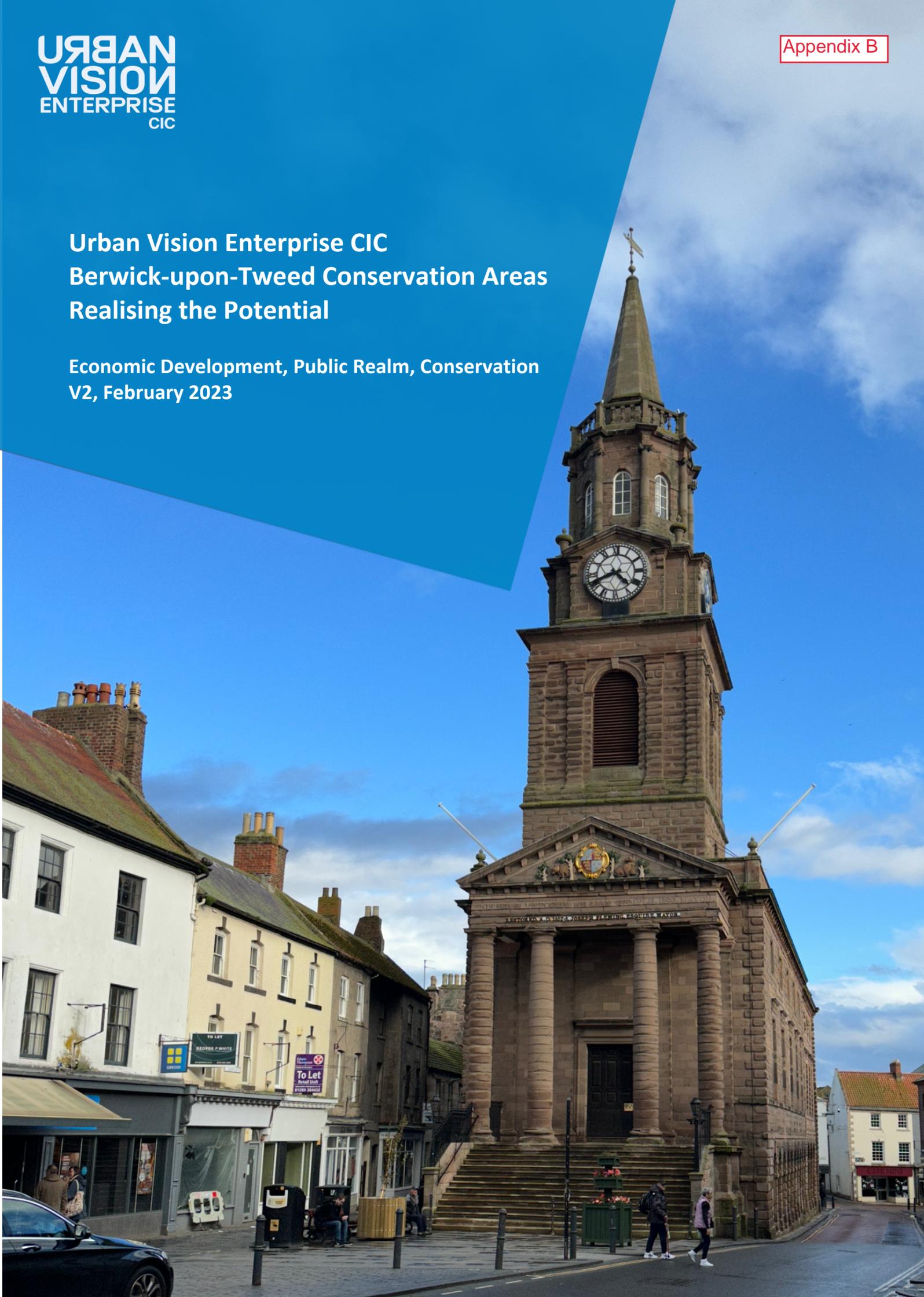


# Urban Vision Enterprise CIC Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Areas Realising the Potential

Economic Development, Public Realm, Conservation  
V2, February 2023



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# Executive Summary



## Overview

Heritage is part of the infrastructure of Berwick-upon-Tweed and most built heritage is in productive use. Berwick's heritage has substantial economic value and is a means to achieving effective, inclusive and sustainable economic development and regeneration, including high street recovery.

There are numerous opportunities to realise the economic potential of the Berwick-upon-Tweed, Tweedmouth and Spittal Conservation Areas. This report makes the following recommendations:

Stakeholders have suggested sometimes polarised views of heritage in Berwick. It is crucial to avoid false dichotomies between conservation and economic growth and climate change. They are inextricably linked.

An inflexible approach to conservation can threaten the survival of heritage, if it prevents it from adapting. At the same time, a failure to appreciate the values of heritage and allowing of harmful development can damage the area's character and economy and lead to a failure to realise economic development potential.

## Promote Heritage-Led Regeneration

- 1. The economic and Town Centre analysis in Chapter 3 should be taken into account in developing strategy, policies and proposals for heritage in the three Conservation Areas. Strategy, policies and proposals should aim to preserve or enhance significance, but also to maintain or enhance economic and community values and sustainable neighbourhoods.**
- 2. Opportunities should be sought to apply for and administer historic area grant schemes to support the high-quality repair of properties, to address viability challenges, and to enable them being brought into full productive use.**
- 3. Northumberland County Council and Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council should positively lead or support projects to refurbish or reuse historic buildings or deliver regeneration:**
  - a. Leading or supporting funding bids to heritage and non-heritage sources;**
  - b. Negotiating with building and landowners and using compulsory purchase and enforcement powers where necessary;**
  - c. Helping with site assembly and masterplanning for key regeneration opportunities;**
  - d. Positively engaging owners and developers to promote the development of key sites, including the Pavilion and industrial sites in Spittal and the library and car park sites in Berwick Town Centre;**
  - e. Recognising the respective roles and strengths of different sectors and enabling cross-sectoral partnerships;**
  - f. Adopting a corporate approach to supporting heritage projects and regeneration initiatives, to remove barriers across departments and organisations;**

4. Promotion of Berwick's heritage should be integrated with wider promotion of arts and culture, as part of an overall visitor strategy. This includes identification of opportunities to use heritage, including the defence structures and vacant buildings, to support art installations, lighting, performance and other cultural activities.
5. Marketing and promotion of Berwick-upon-Tweed should:
  - a. be developed jointly between the various public bodies, trade bodies and businesses, to ensure an integrated and coherent approach, with wide buy-in;
  - b. emphasise the distinctive value and nature of Berwick-upon-Tweed's heritage, across the three Conservation Areas;
  - c. consider the creation of heritage, arts and business walking trails to link Spittal beach with Tweedmouth and the Town centre.
6. Opportunities to provide training should be investigated and exploited to include:
  - a. Professional skills in conservation for built environment professionals, including private sector architects;
  - b. Craft skills to build the capacity of local building and construction firms;
  - c. Awareness raising for senior officers and elected members on the economic values of heritage;
  - d. Local small business training and support, for example in business planning, marketing, and on-line sales.
7. Northumberland County Council should positively promote and support asset transfer, in particular as a means of addressing buildings where there are economic viability challenges.

## Positive Management of the Historic Environment

### Public Realm

8. A design code should be commissioned to guide future public realm projects in all three conservation areas. This should focus on quality and consistency, rather than being stylistically prescriptive. It should allow for simple contemporary design (with an emphasis on quality of materials) or evidence-based reinstatement, but not conjectural 'reinstatement'.
9. It is essential that all bodies and departments responsible for decisions and projects affecting the public realm coordinate their activities, working within the context of the public realm design code, which all should sign up to.
10. The following key opportunities for public realm enhancement should be prioritised, working to the public realm design code:
  - a. The promenade and the main carpark in Spittal;
  - b. The riverside in Tweedmouth;

- c. Carpark improvements and seating areas in the shopping streets in Berwick Town Centre.
11. The highways authority should review street furniture in all three conservation areas and identify opportunities to reduce street clutter.
12. For green spaces and outdoors sports facilities in residential areas, engagement with the local community and stakeholders should be undertaken as a first step, before any decision is made on the future of the space. This should precede any funding bid.

## **Positive Planning and Conservation**

13. A limited Article 4 Direction (not area-wide) should be considered for the Spittal Conservation Area and Tweedmouth Conservation Area, for housing where there is a reasonable survival of historic timber doors and windows.
14. The boundary of the Spittal Conservation Area should be amended to include the coastal area to the north, to create a more consistent and logical boundary.
15. The boundary of the Tweedmouth Conservation Area should be amended, extending along the Dock Road. The amended boundary should encompass structures that would contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the area, include the lifeboat station, the adjacent jetty and stone walls, and the railway viaduct. The amended Conservation Area boundaries could be based on the river edge and railway. Inclusion of railway structures would entail the inclusion of some of the wooded area. The amended boundary should avoid linking to the Spittal Conservation Area, due to their very different and distinctive characters.
16. The buildings identified as potential candidates for listed building status in Chapter 6 should be submitted to Historic England for consideration. Similarly, buildings that may warrant a higher grade should be discussed with Historic England. Similarly, Historic England should be asked to consider potential additions to the Historic Parks and Gardens register.
17. A Buildings at Risk survey should be undertaken to provide a clear picture of vacancy and condition, following on from COVID and other recent changes. This could build on the current volunteer project.
18. Future planning policies and guidance, which falls under the remit of both Northumberland County Council and Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, should take account of the analysis in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this report and:
  - Help realise the economic potential;
  - Identify opportunity sites;
  - Set key development and design principles;
  - Protect of green infrastructure;
  - Promote good design and support creative and green design.
  - Support 15-minute neighbourhoods.

- 19. All decisions including application of the special statutory duties for heritage under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 should involve heritage specialists, to ensure legal compliance.**
- 20. Whilst enforcement action is a last resort, it should be used to address building deterioration where owners are failing to take necessary steps.**



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Northumberland HER  
 Conservation Areas

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 **Northumberland**  
 County Council  
 County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF  
 Tel: 0345 600 6400

# A. Introduction and Heritage Assets



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report relates to the following three Conservation Areas:

Berwick-Upon-Tweed Conservation Area;  
Tweedmouth Conservation Area;  
Spittal Conservation Area.

Heritage is part of the infrastructure of Berwick-upon-Tweed in the present. Most heritage buildings and spaces are in productive uses. Conservation of heritage and the achievement of community and economic goals are mutually supportive. Whilst there are creative challenges in reconciling different goals, this report seeks to avoid presenting any false or generalised dichotomies between heritage conservation and achievement of sustainable and effective economic growth.

The report responds to Northumberland County Council's brief and includes:

**Evidence and analysis:** Chapters 2-6 include evidence and analysis to support planning for the historic environment and heritage-related projects and initiatives.

**Management Plan:** The document forms part of the Management Plan for the three conservation areas. This includes various recommendations relating to heritage-led economic development and regeneration, the public realm, and positive planning and conservation.

