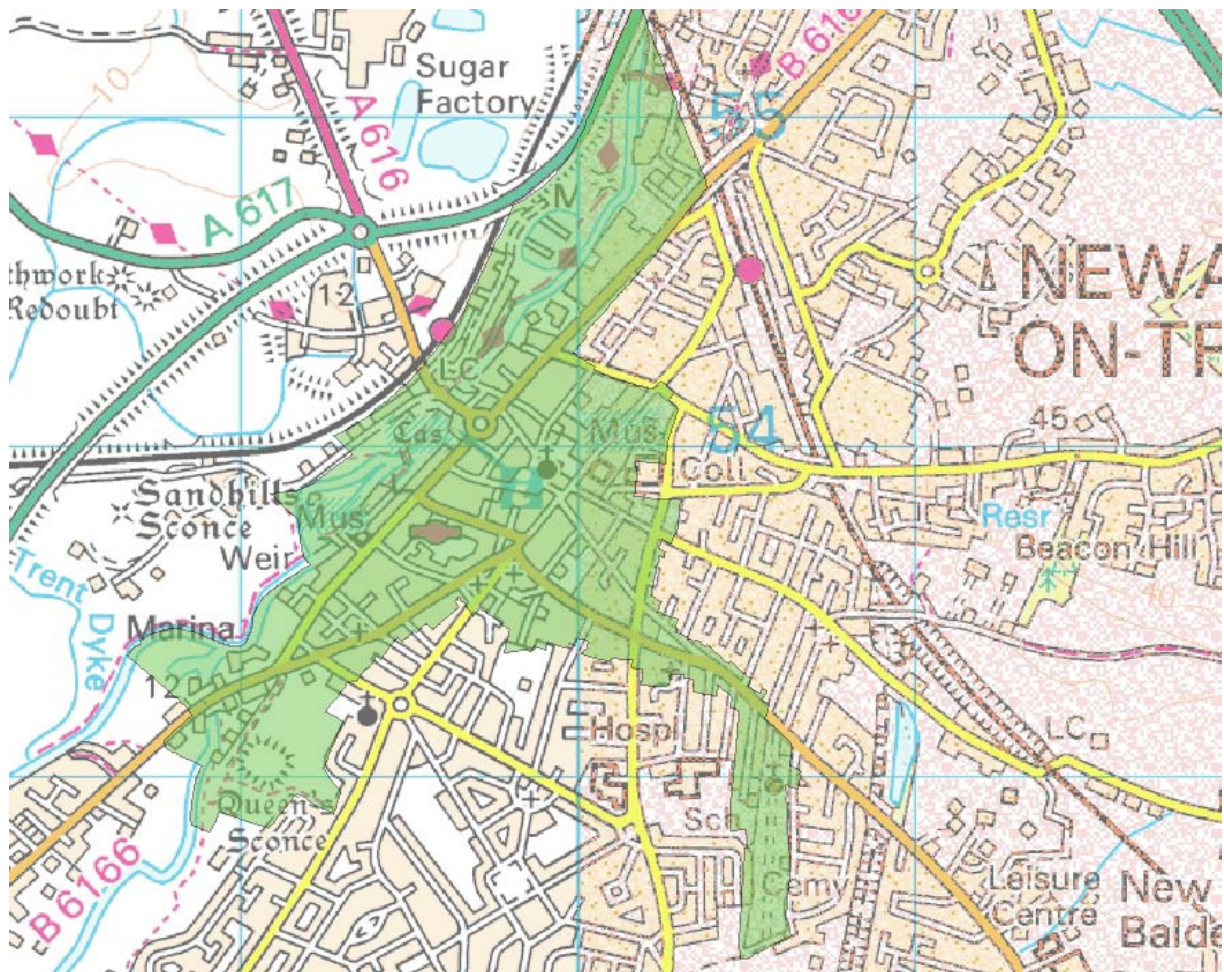
8. Newark market place by day. 2008



9. Newark market place by night. 2008

Newark Conservation Area

In recognition of its responsibilities for preserving and enhancing the special architectural and historic character of Newark, Newark & Sherwood District Council has designated an area of Newark as a conservation area. Designation of a conservation area draws public attention to its architectural and historic interest and emphasises the need for any changes or new development, either within or adjoining the area, to be sympathetic to and respect its character. The Newark conservation area was first established in 1968 and has been extended many times over the last 40 years. This area now covers a major part of Newark town centre and ensures that conservation and heritage are considered during the development of, or alterations to, buildings within the area. The designation of the area also covers trees and therefore permission to fell mature trees needs to be given before this can take place.



