

ALNWICK AND DENWICK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Topic chapter – Environment

1. Context

1.1 Description

As a market town situated in a sparsely populated part of England's least densely-populated county, Alnwick and Denwick occupy a paradoxical environmental situation.

- ✦ Their heritage is an attraction to many people - but ageing housing stock forces many households, especially older people and single-person households, into fuel poverty.
- ✦ Their visual amenity is another source of appeal - but this can cause opposition to small-scale renewables (such as solar photovoltaics and solar thermal) which help to make households and businesses more self-reliant and sustainable.
- ✦ Their remoteness from large population centres is attractive - but residents face ever-increasing costs to access services, workplaces and leisure facilities, and there are limited opportunities to use other travel modes to get around.
- ✦ We are surrounded by green space - but little of it is publicly accessible, and we have no local nature reserves.
- ✦ Most people in Alnwick and Denwick would say that, as residents and visitors, we have a commitment to conserving natural beauty – and yet there is a perception that we are plagued with dog fouling and littering.

1.2 Factors constraining the plan

- ✦ Availability of public finance and staff.
- ✦ Legacy of hard-to-improve housing stock and dominance of private rental sector, where owners have little incentive to improve properties' energy efficiency.
- ✦ Weakness of national legislation supporting energy efficiency and installation of low-carbon energy.
- ✦ Lack of a regional development organisation to promote employment, business relocations or start-ups in Alnwick, which would minimise the travel required to access workplaces.
- ✦ Concentration of land ownership in a small number of hands, which can limit planning options.
- ✦ Undervaluing of environmental assets when weighed against economic objectives.

2. Objectives

To reduce the environmental impact of people who live in and visit Alnwick and Denwick, to improve the pleasure we take in our environment, increase biodiversity and make us more resilient to increasing fuel prices and climate change.

Key indicators of environmental progress are :

- ✦ reduced quantity of littering and dog fouling (per capita)
- ✦ increased % of Alnwick waste recycled
- ✦ reduced greenhouse gas emissions (overall)
- ✦ increased proportion of journeys taken by low-carbon modes (bus, cycle, foot)
- ✦ increased percentage of food produced locally
- ✦ increased green space (per capita)

✧ increased biodiversity

3. Issues and options

3.1 Waste services

3.1.1 The issue

Alnwick and Denwick have a widely-perceived issue with dog fouling and littering.

Dog fouling has attracted considerable local media attention and, along with littering, was the most frequently cited environmental issue in the Alnwick and Denwick community consultation which ran between December 2011 and January 2012. Dog fouling is not just unpleasant - it causes the illness toxocariasis, which can result in blindness.

Alnwick also has limited town centre recycling facilities. Recycling rates for Northumberland have increased from approximately 30% to 40% in the past 5 years, but it is unlikely that rates will increase much further without increased doorstep provision – currently confined to paper, card, cans and plastic bottles, with garden waste collected for an added charge. Town centre recycling sites are limited. The 'bring site' at Greenwell Road hosts bins for glass bottles and jars, shoes, textiles and tetrapaks. Similar sites are behind Willowburn Sports Centre and in a corner of the Co-op petrol station, but no supermarkets or other car parks offer full recycling facilities.

3.1.2 Do nothing option

A number of options to help reduce dog fouling and littering, and increase recycling, can be implemented without a neighbourhood plan.

Increased resources dedicated to law enforcement may help tackle dog fouling and littering. Local campaigns, awards and community action can help with all three. However, all of these measures have ongoing costs, or other constraints such as volunteer time.

3.1.3 Other options

An option which might be considered for the plan is increased provision of facilities to help people dispose of dog excrement, litter or recyclable waste.

Research by Keep Britain Tidy suggests that increased provisions of bins tackles littering, although the location of facilities is a significant factor. Anecdotal evidence suggests that provision of bins at Alnwick community orchard significantly reduced fouling at the site.

.4 Questions

1. Would you support the provision of appropriately designed bins in areas where there is a problem with dog fouling and litter?
2. Would you support more town centre sites for recycling glass, textiles and cartons to help improve recycling rates?