The report addresses two key objectives:

Promote Heritage-led Regeneration (Chapters 3 & 4)  
Positive Management of the Historic Environment (Chapters 5 & 6)

The report is based on analysis of data, engagement with stakeholders, site visits and photographic surveys and other activities. In parallel, a heritage audit is being undertaken, which will inform future decisions, such as possible revision of Article 4 Directions.

The document will be used together with:

- the character appraisals for each conservation area
- the heritage audit
- shop front guide and other supplementary guidance
- adopted or made statutory planning policy.

## 1.2 Strategic Context

There are already plans and strategies in place to promote economic development and diversify the local economy in Berwick, including the Northumberland Economic Strategy, the Local Plan and the Coastal Community Team Economic Plan 2017. These promote supporting local businesses, developing local skills, improving and promoting the tourist offer and improving the public realm.

This report focuses on realisation of the economic potential of the three conservation areas, so these wider strategic aims and activities are clearly complementary. A key factor for achieving effective heritage-led economic development is to consider and deal with heritage against a wide social, economic and environmental context, with a placemaking focus, rather than a narrow focus on cultural value or significance.

This involves:

- a. Promoting awareness of the economic and other values of heritage to key stakeholders and decision-makers, including local authority officers at all levels and elected members;
- b. Inclusion of heritage as an integral part of future plans and strategies for economic development and addressing climate change, including Northumberland County Council and Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council strategy and policy documents.
- c. Challenging false dichotomies between conservation of Berwick's historic environments and achieving economic development. In towns and urban centres all around the country, heritage has often been a key factor in achieving physical and economic transformations.

## 2. Heritage Assets

### 2.1 Berwick-upon-Tweed's Heritage

#### 2.1.1 Conservation Areas

The three Conservation Areas cover three distinct parts of the Town.

**Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area:** This covers the Town Centre and its environs, with the boundary defined mainly by the coast. The Conservation Area includes the historic defences and the greatest concentration of listed buildings and scheduled monuments, including high-grade listed buildings.

**Spittal Conservation Area:** This is a mix of former industrial village and coastal resort. It comprises mainly housing, with some community buildings and spaces, former industrial buildings, and the seafront, beach and promenade. Spa Park provides a civic focus.

**Tweedmouth Conservation Area:** This is varied in character, with an historic village core, commercial and industrial areas, planned housing and the Tweed Dock. St Bartholomew Church and its churchyard provide a central landmark and focus.

Berwick-upon-Tweed and Tweedmouth are linked by the three historic bridges. Tweedmouth and Spittal are linked by the Dock Road. The walk from Spittal promenade to Bridge End in Berwick Town centre is around a mile and a half.

There are character appraisals for the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area and Tweedmouth Conservation Area and a new character appraisal has been prepared for Spittal Conservation Area.

#### 2.1.2 Article 4 Directions

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area has an Article 4 direction relating to Dwellinghouses. This removes permitted development rights relating to existing or new windows, doors and openings and porches.

The Spittal and Tweedmouth Conservation Areas do not have Article 4 Directions.



**Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area:** The Town centre includes the main concentrations of listed buildings and scheduled monuments.



**Spittal Conservation Area:** Industrial village and seaside resort.



**Tweedmouth Conservation Area:** Tweedmouth has varied character with an historic village core, housing areas and working dock.

### 2.1.3 Listed Buildings

Collectively, the three conservation areas include 268 listed buildings. The following table shows the breakdown by area and grade.

Conservation Area	Grade 1	Grade II*	Grade II	Total
Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area	18	17	212	247
Spittal Conservation Area			7	7
Tweedmouth Conservation Area		1	13	14

**Table 1: Listed Buildings:** Numbers and grades of Listed Buildings

The three bridges over the Tweed are statutorily protected, as follows:

Bridge	Protection
Berwick Bridge	Grade I listed and scheduled monument
Royal Border Bridge	Grade I listed
Royal Tweed Bridge	Grade II* listed

**Table 2: Bridges:** Statutory protection

### 2.1.4 Scheduled Monuments

There are 4 scheduled monuments in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area.

These are:

- Berwick Bridge (the ends are in two of the Conservation Areas);
- Enclosure castle, two 16<sup>th</sup> century turrets and early 17<sup>th</sup> century house;
- Medieval and post-medieval fortifications;
- Spades Mire earthwork and section of rig and furrow.

The Medieval and post-medieval fortifications includes the full extent of the Elizabethan ramparts with their bastions, gateways and earthworks as well as parts of the medieval town defences including the earthen mound, wall and ditch, in addition to the Henrician earthwork and masonry fortification known as Lord's Mount. This is a fundamental part of the Town's form and structure and historic fabric.



**Scheduled Monuments:** Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area – the walls and ramparts form part of a scheduled monument that surrounds the town.

### 2.1.5 Other Designations

Trees in Conservation Areas already have a degree of protection. In addition, there are various tree preservation orders. These may be identified through the local authority's interactive map.

## 2.2 Heritage Value

Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area has a concentration of heritage. This includes the Medieval defences, exceptional and early 17<sup>th</sup> classicism (Holy Trinity Church) and distinctive 18<sup>th</sup> century neoclassicism (including the Town Hall), and an eclectic range of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Collectively, the three Conservation Areas and the three linking bridges have significance against a national and international context. The significance of the three Conservation Areas is not just about the bridges, defence structures and formal architecture, but also more modest and utilitarian vernacular buildings.

There are some buildings of interest from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but little or nothing of particular significance from the inter-war and post-war periods, the later 20<sup>th</sup> century or the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Brewers Arms' entrance and shopfront is a notable exception and some more recent conversions of older buildings are well done, with good contemporary features. Many other historic towns in the UK now have listed buildings or significant buildings in Conservation Areas from the post-war and later periods.

The character of all three Conservation Areas is based on architectural diversity resulting from change over time in the functions of buildings, building technology and styles. Berwick has innovative and creative buildings from different periods. The lack of significant buildings from the later 20<sup>th</sup> century or 21<sup>st</sup> century is a matter of concern. This may be due to some

extent to misconceptions regarding the nature of conservation and/or a failure of confidence and/or Berwick's current economic circumstances.

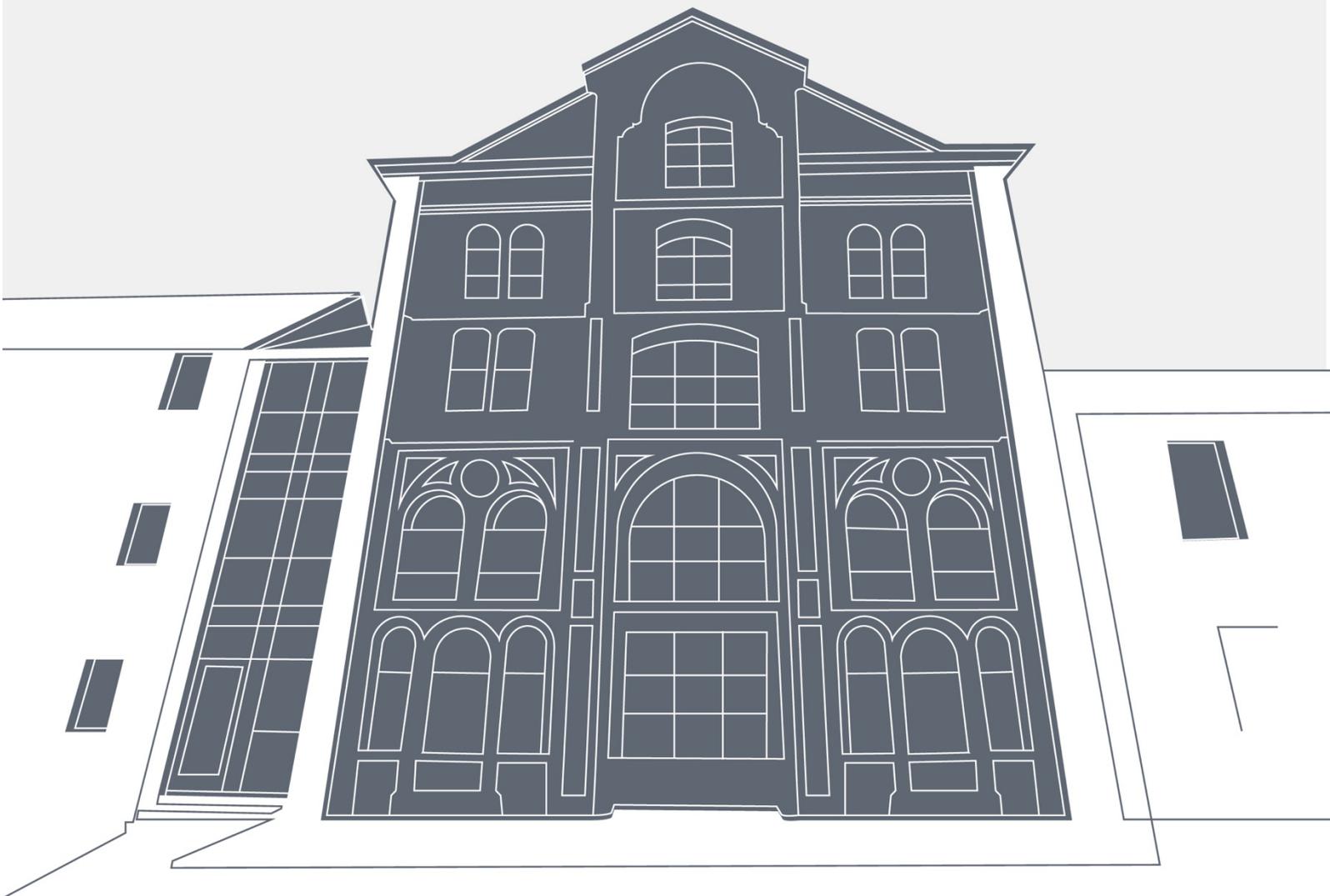
Continuing the tradition of change and adding to architectural diversity should be a positive aim for the future development of the three Conservation Areas. The area's significance will not be enhanced by pale imitation or bland and mediocre design (see 7.3).



**“All continuity of history means is perpetual change, and it is not hard to see that we have changed with a vengeance, and thereby established our claim to be the continuers of history” (William Morris address to the Society for Ancient Buildings, 1889)**

# B. Promote Heritage-Led Regeneration

Strategic Objective 1



## 3. Heritage – Economic Analysis

### 3.1 Values of Berwick-upon-Tweed's Heritage

#### 3.1.1 Values of Heritage

There are various ways in which Berwick-upon-Tweed's historic buildings and Conservation Areas contribute to the local economy, support the local community and help to deliver more inclusive and sustainable forms of development and regeneration. Loss of heritage is not just a cultural loss, but also an economic loss, community loss and environmental loss.

A recent report, *The Value of Heritage (2022)*, by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Conservation, People and Places, recognises the economic, regeneration, environmental and social values of heritage.

#### 3.1.2 Economic and Utility Value

Most of Berwick-upon-Tweed's heritage is in productive use, providing commercial space, residential accommodation, and space for community, recreational and other activities. Heritage has cultural value derived from the past, but is now part of the infrastructure of contemporary Berwick-upon-Tweed, including the Town Centre, Spittal and Tweedmouth.

