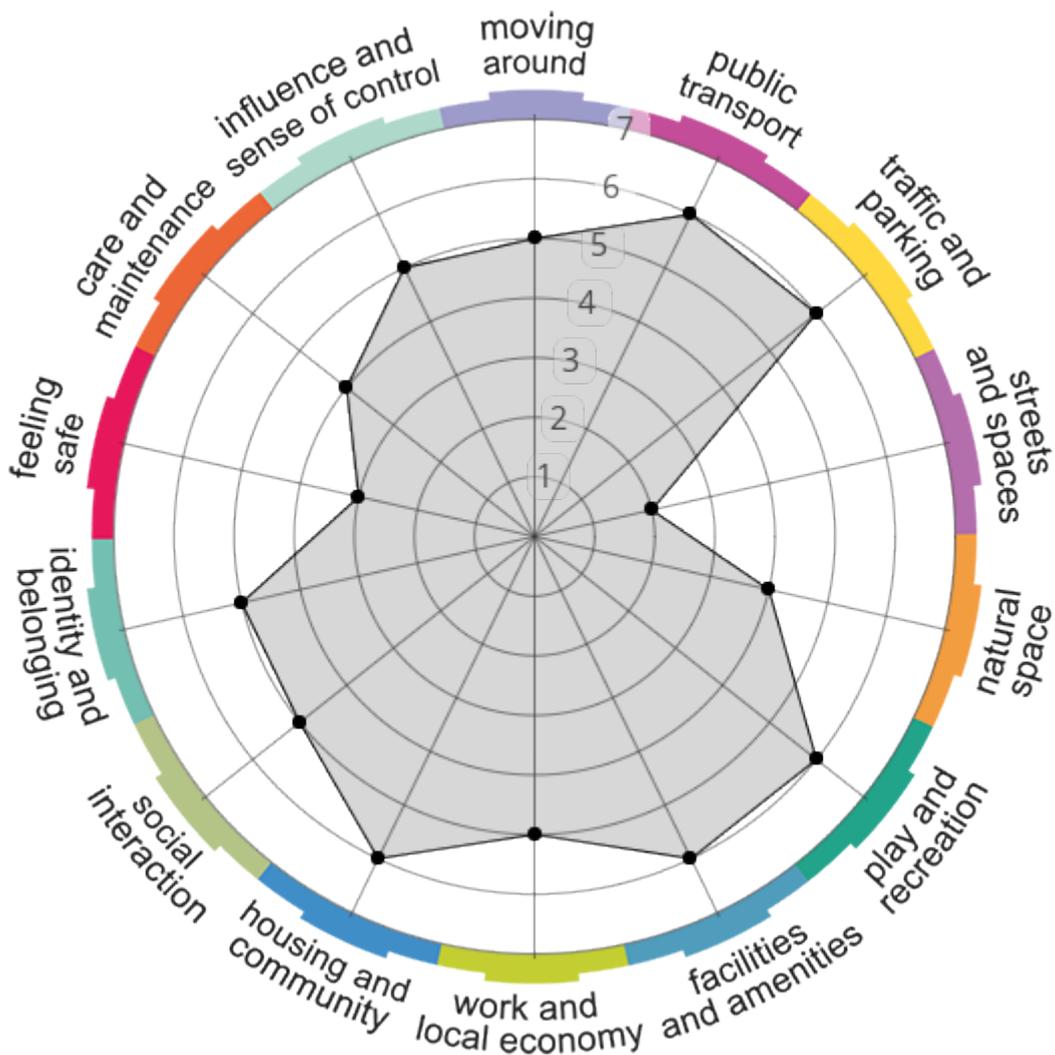


PLACE STANDARD - RESULTS

Assessment Area: Chester le Street Masterplan

When you have answered all the questions, each point on the compass can be joined to produce a graph that indicates the relative strengths of the place.

The diagram will show you at a glance, where your place has done well, and where there is room for improvement. Where it has done well, the diagram will reach the edge of the circle. Where it has done poorly, it will touch the centre.



1. MOVING AROUND

Can I easily walk and cycle around using good quality routes?

RATING: 5

Comment:

It is a transport hub. Regular bus service connecting towns and villages. On the main bus route between Newcastle and Durham. Has a first class train station even though the service may not be regular it still functions for local commuting. Easy access to A1 and A167.

Cycling through the town centre can be difficult.

Public consultation

Safer, better connected cycle paths

Improved walking routes to Riverside park

Congestion around picktree can be a challenge.

Front street closed to traffic.

2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Does public transport meet my needs?

RATING: 6

Comment:

It is a transport hub. Regular bus service connecting towns and villages. On the main bus route between Newcastle and Durham. Has a first class train station even though the service may not be regular it still functions for local commuting. Easy access to A1 and A167. Cycling through the town centre can be difficult.