3.2 Renewable technologies

3.2.1 The issue

Alnwick and Denwick have 75KW of installed windpower (at Defra's Lion House site, which has not been functional for several months) and approximately 150KW of installed solar photovoltaic capacity. Combined, these renewable technologies deliver approximately 300MWh of electricity per year. Solar thermal installations deliver approximately 20MWh of heat per year, and biomass systems deliver considerably more. Overall, renewable technologies probably currently reduce our

overall greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 1%. Construction of a 1MW biomass power station on the outskirts of Alnwick is also under consideration.

Outside conservation areas, solar technologies can be installed on roofs as permitted development, without planning permission, as long as the installation does not project more than 200mm beyond the roof slope, and the highest part of the installation is no higher than the highest part of the roof.

However, Alnwick already has a sizeable conservation area, and elsewhere in this suite of options papers there is consideration given to extending it.

In conservation areas, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal panels currently require planning permission whenever they are mounted on the principal or side elevation of a house and visible from a highway. Planning applications are expensive and time-consuming, and can create bad feeling within communities. There is anecdotal evidence that this creates significant barriers to proceeding with solar installations which would help reduce Alnwick's total environmental impact.

3.2.2 Do nothing option

If action is not taken to support renewable technologies in conservation areas, this will reduce overall take-up, especially if conservation areas increase in size. Maintaining this barrier to renewables in conservation areas could damage local installation businesses, and make people of Alnwick more dependent on increasingly expensive and unsustainable gas, oil or electricity.

3.2.3 Other options

An option which is under consideration for the plan is a policy to encourage solar photovoltaics and solar thermal for any building which is not listed.

This would commit Alnwick Town Council and Denwick Parish Council to support any installation on unlisted buildings in a conservation area, as long as it meets the same criteria as an installation outside the conservation area, and meets the requirements of policy criteria.

3.3 Sustainable construction

3.3.1 The issue

Domestic greenhouse gas emissions statistics are not available for Alnwick and Denwick, but emissions for Northumberland as a whole in 2009 were 2.7 tonnes of CO₂ per household. This represents a 10% fall per household on 2005 levels.

However, domestic greenhouse gas emissions for Northumberland remain 23% higher than for England and Wales as a whole. Whilst the cooler climate accounts for a small part of the difference, our emissions are also falling at a slower rate than the rest of the country, which suggests that a substantial factor is due to the higher percentage of hard-to-treat properties – especially pre-1930 solid wall properties. The UK government has agreed a 50% target reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, with domestic properties achieving an even larger saving.

An assessment of Building Research Establishment data carried out in 2009 by Northumberland County Council suggested that 18% of households lived in fuel poverty. With incomes not keeping pace with inflation, and above-inflation rises in fuel prices, this figure is likely to have risen significantly in the last 3 years. No disaggregated figures are available for Denwick, but figures for comparable areas such as Whittingham and Hedgeley (off the gas main, with older housing stock) suggest 45% of households might live in fuel poverty.

3.3.2 Do nothing option

In the models used by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to evaluate policies, the prices of gas, electricity and oil are each expected to increase by up to 30% above the rate of

inflation over the next 10 years. DECC's models have historically been optimistic, so the increase might well be more than that. Without significant intervention, many more households will suffer from fuel poverty.

The current administration plans to roll out the Green deal in late 2012, but official predictions of the numbers of homes which will benefit from loft insulation and other measures are modest. Similarly the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which will replace the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) and proposes additional support for hard-to-treat properties, is less well-funded overall than CERT.

3.3.3 Other options

A number of options to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions can be implemented without a neighbourhood plan. These include general communications and awareness-raising about energy-saving measures and local suppliers, tailored advice, the establishment of a locally-focused not-for-profit Green Deal provider which would issue loans for efficiency improvements (these would be linked to meters, not to householders), and publicity amongst private tenants of their right to request energy efficiency improvements from 2016 under the 2011 Energy Act.

