

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Newcastle Town Centre Area Action Plan - Summary

The Borough Council has produced an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Newcastle Town Centre, and is submitting it to the Secretary of State so that it can be examined to assess whether it is "sound". It is intended to guide the development of the area over the next 15 years.

RENEW North Staffordshire has identified Newcastle Town Centre as having the potential to "accommodate a vibrant housing market which caters for a mixed income community". This potential, not only for housing but also for retail, economic and leisure development, has already resulted in a significant degree of development pressure within the area. This pressure has created an urgent need for guidance at the more localised and detailed level of the planning system.

The AAP sets out a vision for how the Council would like to see the Town Centre develop. The AAP will need to be capable of harnessing the pressure for change within the Town Centre and translating it into development that will be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable in the long-term.

Inside this summary leaflet is a diagram showing the "spatial framework" that will guide the way future development takes place. The AAP contains a suite of policies based around this spatial framework, including a number on the key issue of design, that will help to ensure that development enables the Council make the vision a reality.

On the back there are details of how you can obtain a copy of the full AAP and how you can make comments on it. The closing date for comments is Wednesday 11th July 2007.

THE VISION

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre will be a place recognised for its attractive heritage townscape, its high quality new developments, its vibrant public realm, its open air market and its high quality shops, services and businesses.

It will be a focal point for the economy of the Borough, and a place where people want to spend their time and money. Employment opportunities will be sustained and improved and the emerging residential market will be strengthened. The environment will be pedestrian- friendly and welcoming for all those who live, work and visit the Town Centre.

Action will have been taken to address any damage done to the town's historic character in the twentieth century, to create a more appealing historic Town Centre where the quality of the environment and its heritage is a key selling point. New development in particular will be well mannered and sensitive to the best traditions of historic development in the town.

New opportunities will be grasped to enhance the historic heart of the town and to regenerate areas where sites and land are underused or otherwise detract from the image and identity of the town. Major gateways and the town's public fare will be improved, with environmental assets such as the Lyme Brook adding to local distinctiveness.

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The zones identified in the diagram help to give effect to the vision and set the context for the policies. They indicate where the application of the spatial principles should be focused in terms of future development.

The Northern Gateway

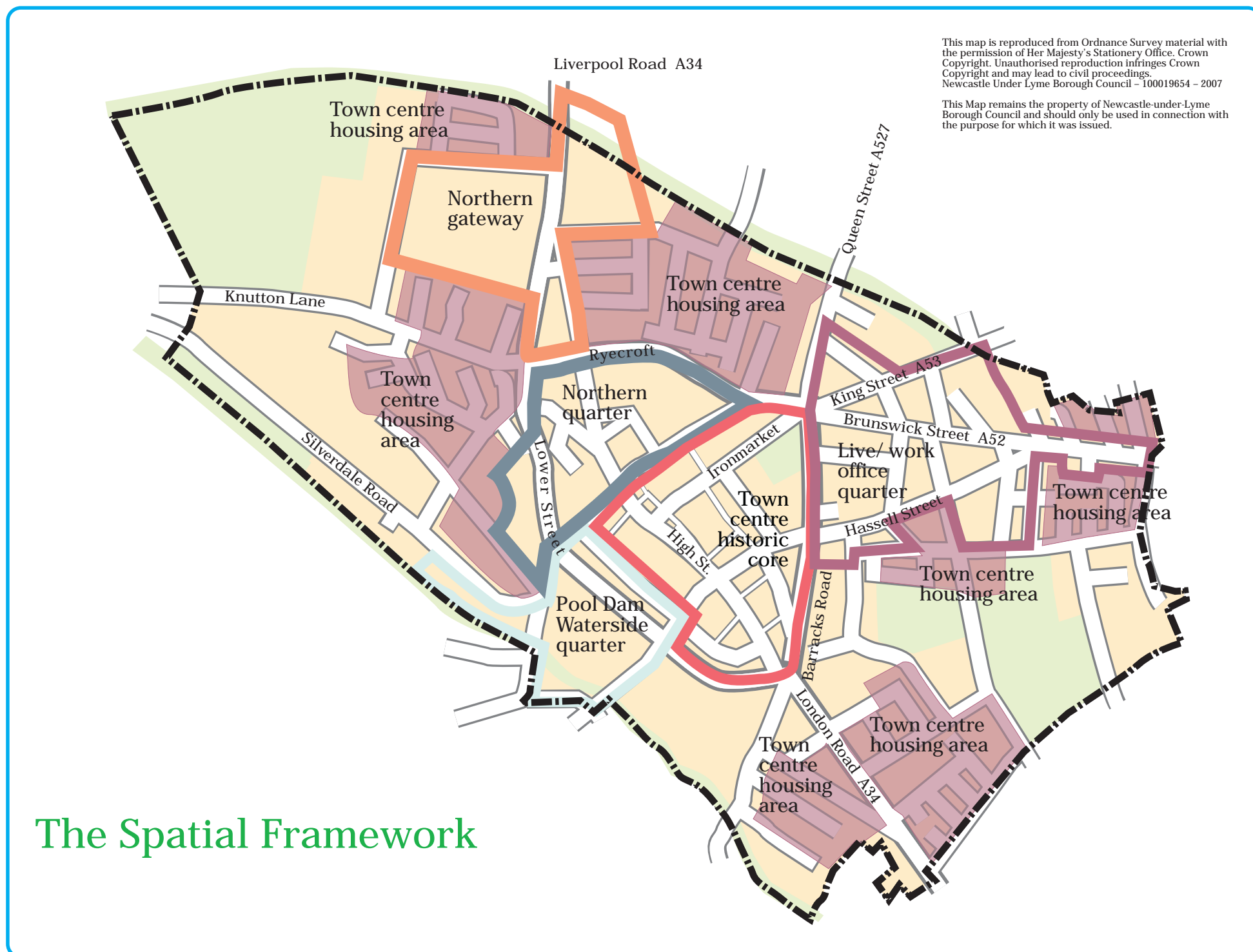
There is an opportunity here through redevelopment of major sites to enhance one of the primary approaches into the Town Centre. Though the scale of existing residential buildings must be respected, there is a potential for striking, contemporary design on the frontages. New development should be seen to create a sense of destination as well as a sense of place.