Plan of Newark Conservation Area

Street Scene

The streets of Newark's historic town centre have undergone considerable pressure for change in recent years. The need to resolve increasing conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, to redesign streets following removal of through traffic, to enhance the environment of the historic core, to improve the shopping centre, to provide accessibility for disabled people and to simply repair worn out street surfaces have resulted in a succession of proposals throughout the town centre.

As a variety of different organisations had direct interests in the streets, there was a great danger that works would be carried out in an uncoordinated and piecemeal fashion. Newark and Sherwood District Council, Newark Town Council and Nottinghamshire County Council therefore produced a 'Strategy to guide alterations and improvements in the Historic Streets of Newark Town Centre.' This strategy has been signed by all three councils and has been used to guide all street works to meet clearly stated objectives that have been carried out to a high standard so that each project ultimately fits together like the pieces in a jigsaw. The first phase of the scheme was awarded a Newark Civil Trust award in 2005.



10. Middlegate prior to work. 2007



11. Middlegate following completion of work. Late 2007

Green Spaces Strategy

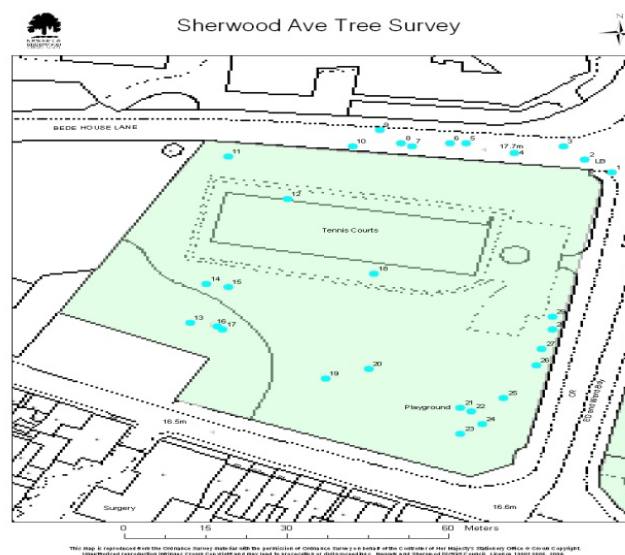
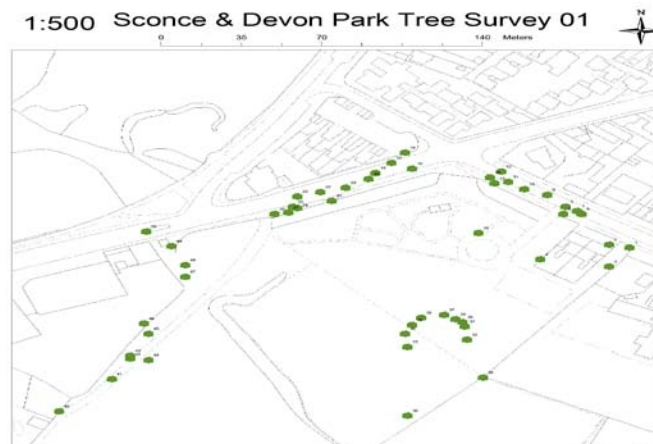
A five year Green Spaces Strategy covering Newark was published in 2007. The Strategy has 11 specific objectives and a detailed action plan that identifies the timescale involved, the key partners and sets measurable outcomes. The action plan covers areas such as increasing biodiversity opportunities, increasing green spaces in areas of under provision, providing intelligence to feed into a playing pitch strategy and linking the strategy into new housing and business developments.

Four of the large managed open spaces in Newark are recognised for their importance and management as reflected in the gaining of the national Green Flag Award. It is unusual for a town the size of Newark to obtain four of these prestigious awards.



12. The presentation of a Green Flag Award to Sherwood Ave Park, Newark. 2007

Being on the edge of Sherwood Forest, trees are an important feature of the town. All large areas of trees and woodland within the town have been surveyed and management plans produced. There are 42 tree preservation orders in existence that control felling. All tree planting schemes that are part of new development are assessed by landscape professionals. The controlling factor is that proposed tree planting must be in keeping with the local area.