Northumberland County Council's core strategy proposes 3 measures to improve existing buildings: the Uttlesford approach, which links practical and affordable efficiency improvements to planning permissions for extensions, annexes and conversions; a carbon offset fund, which requires developers of new properties to pay a fee based on that property's predicted emissions, which is then used on energy-efficiency projects; or reliance on building regulations and the Green Deal.

It is suggested that the third approach is unsuitable given the large number of hard-to-treat solid wall properties in Alnwick.

A small lever which Alnwick Town Council and Denwick Parish Council both hold is to exempt a property from payment of the local precept for one or more years when they make an efficiency improvement to their home. This improvement would most likely be demonstrated by the production of an Energy Performance Certificate, and given the level of precepts, would constitute a relatively small financial saving for the billpayer.

.4 Questions

3. Should the neighbourhood plan promote more energy efficient homes
4. Should the plan encourage local homes and businesses to generate their own energy from renewable sources.

3.4 Sustainable transport

3.4.1 The issue

Alnwick and Denwick are poorly connected via cycle routes to other population centres. Alnwick is only linked to Alnmouth and Hipsburn via the A1068, whose classification by Northumberland County Council as a national primary route indicates its unsuitability for all but the most dedicated of cyclists.

Alternative routes, via Longhoughton and Boulmer and via Shilbottle, are both considerably longer and more strenuous. The absence of a safe, easy cycle route effectively cuts off resident cyclists of Alnwick and Denwick from cycle and rail links along the coast, and cuts off cycle tourists on the

coast and castles cycle route (National Cycle Route 1) from the tourism and services available in Alnwick.

Aggressive driving and high traffic speeds in the streets of Alnwick also discourage cycling. Eight pedestrians and three cyclists have suffered serious injuries as a result of collisions with motor vehicles in Alnwick in the past 10 years.

3.4.2 Do nothing option

It is of course, perfectly feasible for the time being for those of us who have cars to maintain or increase our reliance on them. However, this would mean forgoing the health and well-being benefits which result from increased cycling and walking, and the improvements in quality of life and community-building which result from a more mixed approach to the use of our streets, as well as the exclusion of people who cannot drive, or cannot afford to drive.

Tourism in Alnwick also suffers from the poor connectivity to cycle routes of national importance, and greenhouse gas emissions are increased when people opt to travel by higher-carbon modes of travel because they do not feel safe making journeys on foot or by bike.

3.4.3 Other options

Aln Valley Railway Society are already engaged in developing a combined single track railway and cycle route from Alnwick to Alnmouth. Completion of Phase 1, which will link Lionheart Enterprise Park in Alnwick to Greenrigg Bridge, will complete a quiet traffic cycle route from Alnwick to Hipsburn. Completion of phase 2 will create an entirely traffic-free route. Funding remains an issue for Aln Valley Railway Society, with funding only secured for phase 1 of the project.

Support for a cycle route which will link Alnwick with Alnmouth station is in line with Northumberland County Council's draft cycling strategy, which prioritises cycle routes in "the main urban areas and links to surrounding settlements which generate significant amounts of commuting" and the 3rd local transport plan which committed the council to improved foot and cycle links to railway stations.

Northumberland County Council has already consulted on and implemented a 20mph speed limit in the Swansfield Park Road area of Alnwick. Although the results of this pilot have been inconclusive, the overall effect of a number of pilots across Northumberland has been positive and the very limited nature of the Alnwick trial – three streets accounting for a little over half a mile of road – would be expected to have only a rather small effect.

It is proposed that residents of other residential streets should have the opportunity to request local consultations for 20mph speed limits, with consultations administered by Alnwick Town Council and decided on the basis of a majority vote. Residents of main routes, such as South Road, Alnmouth Road, and Bondgate Within and Without, would not be able to opt for 20 mph speed limits. Any resulting changes to signs and regulations would need to be administered by Northumberland County Council. It might be argued that this option will be expensive but the typical cost of 20mph speed limits without traffic calming measures such as speed bumps is £2.50-£3 per head. It has little effect on journey times – implementing a 20mph limit would add a maximum of 20 seconds to a journey from one end of Allerburn Lea to the other. It also yields significant savings in reduced casualties and health and well-being benefits.