The Northern Quarter

Redevelopment opportunities here could involve extensive parcels of land. This could lead to a greater mix and intensity of uses. Additional residential development could be appropriate here so long as the main function of the Primary Shopping Area is maintained and enhanced. The extension of this "quarter" across the inner ring road helps to emphasise the importance of "breaking through" this barrier whenever possible.

The Live Work Office Quarter

Historical analysis shown how this area was once integral with the historic core, and its character, including a number of its buildings, is witness to this. The designation of the Live Work Office Quarter is complementary to the presence of the Town Centre Housing Areas which are located around it. Whilst the latter will be expected to remain little changed, as relatively tranquil areas, albeit within an urban context, the live-work quarter is expected to continue to develop as a mixed use area, where the main focus is offices, with any housing development likely to be marketed for those who wish to live within a bustling business community. Residential opportunities would be created by "living over the shop" and in new developments.



The Spatial Framework

The Pooldam Waterside Quarter

This would represent a new growth area for the Town Centre. The potential of the Lyme Brook is limited but there is no reason why it should not be "rediscovered" through sensitive development. Therefore any development must exploit the recreational, access and design potential of the Lyme Brook. (Before any development could be permitted, there would also need to be investigation into possible flooding areas.) Mixed development is the key with potential for both leisure and residential uses adjoining the waterside. The "quarter" is defined to take in the Midway area to encourage the improved linkage across the inner ring road. It also extends along the Lyme Brook to include Queen Elizabeth Park and the former Castle Motte. This latter area has no potential for further built development but provides a valuable context for exploiting the potential of the brook. It is also evidence of the historical origins of the town's development.

The Town Centre Historic Core

This is the heart of the Town Centre and is rich with its heritage. Any development opportunities would be likely to be infilling and intensification, with special attention to conservation. There must be attention not only to physical development but the effect any proposed activities will have on the character of the area. Any change must be of a positive benefit and create an asset for this core area of the Town Centre.

Town Centre Housing Areas

In these areas, all located beyond the inner ring road, additional business development is discouraged to ensure that they continue to provide a relatively tranquil living environment close to the hub of the Town Centre. There may be remodelling and enhancement opportunities, but otherwise, merely conserving the best of what there is already must be the priority.

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To achieve the Council's vision, there are 10 objectives:

- p Ensure that the amount and variety of retail provision is appropriate in terms of the role of the Town Centre, and capable of meeting the requirements of Town Centre users;
- p Accommodate new employment of a type in keeping with the role of the town centre, and capable of contributing to its continued vitality and viability, and economic growth on a sub-regional scale;
- p Ensure that new development and patterns of development respect the existing character of the Town Centre, and collectively seek to enhance it;
- p Ensure that the amount and variety of cultural, leisure and recreational provision is appropriate in terms of the role of the Town Centre, capable of meeting the requirements of the Town Centre users and does not create or exacerbate any problems of crime, disorder or unsociable behaviour;
- p Ensure that the amount, quality and variety of public open space and green space is capable of meeting the requirements of Town Centre users;
- p Promote mixed-use development and high-density development within the Town Centre that is collectively appropriate, and relevant, to the population as a whole;
- p Improve accessibility to, and within, the Town Centre or all modes of transport;
- p Ensure that all new development is designed and located to be as sustainable as is reasonably practicable and such that it encourages sustainable use and activity.
- p Ensure that new development and patterns of development uphold the principles good urban design and thus significantly raise the standard and quality of the environment;
- p Accommodate Town Centre living in appropriate locations;

To obtain a copy of the full Area Action Plan, please contact the Council in one of these ways:

By telephone: 01782 742458

By post: Community Strategy Service,
Strategy, Development and Regeneration, Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG

By email: planningpolicy@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Copies are also posted on the Council's website (enter AAP in the search box. www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

The website also carries forms which must be used if you wish to make any representations. The forms give details of how the representations should be presented. The closing date is Wednesday 11th July 2007 .