Sconce and Devon Park

Newark & Sherwood District Council owns and manages the 12 hectare green space that constitutes Sconce and Devon Park, which is the largest area of public open space in the Newark area. The park, which lies 1.2km south west of the centre of Newark, can be subdivided into four separate areas, these being Sconce Hills Park, the Queen's Sconce, Devon Park and Devon Pastures, but collectively it is known as Sconce and Devon Park. The area is of both historic and ecological interest, containing a civil war earthwork and scheduled ancient monument of national importance (the Queen's Sconce) and a local nature reserve, Devon Pastures. The River Devon delineates the park's western boundary just before its confluence with the River Trent.

A successful bid to the Great Britain National Lottery Fund has been successful for a £1.1million scheme to improve the park. The scheme will provide a visitor centre, improved access to the Sconce via a newly constructed bridge, the design of which will reflect Newark's civil war past, and improved disabled access around the park.



13. The Sconce Earthworks in Devon Park

Healthy Lifestyles

One of the tools used by Newark & Sherwood District Council to assess the health of its community is EMPHO (East Midlands Public Health Observatory) health profiles. These are compiled using national and local data and give a snapshot of health in local areas. They also provide useful comparisons with other communities. The 2008 profile indicates that the overall health of the population of Newark and Sherwood is generally higher than the UK average. However, local measures indicate that there are pockets of poor health within Newark and therefore it is in these areas where work on healthy lifestyles has been targeted.

Ill health caused by lifestyle choices is a big issue for Newark. Smoking and obesity particularly in young people are on the increase. In order to address this, a number of initiatives have been put in place.

Community based nutritionists employed in partnership with local organisations are crucial in delivering on a wide range of health agendas. The work is delivered with reference to a local delivery plan. All local actions are developed with reference to the Nottinghamshire Countywide Obesity Strategy and to the targets set out in the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement. The actions identified in the local delivery plan are developed through consultation.



14. A Community Nutritionist working with a local group. 2008

The work of these posts is supported by the Newark and Sherwood Local Obesity Group whose membership is made up from local government, the PCT and the voluntary sector. The Group's role is to develop joined-up actions that deliver to all sectors of the community. The Group is also constituted as a formal sub-group of the Health and Well Being Issue Group of the Newark and Sherwood Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The role of the local agenda, delivered in part by Newark and Sherwood District Council, is to increase the opportunities for our local community to make healthy choices around exercise and the food that is eaten. Throughout the year the officers are involved in a wide variety of projects, events and festivals to promote increased physical activity, healthy nutrition and weight management for all age groups with a 'whole life' approach starting from birth.

A weekly chair based exercise group for older members of the community has now been running for the past three years. This has now been extended into other areas of the town and has become more sustainable following the training of three additional instructors who have been identified from within their own groups. New techniques are always being developed. Some groups now use new stretch bands for the classes. A further development has been the move towards extending the classes into 'Otago'. This is a standing up form of exercise used as a progression from chair based exercise. It increases strength, balance and co-ordination and increases the ability for individuals to carry out simple tasks such as standing from a chair without support, walking up stairs and reaching for items.



15. Chair based exercise class. 2008

It is important to recognise that people spend much of their lives at work and providing health opportunities at work can be an important factor in achieving healthy lifestyles. A new workplace health initiative has been developed. The Healthy Workplace Programme

identifies a number of health based initiatives that can be delivered in the work place during meal breaks or after work is completed. The programme offers stop smoking advice/clinics, low level physical activity, healthy eating and nutrition advice and stress busting. The 'Year of Healthy Communities' calendar is a national initiative that has been produced by the Healthy Communities Team at the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), with the aim of celebrating local healthy lifestyles projects. Newark and Sherwood were successfully selected for 2008 in the calendar for the 'Weigh2Go' scheme and has now followed this success with being selected for the 2009 Calendar for its work with a local mental health charity for its programme 'Healthy Mind Healthy Body'.



16. Healthy food road show 2008



17. Outdoor play encourages an active lifestyle. 2008

Community Sustainability

Newark prides itself on involving all sectors of the local community, from any age group and from any area of the town, and it does this in many varied ways. The use of Friends groups are well established in Newark. Two of the local parks, the large town cemetery, the museum and the local theatre all have long established Friends groups that are active in funding raising, volunteering and maintaining the facilities for which they are so passionate.



18. Volunteers on a planting day in Newark Castle grounds. 2007

It is estimated that the financial benefit provided by the volunteers to each community facility is in excess of £5,000. However, the real benefit is in the sense of community ownership and involvement that is generated. Vandalism and antisocial behaviour is noticeably less common in the facilities where local people are involved.