For owners, the incentive in taking on historic buildings is usually for their utility value (a place to live, work or otherwise occupy) or investment value (as a capital asset, through rental income or as a development opportunity).

Heritage value can also be a factor, as some people positively prefer to live, work or spend leisure time in historic places. Heritage is a positive factor in attracting people to live, and also investment, jobs and visitors to the area, creating competitive advantage.

For the three conservation areas, varying rentals are a factor in supporting a diverse range of business and enterprise. Premises in the more peripheral parts of Berwick Town Centre, upper floors above commercial premises, and properties in Tweedmouth and Spittal can provide lower rentals, which are essential for supporting business start-ups creative enterprises, and social enterprises. Evidence suggests a great deal of variation in rentals across the three Conservation Areas (see 3.2).

Heritage can also form a basis for physical and economic regeneration and economic development, examples including the refurbishment of the Granary and the proposed project for the Barracks, both mentioned later in this report.



**Independent businesses:** Historic areas tend to support more independent businesses, supporting greater choice and diversity.

### 3.1.3 Town Centre Recovery

The High Street Task Force and others have recognised that heritage is a significant factor in developing strategies for the recovery of high streets and town centres, which is especially important post-COVID and in the current uncertain economic climate (see 3.3 for more detailed analysis).

Spittal and Tweedmouth provide lower rentals than the main shopping streets in Berwick Town Centre. Within Berwick Town Centre, the more peripheral shopping streets provide lower rentals than Marygate. National chain stores tend to be located in Marygate, whilst more peripheral shopping streets, such as Bridge Street, are primarily occupied by local and independent businesses. Evidence has shown that historic centres tend to have higher proportions of independent businesses and specialist shops (Heritage Counts), supporting choice and diversity. This is certainly the case in Berwick-upon-Tweed. This applies not just to retail, but also food and drink and other high street uses.

### 3.1.4 Tourism and the Visitor Economy

Berwick-upon-Tweed's historic environments help to project a positive image and distinctive environment for the Town, and this is reflected in promotional materials targeted at tourists and visitors.

Tourism is a significant part of the local economy, supporting a range of local businesses and with potential for expansion and/or increased visitor expenditure.

Specific heritage sites are a magnet for visitors and are promoted as such. These include the town walls and ramparts, the bridges, and the Barracks (museum and art gallery). There is

scope for improvement of these and also for development of new attractions (see Chapter 4).



**Tourism and the Visitor Economy:** The Barracks is one of Berwick's key tourist attractions.

### 3.5 Housing, Community and Sustainability

Berwick's historic buildings account for a significant proportion of the area's housing stock and add to the variety, choice and diversity of accommodation. This includes houses and flats or apartments of varying sizes, so meeting a range of local needs. Many historic properties were built as housing, but there are also residential conversions of buildings originally built for other purposes. The cost of housing varies considerably, sometimes over very short distances. Seafront properties in particular appear to attract higher prices.



**Housing:** The three conservation areas include a variety of types of dwelling, of different sizes and price ranges.

Berwick's historic buildings represent a huge investment of embodied energy in their materials and construction. Demolition and associated landfill represents a loss of this embodied energy. Historic buildings are often durable and adaptable whilst replacement buildings tend to be less durable.

The three Conservation Areas all have high-density townscape patterns and were developed as part of a low-carbon economy. This is apparent in the connections for pedestrian movement and fine grain of mixed use (more facilities in walking distance). This means that many parts of all three Conservation Areas have characteristics of '15-minute' neighbourhoods'. The conservation and refurbishment of Berwick's historic buildings and places contributes to more sustainable forms of growth and economic development.

The maintenance and repair of historic buildings creates skilled employment (professional, technical and vocational). There is evidence to show that building refurbishment generates higher levels of pay and investment in local economies (Donovan Rypkema). However, there is also a heritage skills shortage in Berwick-upon-Tweed, especially compared to the extent of the historic environment. Addressing this skills and capacity shortage could help to deliver growth.

## 3.2 Economic Profile

### 3.2.1 Berwick's Economy

The Coastal Community Team Economic Plan 2017 states:

*'Berwick is one of Northumberland's most deprived towns. It has a vulnerable economy characterised by poor quality job opportunities, part time working, low wages and very limited education facilities'.*

The Plan suggests a lower-than-average rate of business start-ups in Berwick-upon-Tweed and recognises the relatively high proportion of people who live and work in the area or work from home. This is likely to have increased following the impact of COVID (the report preceded the pandemic).

The longer-term implications of COVID are still being assessed, but likely factors include:

- More flexible work patterns;
- Less commuter-related travel;
- Increased demand for local facilities, but perhaps some drop in demand in employment centres;
- Reduced demand for office space, but perhaps balanced by greater demand for hot-desk or rental desk space.

There is clearly a strong reliance on the visitor economy, which has a strong seasonal character. It is less attractive as a base for offices, though changes to live-work patterns could lead to more home-based local economic activity across the three conservation areas.

### 3.2.2 Roles of the Conservation Areas

The three Conservation Areas are all in the administrative area of Northumberland Country Council and within the administrative area of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, but all have quite different economic characteristics.

In broad terms, their roles are:

**Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Centre** is the main retail, commercial and administrative centre. It has the main concentration of facilities and also of visitor facilities, including hotels and visitor accommodation.

**Tweedmouth** is a mixed-use area, including the original village core, a working dock, limited manufacturing, housing, out-of-town retail, local shops, and other community facilities. Many other towns and cities have similar mixed-use areas outside of the centre.

**Spittal** is now primarily a housing area, with some supporting community facilities. It is also a seaside resort with extensive beach and promenade and some holiday lets.

The separation of the areas by a wide stretch of water may be part of the reason for Tweedmouth and Spittal being perceived as separate places, rather than as part of the same town. If the river was very narrow at this point, the psychology or psychogeography of the area would perhaps be different. In fact, the three areas do have similar urban characteristics to other towns – they are just more widely spaced.

### **3.2.3 Property Prices and Viability**

House prices do vary considerably, despite the three areas being close together. Indeed, house prices can vary between nearby streets. Larger houses in waterfront locations can attract more than £0.5 million, whilst smaller properties in terraced streets are sometimes available for around £120,000.

According to the Loopnet (Realla) web site, retail rentals in Berwick range from £34.88 to £3.86 per sq. ft. with an average price of £15.16 (October 2022). A current example in Tweedmouth is marketed at £11.65.

Viability is an issue in some parts of the area, resulting in vacant floorspace and derelict land. This includes the former industrial site to the north of Spittal, partly due to clearance and land reclamation costs. There are viability challenges with individual historic industrial buildings, such as the Brewery site in Tweedmouth and listed industrial buildings in Spittal. In Berwick, there are some vacant buildings in the more peripheral parts of the town and some vacant town centre retail units, particularly in Marygate. Some upper floors above shops are under-used or vacant.

Property prices and rentals are not the only factor. Business rates have been cited as a barrier to investment. Other relevant factors include land contamination, inadequate infrastructure and poor physical condition (entailing high capital costs to bring properties back into use).

The lower land values and rentals in some parts of the three Conservation Areas provide an opportunity in the short-term, for example by providing more affordable floorspace for business start-ups. More basic refurbishments can also help to retain lower rentals. However, lower values reflect viability challenges, which could threaten the longer-term survival of heritage.

There are numerous examples from towns all around the UK where small and creative businesses and social enterprises have moved into peripheral historic areas, taking advantage of lower rentals. This can then act as a catalyst for more mainstream investment, which has sometimes priced some of the original businesses out of the area. Sometimes, businesses or third sector bodies have invested in land or property while prices are low, so that they benefit as the area regenerates.

An awareness of this dynamic is helpful in planning for parts of Berwick-upon-Tweed, in particular parts of Spittal and Tweedmouth. Increase in rental values (reflecting greater market confidence) could help to address viability challenges, but also make property less

attractive for small businesses and start-ups. There is a trade-off. This is not something that public bodies can decide (the market determines values), but public bodies can have an influence through public projects, infrastructure provision and investment, which can help to boost market confidence.

Involvement of public sector or community sector organisations, enabling public funding towards capital costs, could be part of the solution to addressing viability challenges in the shorter term.

### **3.3 Town Centre Priorities**

Research by the High Street Task Force has identified 25 'Vital and Viable' priorities for High Streets and many of these have an historic environment angle. The following table maps these priorities against the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Areas, with emphasis on the Town Centre, but also with reference to Tweedmouth and Spittal where applicable.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Heritage Contribution</b>
Activity	Opening hours; footfall; shopping hours; evening economy	<p>Historic pubs are a factor in making the evening economy attractive.</p> <p>In summer, the potential for sitting out in an attractive historic environment is a positive factor in attracting customers.</p> <p>Heritage-based tourism helps to increase footfall in shopping streets.</p>
Retail offer	Retailer offer; retailer representation	<p>Many properties in the Conservation Areas are owned or occupied by retailers, so it is important to understand their priorities, raise awareness of the economic value of the town's heritage and gain their involvement and support for conservation and enhancement initiatives.</p> <p>Berwick's heritage is reflected in the goods on sale in some shops. The retail offer reflects the town's roles as a centre for the local community and also for tourists.</p>
Vision and Strategy	Leadership; collaboration; area development strategies	<p>An important factor in successful high street recovery and regeneration is ensuring that different players have a shared vision and strategy. Whilst this report is part of the Conservation Area Management Plan, it is necessary to ensure that the economic value of heritage is more widely understood and addressed in other strategies for the area.</p> <p>Success depends on wide buy-in to a shared vision and strategy across a range of stakeholders. For this reason, heritage needs to be considered against a wide social, economic and environmental context.</p>
Experience	Centre image; service quality; visitor satisfaction; familiarity; atmosphere	<p>The historic environment of Berwick creates competitive advantage for the town. The historic environment of all three Conservation Areas provides a basis for collective promotion of the visitor economy and promotion to local communities in surrounding areas.</p> <p>Heritage-based visitor satisfaction is clearly a key consideration.</p>

Priority	Factors	Heritage Contribution
		The poor quality of public realm needs to be addressed to improve the shopper and visitor experience (see Chapter 5).
Appearance	Visual appearance; cleanliness; ground floor frontages	<p>The quality of the historic environment is clearly a key factor in creating positive perceptions of the area.</p> <p>Improvement of shopfronts and reinstatement of historic shopfronts is a key factor in improving ground floor frontages. Schemes to promote the repair of historic buildings would also create visual enhancement.</p> <p>Public realm improvements could enhance the image of the area (see Chapter 5).</p>
Place Management	Centre management; shopping centre management; Town Centre Management (TCM); place management; Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)	Promoting awareness of the economic value of heritage would be helpful in influencing the activities of various organisations involved in the management, regeneration, enhancement and promotion of the area (see Chapter 4).
Necessities	Car-parking; amenities; general facilities	<p>Improvement of car parks around Berwick has real potential for improving the character or appearance of the town.</p> <p>At present, there is tension between the need for carparking, the impact of car parking on the historic environment, and wider considerations of sustainability and climate change.</p>
Anchors	Presence of anchors - which give locations their basic character and signify importance	<p>The defences and other specific sites help to attract visitors, though their potential has not been realised in the view of some stakeholders.</p> <p>The development of the Maltings, Quayside and Barracks provide opportunities to create more effective 'magnets' for visitors, in addition to enhancing the historic environment and creating distinctive new buildings.</p>
Non-retail offer	Attractions; entertainment; non-retail offer; leisure offer	Historic attractions are an important factor in promoting the Town Centre and the visitor economy of all three Conservation Areas.

