

Stanley Masterplan Update



Durham County Council

November 2016

Context for Masterplan Update

Masterplans are being developed for the majority of the main towns in County Durham. This document for Stanley provides an update to the 2012 Masterplan, showing what has been delivered across Council services in the recent past. The update also sets out key activities for the future in and around the town centre.

Key priorities:

- Improving the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre and villages;
- New uses for vacant buildings and sites;
- Supporting the development of new housing and more jobs;
- Providing support to businesses;
- Getting people into work;
- Developing a wider programme of events;
- Opportunities and support for residents;
- Improving existing housing and working with landlords and agents to tackle vacant premises and poor quality premises; and
- Promoting the town better to attract more visitors.

Profile

Stanley is a key town in the north of County Durham. The town has good accessibility across the County, as well as to Gateshead and Newcastle. The A693 main road links the town with Consett and the A1 at Chester-le-Street.

The C2C national cycle route runs near to the town with links into the town centre. It was opened in in 1994 and links Whitehaven in Cumbria to the North East coast at Sunderland. It has an average of between 12,000 and 15,000 cyclists completing the route every year (and literally hundreds of thousands of other doing shorter sections) contributing to the local economy.

Stanley has a large residential catchment - there are around 16,200 residents in the main town – it is relatively compact and most areas are within easy walking distance of the main centre. Around 33,000 people reside in the wider Stanley Town Council area, which includes the settlements including Annfield Plain, Tanfield Lea, South Moor and Quaking Houses amongst others.

The population of Stanley has risen in recent years due in part to a marked rise in the birth rate and the popularity of new housing developments in the town.

The area contains a number of key employment sites including the Tanfield Lea Industrial Estates and Greencroft Industrial Park where there are around 9,700 jobs. Economic activity stands at around 75% (2011) of the working age population – which is marginally below the county, regional and national averages.

A key challenge for the town is retaining and attracting more employers and jobs to the area. Whilst there are approximately 15,900 economically active residents, fewer than 20% work in Stanley. Commuting patterns show that large numbers of workers travel to Durham City, as well as surrounding areas of Tyneside.

The town provides for a large proportion of local food spend and is one of the best performers in the County. However this share has shrunk in recent years owing to competition from new stores in Chester-le-Street and Consett. In terms of comparison (clothes, etc.) and bulky goods spend, residents tend to commute to larger order centres. There are a number of sites in the town centre which provide opportunities to reverse these trends through new development and improvements to the quality of the shopping area.

Stanley and the surrounding villages are well-served for education provision, including the new academy, however educational attainment currently lags behind county averages.



Income and skill levels also tend to perform less well than the county averages. Business space has increased however so there are growing opportunities to reverse this trend.

Leisure provision is principally located at the Louisa Centre, which also now includes the library and a customer access point. A number of parks are also provided across the town including a number of good quality sports hubs. The town also has the Alun Armstrong Theatre/Cinema and an active Bowls Club. Night time restaurant and bar provision in the town centre is currently limited providing opportunities for improvement to bring life back into the town's evening economy. The fabric of the town centre has been significantly improved in the last few years to support such efforts.

Stanley is well-served in terms of bus provision and is linked to a reliable network across the county. A modern bus station is in the centre of town and has recently benefitted from improvements to ensure a safer and more comfortable environment for users.



private investment between 2012 and 2016, supporting 23 business units and bringing 3 empty units back into use.


- Many firms in the area are benefitting from support from a range of agencies including Business Durham. One such business is Lanchester Wine Cellars Ltd - a family run business based at Greencroft Industrial Estate - which has continued to grow and benefit from this support. Most recently Business Durham have guided the company through the process of purchasing land adjacent to their properties to enable them to expand their business – now under construction. The firm have also called upon the knowledge and expertise of Business Durham to secure a range of funding.

Retail

- The County Council have focussed on a range of improvements to the town centre to improve the visual quality of the shopping environment.
- Funding has been used to carry out public realm works including new paving, lighting, street furniture and planting areas.
- There is a complementary project which is looking at accessibility to the front street and improving pedestrian movements. The link between the bus station and Front Street has been addressed to improve the arrival in the town and encourage people to use the main shopping centre.
- The County Council have helped to develop the Smart Stanley initiative which uses digital technologies to improve the Stanley experience for residents, visitors, businesses and their customers. The project helps to promote business, leisure and visitor attractions as well as bring new impetus to the Front Street market. By encouraging increased footfall in Stanley and realising the benefits associated with tourism from the Dales, the Coast-to-Coast cycle route and Beamish Museum, the viability of local businesses will be improved leading to increased and sustainable interest in the area.
- Management arrangements for the market have been reviewed to improve the way it functions. The Smart Stanley project advertises the market offer to support increased patronage.