.4 Questions

5. Would you support a well-maintained safe and signed cycle route network to benefit Alnwick Town and its links to neighbouring villages?

6. Would you support a restriction in vehicle speeds to a maximum of 20mph in the residential areas of Alnwick Town.

3.5 Sustainable food

3.5.1 The issue

Alnwick has a total of approximately 12 hectares of allotments. Of this, around two-thirds are on land held freehold by the Town or County Council; the other one-third are let directly by Northumberland Estates, or, in the case of Ratten Row, on a short lease from Northumberland Estates to Alnwick Town Council. Denwick has no allotments.

Although this is above the minimums recommended by Northumberland County Council, there are still significant waiting lists for allotments in Alnwick. When residents of a municipal authority request allotments, the authority is required under section 23 of the Smallholdings and Allotments Act to pro-actively seek land to satisfy that request.

Furthermore, the limited green space which is open to the public in Alnwick and Denwick benefits from a variety of attractive and sometimes historic trees, but very few of these have edible fruit.

3.5.2 Do nothing option

It can be expected that demand for allotments will steadily increase over the next 10 or 20 years. The options for housing development elsewhere in these issues and options papers proposes approximately 50 new homes being delivered in Alnwick and Denwick each year, between now and 2026. This would mean an approximate population increase of 1700.

The impact of rising fuel prices on food prices is already being felt. This can be expected to continue. Oil is important both as a fertiliser and pesticide feedstock, and for transportation and packaging of food, and the International Monetary Fund predict an increase in oil prices of up to 100% by 2022. This effect will make itself especially felt in fresh fruit and vegetables, where the North-East is a significant net importer.

The result of these two trends - a growing town population and rising food prices – is likely to mean longer waiting lists for allotments, and an increasing share of family incomes dedicated to paying for basic fruit and vegetables.

3.5.3 Other options

Two straightforward options for tackling these issues present themselves.

First, we could consider setting aside considerably more land for allotments in Alnwick and Denwick. Given that the population of Alnwick might well increase by one-third over the next 20 years, this would suggest that we need at least one-third more space, or a total of 16 hectares, simply to meet anticipated increases in demand. However, given that we are not meeting existing demand now, and take up of allotments can be expected to increase with rising food prices, then 18 hectares is suggested as a total target. This would require the town council to lease or purchase land, which will come at some expense, but land which is designated as green space has no planning value and can in any case be compulsorily purchased by the County Council under existing legislation. This would be a proportionate move, planning ahead to meet anticipated demand. 6 hectares of agricultural land would cost around £14,000.

Whilst this will provide vegetables for allotment holders, very few allotments in Alnwick have fruit trees due to space constraints. Local supplies of fruit could be increased by requiring 50% of trees planted in open access green space to be fruit trees. Note also that we are suggesting a large

increase in the amount of land given over to green space, so there would still be a significant increase in open green space. The total cost of trees might approach £50,000, but grants are available from many organisations. Plantings of large numbers of trees have been successfully carried out in recent years by volunteers from local environmental groups, Alnwick Lions, Guides and Town Councillors, so we can be confident that labour costs would be small.

3.5.4 Questions

7. How do you think the amount of allocated space for allotments should change over the plan period to 2025?
8. Would you support a requirement that at least 50% of trees planted in publicly accessible green spaces should be fruit trees?

3.6 Green space

3.6.1 The issue

Natural England, the government's advisor on the natural environment, state that “access to natural green spaces for fresh air, exercise and quiet contemplation has benefits for both physical and mental health. Research provides good evidence of reductions in levels of heart disease, obesity and depression where people live close to green spaces... Green spaces also help us adapt to changes in climate through their role in reducing the risk of flooding and by cooling the local environment. .. Nature nearby is good for people, good for wildlife and good for the environment.” Natural England's Accessible Natural Green space Standard (ANGSt), provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places near to where people live.

These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have:

- ✦ an accessible natural green space of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
- ✦ at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- ✦ one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
- ✦ one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home

Alnwick and Denwick fall far short of these standards.