Priority	Factors	Heritage Contribution
		Historic buildings are mainly in productive use, accommodating a range of retail, hospitality and non-retail town centre uses.
Merchandise	Range/Quality of goods; assortments; merchandising	<p>The historic nature of the area is already reflected in the range of products being sold in some outlets and is a particular opportunity for independent retailers and locally manufactured goods.</p> <p>Research suggests that historic environments support a higher proportion of independent businesses.</p>
Walking	Walkability; pedestrianisation/flow; cross-shopping; linked trips; connectivity	<p>All three conservation areas were developed as part of a low carbon economy, so support mixed use and are relatively permeable for pedestrians (walkable or 15-minute neighbourhoods).</p> <p>It is important that these characteristics are maintained or enhanced and not harmed by regeneration initiatives. This is especially important against the context of climate change.</p> <p>It should be noted that the waterfront walk from Spittal Beech to Berwick Town Centre is around 1.5 miles, so manageable for many people.</p>
Place marketing	Centre marketing; marketing; orientation/flow	The historic environment is obviously a key factor in the marketing and promotion of Berwick-upon-Tweed (see Chapter 4).
Networks and partnerships with council	Networking; partnerships; community leadership; retail/tenant trust; tenant/manager relations; strategic alliances; centre empowerment; stakeholder power; engagement	<p>Whilst a Conservation Areas Management Plan will set priorities for heritage protection and enhancement, implementation will depend on joint working with a range of stakeholders. This includes public bodies, owners, developers and community organisations.</p> <p>Similarly, other strategies and projects and initiatives will need to be based on an understanding of the economic and other values of heritage, if they are to be successful.</p>
Accessible	Convenience; accessibility	The Town Centre does have a range of facilities, reducing the need for travel. For all three Conservation Areas, maintaining or expanding the mix of facilities is beneficial (15-minute neighbourhoods).

Priority	Factors	Heritage Contribution
		<p>There can be challenges in improving access to historic places and environments for those with limited mobility and this should be a key consideration in future regeneration and public realm schemes.</p>
Diversity	<p>Range/quality of shops; tenant mix; tenant variety; availability of alternative formats; store characteristics; comparison/convenience; chain vs independent; supermarket impact; retail diversity; retail choice</p>	<p>The peripheral streets in Berwick and also locations in Tweedmouth and Spittal provide lower rentals, which is an important factor in supporting independent, minority and specialist businesses and providing choice and diversity.</p> <p>Potential redevelopment opportunities to provide different kinds of floorspace are identified later in this report (see Chapter 4).</p>
Attractiveness	<p>Sales/turnover; place attractiveness; vacancy rates; attractiveness; retail spend; customer/catchment views; Construction of out-of-town centre</p>	<p>There are some ground floor shop unit vacancies in the Town Centre, as in most high streets. However, the problem is less acute than in some smaller northern towns, and the visitor economy is probably a significant factor.</p> <p>The out-of-town development at Loaning Meadows is likely to have some adverse impact on the historic Town Centre, including higher vacancy levels, particularly in Marygate.</p>
Markets	<p>Traditional markets; street trading</p>	<p>Berwick already has a market on certain days of the week.</p> <p>Monthly 'specialist' markets have been used in other historic towns to attract visitors (for example farming markets and local produce). The potential for more specialist markets could be investigated.</p>
Recreational Space	<p>Recreational areas; public space; open space</p>	<p>There is considerable scope to improve the public realm in all three of the Conservation Areas, including public spaces, car parks and walkways. This has potential to enhance the historic environment, whilst also creating social and economic benefits. Quality of the public realm is a key factor in achieving economic goals. At present, much of the public realm is poor (see Chapter 5).</p>

Priority	Factors	Heritage Contribution
Barriers to entry	Barriers to entry; landlords	At present, barriers to entry could include economic uncertainty, wage and energy costs, and difficulties in gaining affordable finance.
Safety/crime	A centre KPI measuring perceptions or actual crime including shoplifting	Traditional forms of townscape mean that most streets and spaces are overlooked by active building frontages, creating natural surveillance.
Adaptability	Retail flexibility; retail fragmentation; flexibility; store/centre design; retail unit size; store development; rents turnover	Historic buildings provide distinctive floorspace for retail, enterprise, community facilities, visitor facilities, display space, visitor accommodation and other town centre uses.  Possible redevelopment opportunities to provide different kinds of floorspace are identified later in this report (Chapter 4).
Liveable	Multi/mono-functional; liveability; personal services; mixed use	The Town Centre provides a mix of uses including residential, commercial and community facilities in close proximity (walkable neighbourhoods).  There is a challenge in retaining a mix of uses in Spittal Conservation Area, so that it does not become a mono-use residential area.
Redevelopment Plans	Planning blight; Regeneration	Possible redevelopment opportunities to provide different kinds of floorspace are identified later in this report (Chapter 4).
Functionality	The degree to which a centre fulfils a role – e.g. service centre, employment centre, residential centre, tourist centre	The Local Plan identifies Berwick as a larger main town. The plan does not really define the role or roles of the Town. However, roles of different parts of the three conservation areas include all of service centre, employment centre, tourist centre and residential centre.
Innovation	Opportunities to experiment; retail Innovation	Lower rentals tend to be a factor in attracting new, independent and creative businesses, so the use of floorspace in the more peripheral parts of the Town and Tweedmouth and Spittal have a particular role and potential.

## 3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

### 3.4.1 Stakeholder Views

Key issues identified by stakeholders are listed below. These views have informed the later chapters of this report, including recommendations.

### 3.4.2 Transport

- There are access and transport limitations.
- The need for a more strategic approach to parking has been suggested, perhaps reducing demand for parking.
- However, lack of parking can add to congestion and pollution.
- Many people travel by car, including from the surrounding rural hinterland. F
- or many, public transport isn't practical.
- There are good rail links to Edinburgh and Newcastle.
- There is ample car-parking both in and out with the Walls.
- Many walled towns both within the UK and Europe control and restrict parking to essential service access and resident access.
- Many visitors expect to park and walk or park and ride.
- Imposing car parking charges and investing same in the town would be acceptable to many.
- Pedestrianising of Marygate should be considered again, particularly if the town centre's empty shops are to be repurposed.
- Lorries and delivery vehicles should be restricted to certain times
- There should be no through passage for vehicles going to the docks but via the bypass instead.

### 3.4.3 Funding

- The Town Council has limited funds for things like tourism, signage, parking, and public realm.
- Millions of pounds have been invested either through specific grant schemes such as HERS or CAPS, to restore and conserve, through initiatives by The Preservation Trust and by volunteers leading specific activities such as re-enactment of historical events, projecting film, and period dramas.

### 3.4.4 Promotion

- Tourism has been an increasingly important part of the economy as large-scale manufacturing has declined.
- Berwick's unique heritage is largely unknown further south.
- The town has a special position in the English and Scottish struggles for possession and the completeness of the town defences, which surpass any other walled town in England.
- There is a lack of coordinated promotion of the town as a whole.

- Promotion of heritage could attract a range of visitors.

### 3.4.5 Population and younger people

- Reasons for younger people moving out of the area include shortage of vocational training, access to better-paid employment, shortage of arts and entertainment facilities and lack of late transport to cities.
- Local courses do not include academic or professional higher education qualifications, so younger people look elsewhere.
- There is a decline in the number of school-age children, reflecting the fact that under 40s have moved elsewhere for employment.
- There are few apprenticeships for school leavers and limited employment opportunities other than for example low paid jobs in the hospitality sector.
- There is a need to attract younger people to live in the area, including through provision of suitable housing.
- We need to encourage inward investment to provide the sort of economy which provides meaningful jobs if we hope to retain our young people.

### 3.4.6 Economy and economic potential

- Berwick is a low-pay economy.
- Small businesses should also be encouraged, including through suitable business units.
- Could a large manufacturing firm be encouraged to locate in Berwick?
- Dualling the A1 is probably key to reviving Berwick's prosperity.
- Heritage should not be considered in commercial terms.
- Many buildings being repurposed to provide sustainable businesses.
- There is a wealth of pride in Berwick's past but in the last decade an unwillingness or inability to articulate and press forward a vision of what Berwick's future might be.
- There needs to be leadership with vision and drive and a co-ordinated approach with volunteer organisations, Town and County Councils working together.

Note - The median gross annual pay in England was £26,192 in April 2021 and the median gross annual pay in the Northeast was £23,414. Obviously, these figures are now in constant and rapid transition.

### 3.4.7 High Street

- Like many high streets, Berwick has an increase in empty shops.
- Some shops look derelict.
- The reason for vacancy could be a combination of rentals and business rates, and reluctance by owners to provide incentives to occupation.
- Conversion to housing is a suggestion (reflecting the Government's changes to Use Classes and permitted development rights).

### **3.4.8 Quality of development**

- The lack of significant buildings from the past 75 years is due partly to low building budgets.
- There is a viability gap for some building projects.
- nothing has been built that is worthy of listing post Second World War 2.
- Local authority and statutory bodies provide services looking to function without thought to architectural form and whether the structure harmonises with the historic, leading to loss of historic buildings and bland and unsightly development.

### **3.4.9 Tweedmouth Harbour**

- The commercial harbour is an advantage.
- Plans to develop the harbour should be supported, including increase of warehousing and improvement of facilities for landing-craft from cruise liners.
- Owners of under-used land and properties in the surrounding area should be encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

## 4. Realising the Economic Potential

### 4.1 Economic Development and Regeneration

#### 4.1.1 Leading on Heritage-led Regeneration

There are various ways of promoting and supporting heritage-led economic development and regeneration. The following activities may be led by a combination of Northumberland County Council, Berwick Town Council and other partners and stakeholders, including community-led bodies (see 4.6).

#### 4.1.2 Building Repair and Enhancement

Improving the condition of buildings and bringing them back into use is likely to involve a combination of financial support, persuasion, enforcement, asset transfer and flexible approaches to temporary uses.

Historic area grant schemes should be sought to improve the condition of buildings and help to bring them into full productive use. This can support higher quality repair and refurbishment and also help to address viability challenges.

Viability challenges affect parts of all three Conservation Areas, including upper floors in the Town Centre. Grants could also support the improvement and/or reinstatement of shopfronts, to enhance the quality of environment and shopper/visitor experience.

Such support can help to improve the image of the area, so act as a catalyst to create business and investor confidence.