It is important to have a range of ways in which people can be involved in their local community. These may involve active participation as described above or it may be mechanisms for finding out what local people want. An annual youth event is held involving 14 to 16 year olds from Newark schools. This event allows the young people to meet local decision makers and to have their say on how they see the future of the town.



19. Youth Consultation event. 2008

There are community based Safer Neighbourhood Groups operating in Newark. The teams are made up of police officers, police community support officers, Neighbourhood Watch, housing officers, voluntary groups within the community and members of the public. These Groups are open to any members of the public to attend and raise issues impacting on their neighbourhoods.

The team concentrates on resolving local problems, such as anti-social behaviour, drug misuse, graffiti, disruptive families and traffic safety.

The Local Action Group pulls together representatives from the safer neighbourhood groups to tackle common issues with senior police officers, the county and district councils and local elected representatives to ensure local issues are addressed.

In autumn 2006, Ipsos MORI were commissioned to conduct a survey on our behalf, as part of our duty to seek continuous improvement in our services. The survey asked local residents questions about their quality of life and the way their local council works. With the second highest level of satisfaction in Nottinghamshire, 80% of residents are happy with Newark and Sherwood as a place to live.



20. Older person consultation event. 2008

Residents are asked about their most important concerns including crime and anti-social behaviour. They are also asked for their opinions on facilities such as libraries, museums and galleries, theatres and concert halls, parks and open spaces, sports and leisure facilities.

People identified issues such as cleanliness and waste collection as really important and Newark and Sherwood is considered to be better than the average, with four out of five people being happy with their waste collection and recycling services.

The survey is repeated every three years and details of the reports are available on the website.

Environmentally Sensitive Practices

In April 2009 the local air quality of Newark was reviewed and assessed taking into account eight pollutants of local and national concern. The conclusion reached was that there was no likelihood of Newark breaching any of the national air quality objectives.

The local air quality of Newark is measured at sites across the town. The monitors measure the level of nitrogen dioxide (mainly released from road traffic) at kerbside locations both at busy roadsides and in residential areas. The measurements have been taking place over a number of years and the trend indicates that the levels are on the decrease.

The good air quality experienced by the people of Newark is the result of the implementation of local projects supported by enforcement of environmental regulations.



21. One of the sites holding an environmental permit.

There are 32 processes in Newark which are required to hold an environmental permit. These are audited twice a year to ensure that they are complying with the standards set for their industrial sector. The permits cover air quality in most cases but can also include pollutant emissions to land and water where required.

There are six community recycling sites situated across Newark. These offer recycling facilities for paper, glass, shoes, plastic, textiles and books. In addition to these, the residents also have the benefit of a two weekly doorstep recycling collection. This service collects paper, steel, aluminium, and plastics. In 2008 the dry recycling rate for Newark was 26.8 %. Consideration is currently being given for the doorstep collection of green garden waste.

Newark Beacon (Business Innovation Centre) was officially opened in September 2007. This is a major flagship project for Newark and Sherwood District Council and its partners, Nottinghamshire County Council and East Midlands Development Agency.

The £3.9 million, state of the art Business Innovation Centre has on site business support with broadband access, a wireless hub in the café and break-out area to the rear of the building. There are 27 office units and four workshops aimed at 'knowledge-rich' businesses which can benefit from a superb base overlooking Newark on Beacon Hill Business Park.

The 3000m² Business Innovation Centre has been built to the latest BREAM standards in respect of environmental sustainability and was built on a former brownfield site which had been derelict for 20 years. Prior to this, the site housed a brick works dating back to 1862.

The Innovation Centre project has been developed and constructed to minimise its carbon footprint. Some of the features used include:

- A biomass boiler burning wood pellets
- Rainwater harvesting for use in the building
- Natural ventilation of the building through enlarged corridors and first/ground floor voids to encourage air flow
- Solar reflective glass and eaves overhang to mitigate solar gain in units (avoiding the need for air conditioning)
- Sited on a bus route and within walking distance of the town centre.

The flagship business centre developed and managed by Newark and Sherwood District Council has won two regional regeneration awards. Newark Beacon business innovation centre scooped the top honour in the 'regeneration project' category at the Nottingham Evening Post Commercial Property Awards and at the East Midlands Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors awards ◦



22. Mike Robinson collects the award from Matthew Tucker, board member of Nottingham Regeneration Ltd for the Newark Beacon Business Innovation Centre. 2009

Planning for the Future

There are many challenges facing modern-day communities. Understanding the needs, wants and aspirations of the local population is the key to successfully planning and delivering a truly liveable community. This does not just relate to the planning of the physical environment but also to the provision of services and the overall atmosphere and culture of the town. Having identified these needs and delivered them, the real challenge is to ensure that they are sustainable.