Alnwick has a total of 9 spaces which are 2 hectares or more in size. However, excluding areas which are not generally accessible to the majority of the population – allotments, school playing fields and tennis courts which are locked outside school hours – there are only 4 areas of more than 2 hectares. 3 of these – the land to the west of Chapel Lands, Alnwick West Recreation Ground and St Thomas Open Space – are located in the west of Alnwick, whilst the 4th - Weavers Way Sports Ground is to the south of Alnwick. There is no open green space of greater than 2 hectares in central or eastern Alnwick, and none whatsoever in Denwick.

There is no publicly accessible Green space of 20 hectares or more within 2km of Alnwick and Denwick. Similarly there are no 100 hectare sites within 5km of Alnwick, and no 500 hectare sites within 10km.

Hulne Park is a 1620 hectare site, but Northumberland Estates only permit access to three trails, through the park and the park can be closed at any time without notice.

Alnwick and Denwick also fall very far short of an alternative open space benchmarking system used by Northumberland County Council. Combined, the two areas, per 1,000 population, have:

- 0.33 hectares of parks and gardens (the recommendation is 2.14)
- 0.25 hectares of natural and semi-natural green space (7.55 hectares recommended)
- 0.88 hectares of amenity green space (1.09 hectares recommended)
- 0.07 hectares of provision for children and young people (0.50 hectares recommended)

3.6.2 Do nothing option

The expected housing increase referred to in the housing issues paper would result in an approximate population increase of 1700 up to 2026. Recent developments on Park View and Allerburn Lea have not set aside adequate green space to meet the ANGst standard. Without setting aside adequate green space at the start of development, it is likely that new housing will also fail to meet the standard.

The planned rationalisation of Alnwick's school estate could also lead to some areas of limited access green space being lost to redevelopment as housing or office space.

Climate change in North Northumberland is expected to lead to a temperature increase of 2-3°C by the 2050s and 4-5°C by the 2080s, which will make the provision of green space to cool the town even more important.

3.6.3 Other options

In order to meet the ANGst green space standard, existing and available green space needs to be made publicly accessible. Examples of existing green spaces which could contribute to meeting the target include Lindisfarne School Playing Fields, the fields east of Allerburn Lea and the fields west of Canongate.

The land which is made available does not need to be owned or even leased by the council, and is therefore of zero cost to the council. It only needs to be made publicly accessible for a significant period, and for the owner/s to therefore forgo for the time being any benefit from the development of the land as housing or commercial land.

In any case, some areas, such as the space around Canongate, is at risk of surface water flooding, and is therefore unsuitable for development.

The only downside of this proposal is that some housing developments would be situated a little further from the centre of Alnwick, which may lead to slightly longer journey times, and correspondingly slightly increased reliance on motor vehicles to access the centre. However, this can be tackled by adequate parking provision and promotion of safe and convenient cycle and walking routes into town.

3.6.4 Questions

9. Do you support the plan committing to increase the amount of publicly accessible greenspace provided (eg parks and gardens) to achieve the standards set by the county Council for the rest of Northumberland?

3.7 Biodiversity

3.7.1 The issue

Alnwick and Denwick are poorly served by nature reserves. Natural England's Accessible Natural Green space Standard (ANGSt) recommends 1 hectare of reserves per 1,000 population, but there are no nature reserves whatsoever in Alnwick or Denwick themselves.

There are small reserves located in Craster, Whittingham and Littlehoughton, which collectively account for 8.6 hectares, but the population of Alnwick and its surrounding villages is at least 15,000. So even on this wider view of Alnwick and Denwick, only 0.55 hectares per 1,000 of population are provided.

Northumberland County Council have produced a number of biodiversity action plans but none of these consider Alnwick in any detail.

3.6.2 Do nothing option

Biodiversity is expected to come under increasing threat as climate change alters natural habitats faster than much wildlife can adapt. Rapid migration of parasites and viruses can wreak devastating impacts on wildlife. Existing green spaces such as pasture, large-scale arable farming and monocultural woodland do not necessarily provide effective wildlife habitats.