Intervention by the local authority may be necessary where absentee owners are allowing buildings to stand empty and to deteriorate. This includes informal contact with owners, but also willingness to take enforcement action. Opportunities should be examined for asset transfer of vacant properties, including vacant units in shopping streets. This could also involve businesses or third sector bodies in asset transfer, perhaps supported by the local authority (where necessary using compulsory purchase powers). Flexible approaches and public funding could be used to refurbish such properties and attract new occupiers and uses.

#### 4.1.3 Public Realm

Public realm improvements are an essential part of strategies for city and town centre economic development and regeneration.

Public realm works in Berwick-upon-Tweed have been commissioned by different organisations. Recent works have changed the public realm, but not necessarily improved it. The quality of the public realm is still poor in many places (see Chapter 5).

Public space and public realm improvements could be supported by external funding and/or a coordinated approach to how existing resources are used. The various organisations involved in the public realm need to work together. As a matter of urgency design code should be developed to ensure consistency and quality in the public realm (see Chapter 5). Public realm enhancement and redesign should seek to create flexible spaces capable of supporting recreational, social, cultural, and economic activities, whilst also improving the image of the area.

Public realm improvements could include improvement to the surfacing and landscaping of carparks. This also includes rationalisation of street furniture to reduce street clutter and address the existing problem of multiple uncoordinated elements.

Public realm issues and opportunities are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5.

#### **4.1.4 Site Assembly and Masterplanning**

Redevelopment opportunities within the three Conservation Areas could be promoted (see 5.3, 5.4, 5.5) and, where necessary, barriers should be identified and addressed to enable and encourage development to take place. This may include site assembly, infrastructure works and positive planning (policies and site or masterplanning).

A challenge is in attracting entrepreneurial developers and building owners with the will and capability of working with historic buildings and areas, supported by skilled professional teams.

In site assembly, masterplanning, policy and strategy-making, and developing projects and initiatives, opportunities should be taken to reinforce the roles of the three Conservation Areas (see Chapter 3).

For example, redevelopment of the industrial site to the north of Spittal could include uses to support its role as a coastal resort, for example a hotel and health facility. Mono-use residential development would not achieve this.

#### **4.1.5 Carparking**

At present, there is a parking shortage, with seasonal variations. Parking is provided by surface carparks, which have a damaging impact on the character of all three Conservation Areas and on the setting of historic buildings and structures, including the town defences. A strategic approach to transport and parking could look at alternatives, including multi-storey provision, park and ride, better infrastructure for bikes and scooters, or other alternatives. Changes in live/work and travel patterns in the next decade or so could also create opportunities to rethink transport and parking.

#### **4.1.6 Promotion and Marketing**

The quality and nature of Berwick's historic environment are comparable to historic towns like Chester and Shrewsbury. Arguably, its profile as a historic town does not reflect this. This is a marketing challenge, but may also reflect other factors such as location and the wider

visitor offer. More rigorous marketing may be possible, especially if the quality of offer can be enhanced.

Marketing of Berwick as a tourist destination could focus on the wider offer, including the Town Centre, bridges, Tweedmouth and Spittal. Joint marketing could include waterfront/heritage walks and cultural trail through all three Conservation Areas. A business-led leaflet could provide a route, information and advertising for local businesses, for example for shops, commercial galleries and food and drink establishments.

Some historic towns have established business-led promotion and marketing, such as the 'Totally Locally' initiative in Leek in Staffordshire. Berwick has experimented with such schemes and this could be taken further.

In many areas, public bodies provide support to businesses, for example in business planning, brand identity, on-line selling and business administration.

Involvement of local businesses and stakeholders in development of marketing and promotional materials would help to make them effective and relevant. Development of shared 'core scripts' would help to ensure that the various bodies and stakeholders are promoting a coherent and consistent message. This would include Northumberland County Council, Town Council, Visit Northumberland and other bodies.

#### **4.1.7 Culture-led Regeneration**

The economic power of culture in supporting business and tourism should not be underestimated. Berwick includes various 'magnets', such as the Barracks and defences. Many seaside towns have enhanced such facilities and there are proposals to do this in Berwick. Some towns have also developed new magnets, such as purpose-built art galleries (see 4.3.2). Architectural competitions are one way of promoting high-quality design for specific sites, as is being considered for the Maltings site.

Realising the cultural potential of Berwick's heritage is also part of realising economic potential. This includes leading or enabling creative, cultural and other uses and activities to diversify economic activity and attract locals and visitors in all three Conservation Areas.

Either permanent or temporary art installations could be used to form an arts trail (for example Liverpool's River of Light concept could be scaled and adapted to Berwick). The existing Lowry trail could be promoted and complemented by a permanent or temporary exhibition.

The Berwick Literary Festival is useful for drawing people into the town and there may be scope for similar events throughout the year, including out-of-season winter events.

#### **4.1.8 Sustainable Neighbourhoods**

Parts of the three Conservation Areas already have characteristics of walkable or '15-minute neighbourhoods'. These are based on mixed use, local community facilities, and ease of pedestrian movement (walkable neighbourhoods). These characteristics should be explicitly addressed in planning policy-making, to ensure that development maintains or enhances

sustainable neighbourhoods. For example, policies should seek not just to protect the cultural value of heritage, but also maintain mixed-use neighbourhoods with good pedestrian permeability and connectivity.

Recommendations for planning designations, policy and decisions are in Chapter 6.



**Walkable Neighbourhoods:** Parts of all three areas have mixed uses and facilities in easy walking distance.

#### 4.1.9 Heritage Skills and Awareness

Opportunities to improve professional, technical and craft skills should be sought, including training and CPD (continuing professional development). This will help to ensure that the built environment and constructional sector has capacity to undertake heritage-related work. Skills training within the local planning authority is addressed in Chapter 6.

There is already guidance on various conservation matters, including windows. Shopfronts guidance is being prepared in parallel to this report. Future guidance could emphasise the benefits of early repair in avoiding higher costs later-on.

## 4.2 Berwick – Key Opportunities

### 4.2.1 Defences (wall, ramparts, structures)

These are of key importance, not just in terms of historic significance, but also economic development potential. There is scope to enhance the wall and its use by:

- Providing better and more consistent interpretation along the wall, to highlight its importance to the town, and to show what can be seen from each position;
- Installing creative lighting to highlight key sections of the wall and defences;
- Use (permanent or temporary) of structures to support arts or performance;
- Considering the feasibility of adding lifts or other improvements to allow better access.

These works could be the subject of a specific project and funding bid(s).

### 4.2.2 Redevelopment Opportunities

**Quayside:** The Quayside is a key opportunity site in Berwick Town Centre, with potential to be a significant catalyst for wider regeneration. A report, *Unlocking the Quayside*, March 2020 was prepared for Berwick-upon-Tweed Community Trust and Berwick-upon-Tweed Coastal Community Team and highlights the potential of the site. This could include partial development, but also temporary, seasonal and pop-up uses.

**Redevelopment:** Poor quality buildings in the Conservation Area could be identified (for example in a neighbourhood plan) as opportunities for redevelopment. This includes average or poor-quality 20<sup>th</sup> century infill buildings in Marygate. This would create opportunities to attract investment and to enhance the character or appearance of the area by replacing poor design with high quality modern buildings.

**North of Marygate:** The main redevelopment opportunity may be north of Marygate. The library, adjacent car parks, and public realm harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, this area could provide the best development opportunities within the Town, perhaps also including the large rear projections of retail units (which front Marygate). High quality redevelopment of this area could enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and also result in significant economic benefits, including the creation of a different kind of retail opportunity within the town centre (rather than out-of-town). This would require cooperation of the different landowners and would probably need to be developer-led (or developed in partnership with a developer). There are challenges, but also considerable potential benefits.

### 4.2.3 Cultural Venues

**Barracks:** Various partners have developed a vision for the barracks, based on bringing vacant floorspace into productive use including new workspace, residential accommodation and improved visitor facilities. This is a very positive project, supporting town centre living, enterprise and improving community and visitor facilities.



**Barracks:** Artist impressions for the development of the Barracks.

**Maltings:** Redevelopment of the Maltings could provide a top-quality facility and an exemplar of 21<sup>st</sup> century architectural and public realm design, creating a more effective magnet for visitors. Use of an architectural competition for the site is particularly welcome. To maximise impact and add to the architectural diversity of the Town, this needs to aim for a creative exemplar design, and not a 'timid' or compromised design. Getting this right could be game-changing, based on the experience of other towns where distinctive cultural venues have had high impact.

**Galleries:** The Granary includes a small art gallery space and attracts exhibitions by internationally known artists. Other seaside towns have used purpose created modern and contemporary art galleries as a magnet for visitors (Eastbourne, Hastings, St Ives, Margate, Llandudno, Southend-on-Sea, Newlyn, etc.) and options could be considered for Berwick. This would need to be considered together with the facility at the Granary and the projects for the Barracks and Maltings (many seaside towns support multiple sites).



**Visitor Magnets:** Art galleries in Llandudno, Hastings and Margate, including both historic building conversion and newbuild.

## 4.3 Tweedmouth – Key Opportunities

### 4.3.1 Harbour, Tweedmouth:

The upgrading of the landing facilities for cruise landing-craft provides real opportunities. Passengers are often given alternatives for walking or coach-based trips and these often focus on historic environments and towns. Discussions could be held with cruise operators to suggest trips focused on Berwick.

Improvement of the harbour, for visitors and goods, could create opportunities for reuse and refurbishment of historic properties in the surrounding area. This could improve the attractiveness of the link through Tweedmouth, between Spittal and Berwick Town Centre.

### 4.3.2 Brewery Site:

The brewery site is owned by the Berwick Community Trust and is currently for sale. Whilst there are limitations in terms of servicing space, and viability challenges, there may be scope to obtain public funding for capital costs and potential to create car-free residential development (or live work). These could comprise small units for first-time buyers, with creative, architect-designed interiors, to maximise living and storage space.



**The Brewery, Tweedmouth:** Impression of creative conversion to create an educational facility.

### 4.3.3 Retail sites:

Tweedmouth has some larger retail outlets, including a supermarket. Whilst these add to the overall retail offer, they are harmful in terms of character. Future retail trends are hard to predict, but there may be opportunities in the next decade or so for enhancement. This could range from boundary improvements and landscape improvements to substantial remodelling or complete redevelopment.

## 4.4 Spittal– Key Opportunities

### 4.4.1 Seaside Resort

Overall, the role of Spittal as a seaside resort needs to be reinforced and promoted, reversing the trend of decline.

### 4.4.2 Spittal Pavilion

Redevelopment and refurbishment of the pavilion site and surrounding land could create a much more effective and marketable tourist magnet, and a better facility for local people. There has been private sector interest in redevelopment in the past, including provision of better toilets. The local authority should work with owners and developers to seek to resurrect this project.

The site includes adjacent land, car parking, play area, grassed areas, a paddling pool, and servicing areas. A scheme for the site could potentially also include the ‘Family Fun Centre’ as part of a comprehensive scheme (with retention of the front part of the building).