One of the key challenges is to ensure that national and regional plans have relevance to the local community. The way in which Newark tries to ensure this is via its Community Plan. The Plan is centred around the six themes of Clean and Green, Learning and Earning, Accessible, Healthy, Culturally Connected and Safe and Strong. The themes each have a local delivery plan that has been developed following extensive consultation. The Plan dates from 2006 and was originally envisaged to run for ten years. The Plan is currently being refreshed and it has been agreed that, where possible aspirations, for the next 15 years should be captured in the Plan.

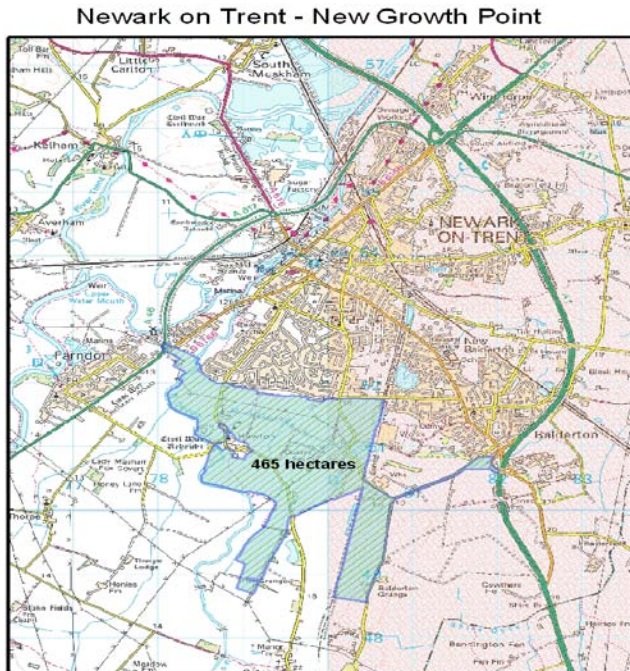
Over the past ten years the Newark and Sherwood Local Plan (adopted 1999) has guided development within the District. The plan emphasises the importance of directing development to the built up area of Newark “with particular emphasis on the reuse of derelict, vacant or neglected sites and buildings”(Policy FS1 N&S Local Plan). The Plan also identifies Newark riverside as a location to enhance leisure potential in the town by developing a linked open space along the Trent (Policy R10 Newark Riverside, R12 Northgate Riverside, Newark). Allied to the Local Plan, the Council developed “Newark Riverside: Northgate Regeneration Strategy, an Agenda for Change” which developed a range of goals, recommendations and action plans to deliver this agenda.

The Local Plan is to be replaced by the Local Development Framework, which will address the spatial issues that are critical for the development of Newark and Sherwood. As Newark is the main town in the area it will become the focus for a large part of the district’s growth. The Council is preparing a range of evidence to support growth, one of the key elements of which is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This aims to identify potential sources of land for housing to help the District Council make the best and most appropriate choices for future housing development.

The planning system has been substantially reformed to embed community responsive policy-making at its heart and to make contributing to the achievement of sustainable development a statutory objective. The new spatial planning system exists to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, and requires planners to collaborate actively with the wide range of stakeholders and agencies that help to shape local areas and deliver local services. The future planning policies for Newark are currently being consulted upon and these will then set the framework for future development in the area.

Newark has embraced a national opportunity to relax planning rules to develop a large new suburb adjoining the town. This will deliver 5,000 new homes by 2016, of which 30% will be affordable homes. A major consultation exercise has been undertaken to ensure that the Growth Point delivers what the local community wants. In addition to the housing being

provided, there are also plans to provide a new 'sports hub', light industrial units and a large country park. The aim is to ensure that this new development is not seen as a new community but that it is linked physically and culturally with Newark and allows the town to expand without any loss of its heritage or identity



The expansion of Newark will include: a southern Relief Road linking the A46 and A1; an additional 5000 houses by 2016, 30% of which will be affordable homes; a mixed use development, including 100 hectares of employment land; a 40 hectare Country Park; and community facilities, including four new local centres and a multi sports hub.

The Future

There are many challenges facing towns such as Newark. Not only must it maintain and support its historic heritage, landscape and architecture but it must also deal with the present, as well as planning for future growth and the increased pressures on society that this will bring. The town of Newark has been, is and will continue to be a liveable community for its residents.



23. Launching the Community Plan 2007