The expected housing increase outlined would result in an approximate population increase of 1700, which requires increasing provision of nature reserves in order to meet Natural England's standard.

3.6.3 Other options

In order to meet the ANGst green space standard, approximately 10 hectares of nature reserves need to be established either on the periphery of Alnwick and Denwick, or within an 8 mile radius. It is accepted that to a degree nature reserves can only be provided where there is either already nature conservation interest or where there is the potential for habitat creation.

Northumberland County Council has proposed a new form of designation – Nature Improvement Areas – aimed at enhancing the ecological network through increasing the size and/or number of wildlife sites. Extension or linkage of existing nature reserves or new sites could be considered to meet this target.

Again, there is a cost to this programme, in forgone development, but wildlife is able to prosper on marginal land which has no development value, due to flooding, contamination or poor transport connections.

The land which is made available does not need to be owned or even leased by the council, and is therefore of zero cost to the council. It only needs to be made publicly accessible for a significant period.

3.6.4 Questions

10. Should the plan identify local nature reserves in areas of nature conservation interest?

3.8 Flooding and pollution

3.8.1 The issue

On the evidence of Environment Agency flood risk maps, only two small areas of the built environment in Alnwick and Denwick are at significant risk of river flooding. These are the northern tip of Canongate and Golden Moor in Denwick.

However, a number of other areas are at risk of surface water flooding, due to rising groundwater, or more often run-off caused by periods of heavy rain. Northumberland County Council have carried out preliminary and strategic flood risk assessments from surface water flooding, and have identified squares of 1km², where critical services, or a minimum number of commercial

properties or residences are at significant risk of flooding.

The entirety of each square is not at risk.

- ⤴ In the south east of Alnwick – covering the Willowburn sports centre and retail park and the Willowburn and Sawmill industrial estates - 20 or more non-residential properties are at significant risk.
- ⤴ In the north-west of Alnwick – extending from Swansfield Park Road in the south to Canongate in the north, and Lower Barresdale in the west to the Bondgate in the east – at least 1 Critical service, 20 non residential properties and 200 people are at significant risk.

Denwick is not identified as being at risk of surface-water flooding, although this may be due to the risk assessment methodology, which focuses on larger population centres. In any case, the small area of built environment means Denwick is probably at relatively low risk.

3.8.2 Do nothing option

It is currently national policy not to be more specific about precise 'hotspots' of surface water flooding, and in any case, any new planning proposals in areas which are at significant risk would need to be modelled, taking into account the nature of the development, the amount of green space, and types of drainage systems.

However, we can expect surface water flooding to become increasingly likely due to the expected increased frequency of extreme weather events and increased area of the built environment in Alnwick, which would reduce the opportunities for water run-off.

Therefore flood risks will continue to increase across Alnwick, and any new developments in the flooding hotspots of south east and north-west Alnwick will require more green space, more complex drainage systems and other additional measures which will add to the expense of any development.

3.8.3 Other options

In order to minimise the risk of surface-water and river-flooding in Alnwick and Denwick, and to minimise the cost of adapting to it, it is suggested that any new 'greenfield' developments are concentrated in the north east (Allerburn Lea and and South Road) and south west of Alnwick (Fairfields and the B6341).

The north west and south east of Alnwick should be the presumed areas for provision of additional green space and nature reserves.

Other factors, such as transport, the provision of critical services and protection of landscapes, should be considerations in determining where to develop, but the need to minimise flood risk, especially in a time of climatic uncertainty, should carry appropriate weight.

3.9 Landscape

3.9.1 The issue

The Alnwick Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) considers that the landscape will be increasingly important to the local economy in the future. As part of a series of visitor attractions the landscape is a resource that will need to meet the demands and expectations of visitors but it is also important for sustaining quality of life for local people and for

attracting new businesses.