Tourism, Leisure & Recreation

- The wider Stanley area features many high quality landscapes and important heritage features. The Council continues to maintain a number of important recreation sites, some of which are linked to some of these features such as Causey Arch. Beamish Hall has recently undergone further development to compliment the ongoing investment and growth of Beamish Museum.
 - Stanley is well served by the Louisa Leisure Centre which features a pool, and has recently been developed to incorporate the County Council's Customer Access Point and Library. The relocation of the library will ensure better access for more residents as it is now closer to the bus station in the town centre.
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- The Town Council have moved into the former Lamplight Centre, now renamed the Alun Armstrong Theatre, which has benefited from improved facilities. This facility delivers a cultural programme including live performance and a cinema. It also offers a café and gallery, as well and space for functions.
 - Several key events are held in the town including the Stanley Music Festival, Stanley Fireworks Festival and Stanley Christmas Festival.
 - The Stanley Area Action Partnership has delivered a range of projects including opportunities and activities for young people (including Summer Football Programme); improvements to Annfield Plain Park; Healthy Habits and Healthy Futures. Support for the elderly, carers and disability groups including the Ageless Intergenerational Project.

Infrastructure

- A range of transport improvements have been delivered including safety measures on key roads in the town and upgrades at the bus station. Some localised car parking (i.e. Beaconsfield Terrace) and footpath improvements have also been realised in the last couple of years.
- Significant improvements have been made at Northlands Roundabout and Junction 63 of the A1 (M) in Chester-le- Street to ease congestion. Costing over £5m and delivered by the County Council in consultation with Highways England and Government funding, these works have improved access along the A693 economic corridor in North Durham

(identified as a priority in LTP3) from Stanley allowing for more efficient access for commuters and freight who wish to access the A1 (M).

- As a result of the Digital Durham project supported by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport, British Telecom and the Council most areas in and around Stanley should experience an improvement in the quality and speed of Broadband services through the roll out of fibre services.
- Significant investment has been made in schooling facilities in Stanley in recent years. The North Durham Academy moved to a new £30m facility in the town in 2013. In the same year Greenland Community Primary School moved to a new £6m facility in South Moor.
- A raft of further improvement works and extensions have been undertaken throughout the area in recent years, including at East Stanley Primary School and South Stanley Infant School. Improvements to the fabric of South Stanley Junior School have been completed in September 2016. Hare Law Special School moved into the former Greencroft Community School in 2015 – the building was refurbished and remodelled at a cost of approximately £1.3m to make it suitable.
- Recent Investment at Hustledown Sewage Treatment Works (South Stanley) has resolved capacity problems in this area of Stanley.



Health

Within the town there is provision of:

- Adult Wellbeing in Targeted Communities which operates in the South Moor and Quaking Houses areas
- Healthy Living Pharmacies
- The Social Prescribing Programme across the County and there is a particular centre in the town.
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centres
- Mindfulness courses and refresher days.
- Targeted Health Trainer and Health Visitor support onsite for members of the GRT community.
- Trained volunteers through the Community Parenting Programme.
- Contraception and Sexual Health Services.

The following countywide provision is also being delivered within the town:

- Wellbeing for Life targets the most deprived areas in County Durham and does work in some MSOAs in/around the town. This geographically targeted work is supported by the programme via outreach and work with particular groups of people such as the LGBT community.
- If U Care Share, based in Great Lumley provides support for people affected by suicide.

What will be delivered?

Of the 770 committed new houses over 360 of these will be built on the former Ever Ready factory site in Tanfield, which will serve to improve this largely redundant and unsightly site.

The South Moor regeneration Project is aiming to complete environmental improvements along Pine and Poplar Streets, as well as providing surface water management to compliment the ongoing efforts to restore the nearby Twizell Burn and its catchment.

- The Greening Twizell Partnership has brought together local community and statutory bodies responsible for the Twizell Burn including The River Wears Trust, Natural England Groundwork, The Environment Agency, Durham University and Durham County Council.
- The Partnership seeks to improve the green infrastructure, environment and public amenity use of the River Twizell, between its headwaters around New Kyo to its confluence with the River Wear at Chester le Street via a channel meandering between and through the Stanley villages of South Moor, Quaking Houses, South Stanley and Craghead.

Further projects in the South Moor and Craghead area focus on bringing more empty properties back into use, as well as implementing a landlord accreditation programme to ensure better quality housing for tenants. The County Council is also seeking funding to improve shopfronts and parking along Park Road in South Moor, while Heritage Lottery Funding will help to develop a 'heritage trail' through the area.

The Stanley Area Action Partnership has identified a range of actions, including the need to ensure support for new business start-ups in the Stanley area.

- They are exploring the development of a business incubator unit where new businesses can test their product or business idea prior to taking on a vacant shop or premises.
- Along with engagement of providers to provide employment and training opportunities for local out of work residents to access support and advice to get back into work.

- In the Town Centre the streetscape improvements will be completed along Front Street.



- The Council will continue to promote development opportunities at key vacant buildings and sites, and explore opportunities to improve the access arrangements at the 'top end' of Front Street.
- The former bus station site and the Clifford Road Retail Park present excellent retail opportunities and the Council will support operators looking to develop in these locations.
- The Council are also exploring opportunities to improve the capacity of the Oxhill junction at the turning to South Moor, which often experiences traffic queues at peak times.
- While the C-2-C national cycle route passes through Stanley linkages with the town and area are underdeveloped. New cycle parking has been installed to help with this however further promotion work from the trail is identified for delivery in the Stanley Destination Development Plan.
- The Sewage Treatment Works serving Stanley at East Tanfield is identified for an upgrade and work should be completed by 2020.