There are similarities between the site in Spittal with a similar but larger site in Blyth, further down the Northumbrian Coast, which was redeveloped around 15-20 years ago. Whilst the Blyth scheme involves a larger area, similar principles could be applied. The space could be redesigned, based on the following principles:

- Development of a design code by qualified design professionals to ensure a coherent and consistent design quality across the site;
- Retention of uses, though not necessarily in the same parts of the site as at present, and opportunities for new uses, to create an overall seafront attraction;
- Retention and refurbishment of the pavilion and the nearby 1930 shelter as productive parts of the scheme.

Uses could include:

- Grassed or hard surfaced areas for multiple uses, including performance, markets or stalls, informal play and casual sitting.
- A paddling pool or other water features, based on the outcomes of engagement;
- Provision of beach huts;
- Provision of refreshments;
- A glass-frontage café (storm-watching café);
- Community and visitor amenities, including toilets;
- Exhibition or display space.

### 4.4.3 Promenade

The main challenge and opportunity in public realm terms is the promenade, which is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5.

#### 4.4.4 Industrial Area Regeneration

The derelict industrial area towards the north of Spittal provides one of the main redevelopment opportunities in all three Conservation Areas. Intelligent masterplanning and a site brief would be helpful, if this opportunity is to be fully realised. A residential scheme was granted planning permission and was reasonable quality, but would add to the mono-use problem. More could be achieved in terms of mixed use, including activities that would contribute to the area's attractiveness as a coastal resort.

The chimney presents a long-term conservation challenge. An effective way of securing protection could be for it to form part of the public realm in any development of the former industrial area. It could then be managed as part of that public realm, perhaps funded through a service charge. Alternatively, a trust could be established, or an existing body could take on the chimney, which could then gain funds and manage the structure.



**Spittal Opportunities:** Remodelling of the promenade and adjoining spaces could help to develop its attractiveness as a coastal resort. The same is true for key development sites.



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Northumberland HER  
 Conservation Areas

□ Conservation Areas

  
**Northumberland**  
 County Council  
 County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF  
 Tel: 0345 600 6400

## 4.5 Delivery

### 4.5.1 Partnerships and Stakeholders

Achieving heritage-led regeneration depends on a range of stakeholders and potential partnerships, including public bodies, community or third sector organisations, businesses of all scales, developers and others.

Effective regeneration in the three Conservation Areas is likely to involve planned projects and partnerships, but also a more chaotic combination of actions by building owners, businesses, community organisations, residents, and creative bodies. Both are necessary in achieving physical and economic transformation, including addressing vacant buildings and land, especially where there are viability challenges.

Cross sectoral partnerships could include:

**Private Sector:** Private owners control most of the properties and sites in the three Conservation Areas. Motivations for owning properties are usually about utility value or investment. Conservation can be a motivation, but often is not. One of the problems in Berwick is vacant properties with remote ownerships. Developers sometimes own land or buildings, or sometimes work in partnership with owners. In addition to planned projects, a key factor in the regeneration of many areas has been the uncoordinated and entrepreneurial activities of small and micro-businesses, which collectively can have high impacts.

**Public Sector:** Northumberland Council and Berwick Town Council have multiple roles, including ownership of land and properties, highway functions, car parks, management of the public realm, planning, development, policy-making, gaining funding, maintenance and various other functions. Other public bodies, such as Historic England, can provide advice and financial support, through grants. Other funding and regeneration bodies, not specific to heritage, could also be involved in some projects.

**Community/Third Sector:** Community organisations can directly take on land or buildings. Or they can partner with owners and developers. Where there are viability challenges, community organisations may be able to access public funding to help cover capital costs and provide solutions for problem sites and buildings. There are various community organisations operating in the area, including a Conservation Area Advisory Group, Spital Improvement Group, Berwick Community Trust, Berwick Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Berwick Civic Society. These vary in focus from scrutiny and representations on planning applications to project delivery and taking on assets.

**Other Bodies:** Housing providers but could also be a key partner for some sites and buildings. A possibility could also be to establish a Business Improvement District for the three areas. This could raise funding and help to coordinate environmental enhancements, promotion and marketing, and business support.

## 4.5.2 Funding

Funding programmes and organisations are numerous and in constant transition, so the following is a general overview only, focused on heritage sources.

Redevelopment is likely to be developer-led. Some projects, including public realm schemes discussed in the next chapter, are more likely to be led by public bodies and to require public funding.

The Architectural Heritage Fund can help to develop projects and test viability. This is a useful funder for early-stage project development.

Funding for historic building repairs and reinstatements could be obtained through Historic England's historic buildings or areas grant schemes. These change over time, and details of current schemes are available on Historic England's web site. The National Lottery Heritage Fund or Community Fund could be useful for raising capital sums to enable specific projects.

Such grants could enable refurbishment and the bringing of floorspace into full productive use, helping to address viability challenges and ensuring quality. Grants could also support reversal of alterations that cause harm to the character, appearance and special interest of the areas, including shopfront reinstatement works.

For some heritage projects, more mainstream regeneration or housing programmes may be applicable, depending on the outputs being achieved (for example creation of dwellings, enterprise space, or community facilities).

Funding could also be available from charities or independent foundations, in particular for community-orientated projects. Some lottery programmes are also focused on community outcomes. This could include training and skills development, supporting physical and mental health, or creation of floorspace for community facilities.

Project development should include a focus on outcomes from the earliest stage. This ensures that projects address strategic aims, but also allows for matching against potential funding sources.

## 4.6 Recommendations (Economic)

The following are recommendations to promote heritage-led economic development and regeneration.

1. **The economic and Town Centre analysis in Chapter 3 should be taken into account in developing strategy, policies and proposals for heritage in the three Conservation Areas. Strategy, policies and proposals should aim to preserve or enhance significance, but also to maintain or enhance economic and community values and sustainable neighbourhoods.**
2. **Opportunities should be sought to apply for and administer historic area grant schemes to support the high-quality repair of properties, to address viability challenges, and to enable them being brought into full productive use.**
3. **Northumberland County Council and Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council should positively lead or support projects to refurbish or reuse historic buildings or deliver regeneration:**
  - g. **Leading or supporting funding bids to heritage and non-heritage sources;**
  - h. **Negotiating with building and landowners and using compulsory purchase and enforcement powers where necessary;**
  - i. **Helping with site assembly and masterplanning for key regeneration opportunities;**
  - j. **Positively engaging owners and developers to promote the development of key sites, including the Pavilion and industrial sites in Spittal and the library and car park sites in Berwick Town Centre;**
  - k. **Recognising the respective roles and strengths of different sectors and enabling cross-sectoral partnerships;**
  - l. **Adopting a corporate approach to supporting heritage projects and regeneration initiatives, to remove barriers across departments and organisations;**
4. **Promotion of Berwick's heritage should be integrated with wider promotion of arts and culture, as part of an overall visitor strategy. This includes identification of opportunities to use heritage, including the defence structures and vacant buildings, to support art installations, lighting, performance and other cultural activities.**
5. **Marketing and promotion of Berwick-upon-Tweed should:**
  - d. **be developed jointly between the various public bodies, trade bodies and businesses, to ensure an integrated and coherent approach, with wide buy-in;**
  - e. **emphasise the distinctive value and nature of Berwick-upon-Tweed's heritage, across the three Conservation Areas;**
  - f. **consider the creation of heritage, arts and business walking trails to link Spittal beach with Tweedmouth and the Town centre.**
6. **Opportunities to provide training should be investigated and exploited to include:**

- e. Professional skills in conservation for built environment professionals, including private sector architects;
  - f. Craft skills to build the capacity of local building and construction firms;
  - g. Awareness raising for senior officers and elected members on the economic values of heritage;
  - h. Local small business training and support, for example in business planning, marketing, and on-line sales.
7. Northumberland County Council should positively promote and support asset transfer, in particular as a means of addressing buildings where there are economic viability challenges.

# C. Positive Management of the Historic Environment

## Strategic Objective 2



## 5. Public Realm

### 5.1 Values of the Public Realm

This chapter of the report looks at key public spaces and public realm in the three Conservation Areas. This includes specific spaces, and also consideration of smaller spaces. The analysis and recommendations in this chapter are commensurate with the 'Tweed & Silk - A Public Realm Strategy for Berwick-upon-Tweed' document.

The public realm forms part of the character of the area, including streets, urban spaces, green spaces and paths. Such spaces also have amenity, utility and economic values. These values need to be understood to develop successful schemes to realise the area's potential. Such values include:

**Economic Value:** The quality of streets, spaces and public realm affects how people move, congregate and interact, so can make a significant impact on the economic viability of surrounding businesses. In addition, quality of environment is a factor in attracting people to the area (locals and visitors).

**Community Value:** Streets and spaces support movement, social interaction, recreational activities, exercise, and other activities. They have amenity value for residents. They can also support specific community functions, such as the Spa Park which includes the war memorial. Quality of environment is a factor in attracting people to live in the area and in creating quality of life. A high-quality public realm can support good physical and mental health.

**Environmental Value:** A well designed public realm contributes to a locally distinctive sense of place. Streets and public spaces support active travel. In addition, they form the settings for historic buildings. Public realm design provides opportunities for greening of the area, to support biodiversity.

Public art in the public realm can help to create distinctive and exciting spaces and can have high economic impacts.



**Economic power of public art:**

Economic impact is demonstrated by 'Another Place' on Crosby Beach (Anthony Gormley) which comprises 100 cast figures spread over a mile of beach and attracts numerous visitors, which benefits the nearby high street.

## 5.2 Working with Communities

Public realm works should seek to create a range of types of space to meet different needs, including parks, recreational spaces, sports facilities, green areas, performance space and spaces for other social and economic activities.

Effective community and stakeholder engagement is crucial as part of the design process. This is often done at too late a stage in that process.

The recommended order is:

Engage with public (to find out how space is used and local aspirations) ⇒ Prepare Brief, including public aspirations ⇒ Design Work.

The following order should be avoided:

Prepare Brief (without knowing what people want) ⇒ Design work (before any community input) ⇒ Consult (issue scheme and defend).

Early engagement is additional to any statutory stage of consultation, including requirements in consultation caselaw (for example Gunning Principles).

## 5.3 Community Spaces

### 5.2.1 Grassed and landscaped (planted) spaces in residential areas

There are several informal green spaces in residential areas in all three Conservation Areas. Some of these are open, some enclosed, some are simple grassed spaces, some have trees and planting.

As a first step, engagement should be undertaken with local residents (of all ages) and businesses, including those occupying properties around the spaces. This should be done before any in-principle decision to redesign the space and before the preparation of any brief for the redesign of the space or appointment of design professionals.

Front-loaded engagement will allow the existing use and value of the space to be assessed, and test the principle of redesign. For example, simple grassed areas may suggest unrealised potential, but may also have value to local children for informal play. Where there is support for redesign of the space, public aspirations can be built into a brief, which can then be given to creative designers.



**Community engagement:** Engagement with the community and local stakeholders is a crucial first step in considering public realm improvements for green and community spaces in residential areas.

## 5.2.2 Sports grounds and facilities

Similarly, it is essential to engage with those managing and using sports and recreational grounds before making any decision to intervene. This includes children's play areas, pitches and bowling greens.