The SPD includes a section, commissioned in 2008, to look at the effect on the landscape from potential for settlement expansion around Alnwick. Most of the opportunity areas for settlement expansion were identified as being close to the A1 and the approach from the A1 is the most common arrival point. Given the importance of the landscape and the character of the town's setting to business and visitor experience, the Neighbourhood Plan therefore needs to consider what impact development on the south and east of Alnwick will have. Historically the town would not have been visible on arriving from the south but more recent residential developments at Fairfields have emerged onto the hillside below the golf course and are clearly visible.

3.9.2 Do nothing option

Failure to consider landscape character for future development, especially south and east of Alnwick, will impair business and visitor experience and mean new developments which are less attractive for householders on those new developments.

3.9.3 Other options

Further development in the area should consider significant swathes of 'structure' planting to soften edges and provide a pleasant green setting for new householders.

The plan should also build on the town's green infrastructure assets utilising tree lined approaches into Alnwick to create green infrastructure corridors linking new housing areas with the proposed new High School site and integrating play areas.

3.9.4 Questions

11. Should the plan protect trees in the town centre and those lining approach roads?

4. Summary

In this chapter we have reviewed the environmental issues facing Alnwick now and in the future, and made proposals to address them.

1. Dog fouling and littering appear to be widespread and the town has limited recycling facilities.
Improve provision of appropriate bins and recycling points.

2. Solar photovoltaic and solar thermal panels require planning permission in conservation areas.

Introduce a policy encouraging solar photovoltaic and solar thermal panels in conservation areas in Alnwick and Denwick.

3. Ageing housing stock, low incomes and rising fuel prices mean domestic carbon emissions are high, and a significant proportion of residents live in fuel poverty.

Introduce some or all of the Uttlesford approach, carbon offset funds or an exemption from the council precept to support energy efficiency improvements.

4. Alnwick and Denwick are poorly connected to other population centres by cycle routes, and high traffic speeds around town discourage cycling and walking.

Consult residents on introducing 20mph speed limits on residential streets, and fund the introduction of a direct traffic-free cycle routes linking Alnwick to surrounding villages and Alnmouth Station.

5. There are long waiting lists for allotments and little use of green space for trees producing any edible fruit.

Set aside an additional 18 hectares for allotments and 10% of green space for fruit trees by 2026.

6. Alnwick and Denwick fall far short of Natural England's best practice ANGst standards for provision of accessible green space.

Commit to meeting best practice standards by 2026, by setting aside sufficient space inside and on the periphery of Alnwick.

7. Alnwick has no nature reserves

Increase the area of local nature reserves in Alnwick and surrounding villages to 10 hectares in line with Natural England's best practice standards by 2026.

8. Several areas on the outskirts of Alnwick are at risk of surface-water flooding

Prioritise development of new housing and commercial facilities in the north east and south west of Alnwick. Favour the location of green spaces and local nature reserves in the south east and north west of the town.

5. Evidence base

Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth. Public consultation event 13th May.

Aln Valley Railway Society. Project pages

Alnwick Partnership. Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood plan questionnaire responses.

DCLG. National Planning Policy Framework

DECC. Interdepartmental Analysts Group Guidance for Policy Appraisal

DECC. Local authority and sub-local authority greenhouse gas emission statistics.

Defra. Local authority collected waste for England – annual statistics.

Defra. UK Climate Projections

HMSO. Energy Act 2011

HMSO. Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1906

International Monetary Fund. The Future of Oil: Geology v Technology

Keep Britain Tidy. Knowledge bank

Natural England. Nature Nearby - Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance

Northumberland County Council. 3rd local transport plan

Northumberland County Council. data on 20mph pilot zones [unpublished]

Northumberland County Council. Draft cycling strategy

Northumberland County Council. Fuel Poverty analysis of Housing Stock Modelling

Service (HSMS) produced by Building Research Establishment.

Northumberland County Council. LDF Core Strategy evidence base [unpublished]

Northumberland County Council. Local Development Plan – core strategy issues and options consultation document.

Northumberland County Council. Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment.

Portsmouth City Council. Costs of 20mph speed limits

Road casualty reports 2000-2010 - ITO World using data from the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) and the UK Data Archive

Smiths Gore. Land Prices Annual Review 2011

20s plenty for us. Briefing papers