Public consultation

Protect and improve rail links

Consider transport interchange

3. TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Do traffic and parking arrangements allow people to move around safely and meet the community's needs?

RATING: 6

Comment:

Ample car parking. Area is traffic calmed. Temporary closure is in place for events. At night car parks may be poorly lit and intimidating.

Public consultation

Some challenge between those that would like the Front Street open to traffic and those who want it closed.

Parking is regarded as expensive and/or the offer of free parking would be welcome.

Explore linking bus and rail tickets.

Congestion around the bottom of the front street and market place

4. STREETS AND SPACES

Do buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around?

RATING: 2

Comment:

Town centre remains quite unattractive. Building quality may be poor. Less appealing shop fronts and many vacant. Areas around car parks (back of front street) are the backs of shops (bins, poor lit, etc). Historic churches are still visible, but not always in the front street. Limited green space immediately available.

Public consultation

Focus on the market place and the need to reinvigorate it, as well as the wider retail offer.

Appearance of the front street could be improved.

Retail offer which is not beneficial to good health such as take-aways and betting shops may need to be addressed.

Consider using the natural environment to improve the place.

De-culverting may create a focal point.

5. NATURAL SPACE

Can I regularly experience good quality natural space?

RATING: 4

Comment:

The town centre and the Riverside park are separate. The park is excellent and is well utilised. Has access to birdlife, lots of green space, ample play space, walkways and skate park. It is accessible from the front street but still requires an individual to be mobile.

The front street has limited immediate access to natural space and suffers as a consequence. Can feel quite a closed space.

Public consultation

Improve the connection to the park.

Some public disagreement between those that value the de-culverting and those who do not.

Use the environment to improve the appearance of the Front Street.

6. PLAY AND RECREATION

Do I have access to a range of spaces and opportunities for play and recreation?

RATING: 6

Comment:

Riverside park has opportunities for different types of recreation (walking, cycling, running, play park, skate park, boat club). Leisure centre is opposite with a full range of activities. Organised sports clubs use the full park area/offer. Town centre itself feels separate to that offer. Centre may not be as accessible. Seating and bike storage may be lacking.

Public consultation

Focus on improving cycle paths and connectivity.

Support for opening up cong burn.

Consider a variety of uses for the market place and it

7. FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Do facilities and amenities meet my needs?

RATING: 6

Comment:

Access to shops, some independent shops, library, leisure centre, gyms, GP practices, dentist, supermarket, banks, churches. Places to eat and drink are available. Too many vaping shops and poorer quality retail offers. Food offer is not as healthy as it could be.

Public consultation

Consider a transport interchange.

Secure cycle storage

Use Rail Information point.

Tidy up the front street, the shop fronts and the market place

Consider the impacts of takeaways.

8. WORK AND LOCAL ECONOMY

Is there an active local economy and the opportunity to access good quality work?

RATING: 5

Comment:

Lots of home based business, sole traders. Drum industrial estate offer employment. Access to a job centre and recruitment agency. Has a retail and voluntary service offer. Possible lack of office space means that many residents work outside of the town. Does this create the commuter town mentality.

Public consultation

Focused around the improvement of the retail offer, the arcade and the market place.

Consider a wide range of uses for the town centre.

Consider support for

9. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

Does housing support the needs of the community and contribute to a positive environment?

RATING: 6

Comment:

Good mix of housing types and products. Good quality offer and a diverse price range. Specialist provision on the edge of the front street. Private rented sector is reflective of the rest of the county. Public consultation

More social and affordable housing.

Consider housing in and around the town centre.

Consider the use if the civic centre site.

10. SOCIAL INTERACTION

Is there a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people?

RATING: 5

Comment:

Lots of current opportunities (park, cricket ground, sports centre, coffee shops, places of worship). Some community venues available. Social enterprises like Refuse, seem to attract a diverse range of people. Full range of offer may not be fully known. Not many indoor public spaces in poor weather. Night time activity is focused around alcohol consumption.

11. IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Does this place have a positive identity and do I feel I belong?

RATING: 5

Comment:

Strong sense of passion from those already connected. Heritage trail, dainty diner and newer aspects such as Riverside Cricket Ground.

Question - who is the town centre for? Ideal of what it could be v the current usage.

Challenge may (or may not) arise from the commuter town aspect and those who have little affiliation with their town.

Public consultation

Market attracts people to the town.

People shared their pride in their town and its benefits. They would like see it promoted more widely.

12. FEELING SAFE

Do I feel safe?

RATING: 3

Comment:

Unoccupied shops. Front street not overlooked at night (potentially not aided by focus on alcohol).

Back street parking. Police are well integrated into local community.

Public consultation

Make the front street visually attractive

Encourage a wider night time economy.

13. CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Are buildings and spaces well cared for?

RATING: 4

Comment:

The public realm is well maintained. In bloom town and civic pride seems evident. Poorer quality front street buildings and back street parking. Many visitors access the town this way and it gives a negative impression.

Public consultation

The retail offer and the market place were highlighted as unattractive areas.

14. INFLUENCE AND SENSE OF CONTROL

Do I feel able to participate in decisions and help change things for the better?

RATING: 5

Comment:

Thriving AAP with many active sub groups. Public noticeboards display an active community. Places of social contact are well used. DCC customer access point is well used. However, consultation events occasional have weaker uptake.

Public consultation

Promote, consult and involve local people regularly.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

What are the main issues and priorities for change that you have identified?

A number of high level recommendations were made. These could be considered as part of the masterplan or provide an indication as to a possible prioritisation exercise.

- Cycling – efforts could be made to improve connectivity through the town and consider the entry and exit points. Improve bike storage throughout.
- The park and town centre – enhance the connectivity and increase usage between them both. Ensure it is accessible to all.
- Improve the appearance of the town centre as this is impacting upon multiple of health related areas. Consideration should be given to the quality of the wider retail offer.
- Improve the rear of the front street. Currently it is poorly lit, unwelcoming and for many, the first impression of the town centre.
- Consider engaging local community groups as part of the process of improving the appearance of the town.
- Consider the Healthy Place Standard as part of the masterplan process in order to encourage a wider range of views and broader consideration for the impact of place upon health

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

What actions could be taken to address these?

Recommendation	Comment
<p>Cycling – efforts could be made to improve connectivity through the town and consider the entry and exit points. Improve bike storage throughout.</p>	<p>The defined Sustainable Transport Zones 1 and 2 recognise opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility.</p> <p>The Masterplan notes project activity will be undertaken in respect of:</p> <p>Small schemes to improve the facilities for the walking and cycling network which will be undertaken in the next three years (including signage, crossing, minor improvements and surfacing works)</p> <p>Free cycle parking offered to all businesses, organisations and community groups who have staff or visitors who cycle to their property through social enterprise ParkThatBike.</p>
<p>The park and town centre – enhance the connectivity and increase usage between them both. Ensure it is accessible to all.</p>	<p>The defined Sustainable Transport Zones 1 and 2 note that</p> <p>The Masterplan recognises that the Riverside Park area of the town, including the Emirates Cricket Stadium are important visitor areas, attracting significant numbers of visitors to the town. The Riverside Park area provides amenity open space which can support play and recreation opportunities. The Masterplan seeks to develop these linkages further and to improve the accessibility between the town and Riverside Park for pedestrian and cyclists. There are currently two locations, one being a bridge crossing and the other being an underpass. It is hoped that through improving these access routes and</p>

	<p>quality of environment to entrance points to the town that footfall can be improved through linked visits.</p> <p>The Masterplan identifies opportunities in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility. • Improve the appearance and quality of arrival into the town centre. • Increase footfall from leisure and recreation related activities to town centre. • Improve environmental quality. <p>These opportunities are supported by a series of project activities.</p>
<p>Improve the appearance of the town centre as this is impacting upon multiple of health related areas. Consideration should be given to the quality of the wider retail offer.</p>	<p>The Masterplan notes the Chesterle-Street Conservation Area which covers the northern portion of the town centre. It is noted that the special characteristics of the conservation area are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal. New development should respond positively to those characteristics, conserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p> <p>The Masterplan recognises that many of its proposals rely on partnership working and specifically upon private sector investment. Whilst, economic circumstances can sometimes be challenging due to the changing nature of the retail environment, the Masterplan seeks to facilitate and secure private sector investment wherever possible.</p>
<p>Improve the rear of the front street. Currently it is poorly lit, unwelcoming and for many, the first impression of the town centre.</p>	<p>The Masterplan notes the Chesterle-Street Conservation Area which covers the northern portion of the town centre. It is noted that the special characteristics of the conservation area are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.</p>

	<p>New development should respond positively to those characteristics, conserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p>
<p>Consider engaging local community groups as part of the process of improving the appearance of the town.</p>	<p>Over the years Chester-le-Street has benefited from the work of a variety of stakeholders in partnership with both the council and the local resident and business communities. The council will continue to make use of the Chester-Le-Street Area and District Area Action Partnership (AAP) as a key interface with the local community.</p> <p>The AAP has a Task Group which considers a range of town centre issues. The group called 'Thriving Chester-le-Street' meets on a monthly basis and will be able to look at developing some appropriate local project responses for some of the themes contained in the Masterplan.</p>
<p>Consider the Healthy Place Standard as part of the masterplan process in order to encourage a wider range of views and broader consideration for the impact of place upon health.</p>	<p>The Healthy Place standard has been considered as part of the development of the Masterplan and the representations made as part of the consultation have been fed into the process.</p>