Such engagement may identify that the existing facility is fit-for-purpose, so no intervention is required. Or it could identify shortcomings, which could be addressed through redesign or through opportunities to provide new or better facilities on alternative sites.

## 5.2.3 Churchyards

All three of the Conservation Areas include churches in churchyard settings. The churchyards are green, usually informal areas, with graves, trees, paths and often with hedges or walls or railings around the space. Some churches and structures and elements of churchyards are individually listed. Churchyards are part of the immediate setting of listed buildings and important elements of the character and special architectural or historic interest of all three Conservation Areas. Churchyards also provide an amenity for residents and can have considerable value in terms of habitats and biodiversity.

Such spaces require careful management to conserve their character and heritage, amenity and other values. They are subject to incremental change, associated with the function of the church and churchyard. They are generally not spaces for significant change or intervention.

## 5.4 Analysis of Key Spaces: Spittal

### 5.4.1 War Memorial and Fountain

This is the main civic space in Spittal, with the war memorial and fountain as focal points. Despite its civic function, the space is largely informal and grassed. This informal nature is a positive element in the character of the Conservation Area. In addition, the space forms an important part of the setting of the war memorial, fountain and adjacent residential building (all Grade II listed buildings).

The focus should be on sensitive maintenance of the space, rather than any more fundamental redesign. The space is well maintained by the Spittal Gardening Group (a local community organisation).



**Spital:** Spa Park (left) is a key civic space. The promenade (right) varies in width, and is flanked in places by grassed or landscaped areas, so there are opportunities to create flexible spaces for a range of activities.

### 5.4.3 Promenade

The promenade was subject to a public realm scheme earlier in this century. The current walkway is surfaced with brick paviours and is at a higher level than the beach, behind a concrete wall, which includes steps at certain points. Whilst the paving could be more distinctive, the red brick surface is functional for the time being, but not particularly interesting. Upgrading would be beneficial.

Other aspects of the scheme are less satisfactory and require intervention in the short term. The railings above the concrete structure and bollards in the hard surface are standard products and the finish has faded. Street furniture is uncoordinated. Replacement of railings and street furniture could create a far better environment.

The aim should be to improve the walkway, including surfacing, landscaping, seating, and spaces. The redesign of the promenade should take account of its potential functions, including performance space, social activity, arts and cultural activities, and connectivity. Remodelling of the promenade could include adjoining green and landscaped areas, to create seating and recreational areas.

Improvements could include:

- Improving the surface of the promenade and railings;
- Integrating the design of the promenade with flanking green areas;
- Creating flexible spaces for events, performance and other cultural activities;
- Using a simple and consistent design and high-quality materials for seating and other street furniture;
- Creative use of public art, for example as part of the railing design.

It may be possible to integrate the redesign of the promenade with the redevelopment of the Pavilion site, described in Chapter 4.

A design code should be prepared to ensure that different elements are coordinated, for example in terms of materials, colours and styles. This should be prepared by design professionals. It should include design of ground surfaces, street furniture, seating, signage, interpretation, and other aspects of public realm design (see also 5.7). This could form part of a wider public realm design code for Berwick-upon-Tweed.



**Public Realm:** High quality materials and simple, uncluttered design often work best in public realm schemes, as demonstrated in Port Rush (see also page 63).

#### 5.4.4 Main Car Park

Redesign of the main carpark in Spittal could include resurfacing, landscaping, signage and interpretation. A common design code could be used as for the promenade.

## 5.5 Analysis of Key Spaces: Tweedmouth

### 5.5.1 War Memorial / Riverside, Tweedmouth

The war memorial is set within a small, landscaped area. Nearby, but separated, is a grassed area with seating overlooking the river.

The war memorial is in an attractive landscape setting and is accessible via a path. There is no need for intervention, other than ongoing maintenance.

The grassed area is fairly ad-hoc in terms of seating, bin, surfacing and notice board. The green nature of the space should be maintained, but replacement of furniture would be beneficial, to create a more coherent character.

### 5.5.2 West End (Bridge End Core)

Currently, this space comprises a grassed area, raised planting beds, contoured land with stone sett surfacing and pub car parking.

The car park in particular is unattractive and could benefit from resurfacing, and perhaps change in the layout to place parking spaces adjacent to the road.

Given the residential and pub setting, engagement with residents and the pub would be an essential precursor to any design works.

### 5.5.3 Border Bridge (Riverside)

There is good access to the riverfront, with path and grassed areas. However, there are unattractive features, including hard surfaced areas, uncoordinated lights, signs, grid covers and other street features.

Improvements could include:

- Improving the surface of the path in terms of appearance and functionality;
- Improving links to the footpath, using similar materials;
- Retaining most grassed areas, but with better defined edge treatments;
- Replacing untidy hard surface areas with grassed or planted areas;
- Using a common style for seating and other street furniture;
- Landscaping should not be too formal, except for that around the war memorial.

A design code should be prepared to guide improvements. The design code should be prepared to ensure that different elements are coordinated, for example in terms of materials, colours and styles. This should be prepared by design professionals. It should include design of ground surfaces, street furniture, seating, signage, interpretation, and other aspects of public realm design. This could form part of a wider design code for Berwick-upon-Tweed.



**Riverside in Tweedmouth:** A more coordinated approach would be helpful, based on a design code.

## 5.6 Public Realm in Berwick Town Centre

Berwick Town centre has a wide variety of public spaces with different functions. However, there is little cohesion between different streets and spaces, or even within the same space, in terms of surfacing, lighting, seating signage and street furniture. For example, there are various different lighting types.

Whilst there may be a case for different approaches in different streets and spaces, the current situation is a result of uncoordinated and incremental changes, rather than any conscious design judgements.

Some public realm projects have added to the problem. There appears to be lack of coordination between different bodies that have decision-making powers relating to the public realm, or even between different sections within the same body.



**Berwick Town Centre Public Realm:** This seating area in Marygate is used, but lacks coherence. It is formed of uncoordinated and unrelated elements (bollards, seating, planters, bin, cycle rails, information board), with little or no design cohesion between them. The bin is one of the most prominent elements and the map is blocked by planters. This creates a poor-quality public space and harms the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 5.7 Future Public Realm Works

To ensure high quality and consistency in future public realm schemes, a design code for the public realm in the three Conservation Areas should be prepared. The code could include variations for the three Conservation Areas, and possibly for specific parts of the area, such as the Promenade in Spittal.

The design code should be developed with suitably qualified, creative design professionals. It could cover things like materials, street furniture, signage, trees and landscape. A design code will only work if there is buy-in from all organisations involved with the public realm, followed by very close liaison between those organisations.

A design code could incorporate the following principles.

1. Redesign of the public realm should take opportunities to green the area, whilst enabling flexible multiple uses of streets and spaces to allow for a range of commercial, recreational and cultural activities.
2. Each space should be designed as a coherent whole, with different elements using a common design approach and palette of materials. Incremental and uncoordinated additions or changes to spaces should be avoided.
3. Simple design using excellent materials can create an impression of quality, whilst avoiding adding to clutter. Less is often more.
4. Spaces should be accessible to people with a range of mobilities, with good connections to the surrounding pedestrian network.
5. Where public realm is underused or poorly maintained and neglected, options include:
  - a. finding solutions to ongoing maintenance;
  - b. considering redesign of the space;
  - c. considering alternative uses for the land, including redevelopment.
6. For street lighting and street furniture, options include:
  - a. high-quality contemporary design, to emphasise the current role and ongoing development of the Town;
  - b. Reinstatement of historic designs, but only where they are based on clear evidence, so avoiding conjectural 'reinstatement' which could harm the authenticity of the Conservation Areas.
7. Opportunities should be taken to rationalise signage and other street furniture, reducing street clutter.
8. Enlightened commissioning of public art as part of the public realm may be achieved:
  - a. as part of new development;
  - b. as an integral part of public realm works;
  - c. as individual pieces in key locations.

9. Public realm works may provide opportunities to provide interpretation and information about the Conservation Areas.
10. Car parks form part of the public realm and opportunities should be identified to improve each one, including ground surfaces, paths, landscaping and greening.
11. Successful public realm design depends on the careful selection of talented and creative design teams, for example urban designers, landscape designers, and artists.

## 5.8 Recommendations (Management - Public Realm)

The following are recommendations for enhancement of the public realm.

8. A design code should be commissioned to guide future public realm projects in all three conservation areas. This should focus on quality and consistency, rather than being stylistically prescriptive. It should allow for simple contemporary design (with an emphasis on quality of materials) or evidence-based reinstatement, but not conjectural 'reinstatement'.
9. It is essential that all bodies and departments responsible for decisions and projects affecting the public realm coordinate their activities, working within the context of the public realm design code, which all should sign up to.
10. The following key opportunities for public realm enhancement should be prioritised, working to the public realm design code:
  - d. The promenade and the main carpark in Spittal;
  - e. The riverside in Tweedmouth;
  - f. Carpark improvements and seating areas in the shopping streets in Berwick Town Centre.
11. The highways authority should review street furniture in all three conservation areas and identify opportunities to reduce street clutter.
12. For green spaces and outdoors sports facilities in residential areas, engagement with the local community and stakeholders should be undertaken as a first step, before any decision is made on the future of the space. This should precede any funding bid.



### **What to aspire to:**

The scheme at Portrush (top) includes simple, and uncluttered design, using a limited range of high-quality materials.

The public realm on the Dundee waterfront (below) includes different kinds of public space, to meet differing needs, and comprises high-quality creative design.



### **What to Avoid:**

This public realm schemes in Seahouses demonstrates little coherence between the different elements. Three large and unattractive bins and the back of a street sign dominate, creating a poor quality of environment.

## 6. Positive Planning and Conservation

### 6.1 Conservation Judgments

Effective conservation is about problem solving to reconcile various factors, including:

- conservation of the heritage asset;
- meeting the needs and aspirations of building owners, occupiers and the local community;
- working with available resources and budgets to maintain viable floorspace, ensuring buildings remain in productive use in the longer-term;
- realising the economic, community and environmental potential of the three conservation areas and their buildings, structures and spaces;
- finding sustainable development solutions, against the context of global climate change;
- meeting the requirements of various regulatory frameworks, including planning, building regulations and health.

Conservation involves making judgments, taking account of multiple factors, as the following diagram shows.

### 6.2 Conservation Area Revisions

#### 6.2.1 Article 4 Directions

The Town Centre Conservation Area already has an Article 4 Direction protecting dwellings, as mentioned previously. The other two Conservation Areas do not have Article 4 Directions. This is especially an issue for the Spittal Conservation Area, which has few listed buildings. Most unlisted buildings in the Spittal Conservation Area and Tweedmouth Conservation Area have lost their windows and doors, so the harm to character has already occurred.

However, there are some surviving original doors and windows and loss of these remaining examples would diminish the special architectural or historic interest and harm the character of both areas. This may indicate a need for additional protection. The building audit will provide evidence to changes or additions with regard to Article 4 Directions.

An Article 4 Direction for all residential properties could be made, so surviving doors and windows are protected. A more selective approach could be taken, based on the quality of terraces and extent of survival of doors and windows. This could be informed by the heritage audit (see Chapter 7).

In parallel, an historic area grant scheme could support the reinstatement of timber windows and doors, based on evidence. This may be a hard sell due to increasing energy prices, so a pragmatic approach would be necessary, perhaps supporting modified reinstatements with double glazed panes.

## 6.2.2 Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Boundary

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area boundary includes the historic centre, town walls, ramparts, and open landscape areas and waterfront to the east. The Conservation Area is constrained by the coast on three sides and has a logical boundary to the North, partly delineated by the railway.

The Conservation Area includes a small area behind the railway station, to the opposite side of the railway line, which includes castle remains. Beyond the boundary to the northeast is a caravan park which harms the setting of the Conservation Area.

No change is necessary.

## 6.2.3 Spittal Conservation Area Boundary

The Spittal Conservation Area boundary includes the built area of the village and the waterfront and beach area. The boundary is largely constrained by the railway and coast. Arguably, there is an inconsistency in including the coastal area to the east, but not the north.

Extension of the boundary to include the coastal area to the north should be considered, therefore. The inclusion of the coastal area would clearly make sense in terms of Spittal's historic character as an industrial village and a coastal resort.



**Spittal Conservation Area boundary:** The coastal area to the north of Spittal should be included in the Conservation Area, for consistency. Also note the open views towards Berwick Town Centre and the three historic bridges.

## 6.2.4 Tweedmouth Conservation Area Boundary

The Tweedmouth Conservation Area is drawn fairly widely. It includes the historic village core, the harbour area and river frontage, and housing areas to the North.

The large Asda site is clearly a key community facility for residents, but is not part of the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area. Indeed, it harms the character of the Conservation Area. However, it is surrounded on all sides by heritage buildings and boundaries, so it would be difficult to remove it from the Conservation Area, whilst maintaining a sensible and logical boundary.

The waterfront boundary extends as far as the Waterworks Building. It may be desirable to extend the Conservation Area further along the Dock Road. The question of linking the Tweedmouth and Spittal Conservation Areas has been raised. This could involve inclusion of the waterfront grassed area, river edge and possibly the railway, all of which link the two areas.

However, the two Conservation Areas are quite different in character. Tweedmouth is the more varied, with very different character zones. Spittal is more coherent, with a strong character based on its roles as an industrial village and coastal resort. Spittal does make sense as a separate Conservation Area.

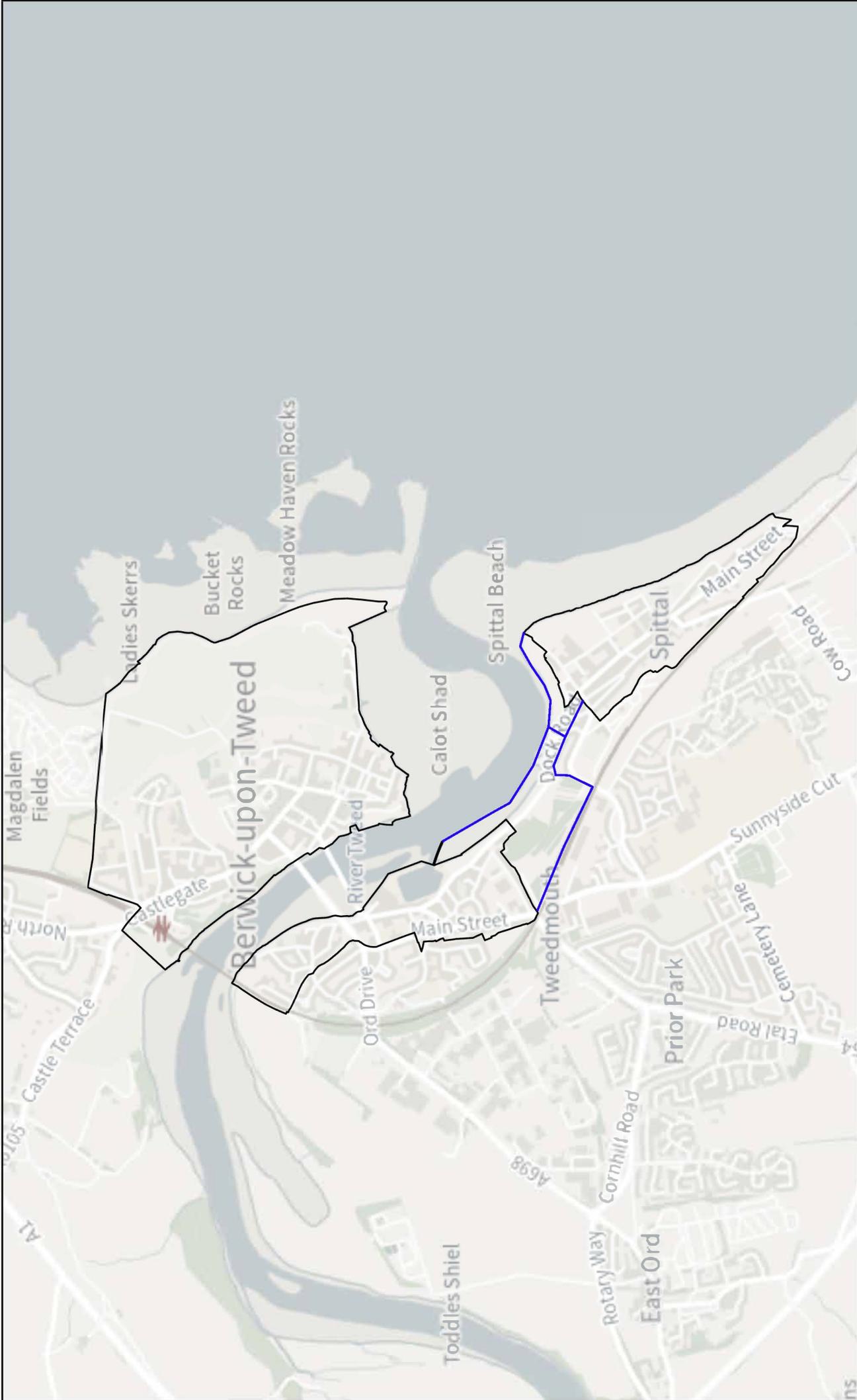
The grassed area between the water's edge and Dock Road has a definite amenity value, allowing views of the main Town Centre and coastal walking, and is a designated village green. There is certainly a planning case for protecting this strip. If the strip was developed for housing or other purposes, there would be a real loss to the amenity and open character of the area.

If extension of the Conservation Areas is considered, structures that would contribute to the special architectural or historic interest would include the lifeboat station including the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century concrete supporting structure, the adjacent jetty and stone walls, and the railway viaduct. The amended Conservation Area boundaries could be based on the river edge and railway. Inclusion of railway structures would entail the inclusion of some of the wooded area.

The best approach may be to extend the Tweedmouth Conservation Area along the Dock Road, but not to link it to the Spittal Conservation Area. Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan policies could then provide more specific protection, perhaps including specific policies and designation of the green strip as Local Green Space (subject to analysis against NPPF criteria).



**Tweedmouth Conservation Area Boundary:** Possible extension to Tweedmouth Conservation Area to include the river frontage, jetty, viaduct and lifeboat station.



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Northumberland HER  
 Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas  
 Possible Extensions

  
**Northumberland**  
 County Council  
 County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF  
 Tel: 0345 600 6400

## 6.3 Other Statutory Protection

### 6.3.1 Additional listing

Many of the list entries for Berwick-Upon-Tweed date back several decades, and are short on detail and based on different heritage values, especially in terms of the value of industrial and 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage.

There is an opportunity to enhance listings with pictures and information, through the listed building web site. This could form the basis of a community project. Historic England has run pilot projects in some parts of the country on listing enhancement.

Some buildings are not listed, but appear to be of special architectural or historic interest. These include:

- **The Brewers Arms, 115 Marygate:** this is not protected, despite the very unusual and distinctive inter-war glass entrance/window;
- **St John's Church, Main Street, Spital:** Gothic Revival church with later square buttressed tower;
- **St Paul's United Reformed Church, Main Street:** Gothic Revival church with square tower and spire.

Other buildings already listed may warrant higher grades. For example, the William Wilson designed terraces at 178-180 Main Street and Wilson Terrace in Spital are distinctive and individualistic designs against a national context, so may warrant Grade II\* listing.



**Potential listings:** Possible contenders for listed building status are the Brewers Arms in Marygate with its distinctive 20<sup>th</sup> century window and entrance feature and the two churches in Main Street, Spital.

### 6.3.2 Other Protection

A local list should be considered. This would add little or no protection compared to the existing conservation area status. However, a local list would provide limited additional protection for buildings and structures identified outside of the conservation areas. Inclusion on a local list is a material consideration in the development management process.

The potential for Berwick's parks to be added to the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens should be discussed with Historic England.

## 6.4 Buildings at Risk

To monitor the condition of the three Conservation Areas, and possibly the wider Berwick-Upon-Tweed area, a Buildings at Risk survey should be undertaken. This would allow targeting and prioritisation of resources and enforcement action. The current volunteer project could inform a buildings at risk report.

For buildings identified as being at risk, a concise action plan could be formulated.

## 6.5 Effective Planning

### 6.5.1 Statutory Duties

There are numerous explicit statutory duties relating to heritage for local planning authorities, in addition to an even wider range of implied duties. A failure to properly comply with such duties can lead to maladministration and legal challenge.

Explicit duties include:

- Planning duties with regard to listed buildings - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 66 (1) and following;
- Duties with regard to listed building consent applications - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 16;
- Control of works to listed buildings - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, sections 8 and following;
- Duties regarding designation of conservation areas - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 69;
- Duties regarding appraisal of conservation areas - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 71 and following;
- Duties regarding development and conservation areas - Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72.

In addition, there are heritage dimensions in undertaking Sustainability Analysis, Strategic Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Assessments.

Of these duties, Sections 16, 66 and 72 in particular should be highlighted, as these relate to development management decisions. Compliance with these duties requires specialist skills

and capacity to be available to support decision-making. This can include specialist knowledge of conservation practice, architectural theory and history, design, heritage legislation and policy, finance and economics, and building construction technical matters.

It should be noted that Section 72 can apply to development outside of the boundary of a Conservation Area, where that development would affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 6.5.2 Planning Policy and Decisions

Planning policies should support the creative and careful adaptation of buildings and structures to accommodate changing needs, whilst preserving or enhancing their special architectural or historic interest.

For new development in the Conservation Areas, future planning policies should seek to secure very high-quality, creative design to complement the existing spatial and townscape character. Master-planning and development or design briefs could be prepared for key sites within the conservation area (see Chapter 5). Independent design review can also help with assessment of significant development proposals.

Policies should promote green design and make clear that conservation area status is not a barrier to innovation or creative design (many historic buildings were examples of creative and innovative design, when they were built).

Planning policies could identify buildings that have a neutral or negative impact on the special architectural or historic interest and character of the area, supporting external enhancement and/or redevelopment opportunities involving such buildings.

There is an ongoing need for design training for decision makers, including officers and elected members.

## 6.5.3 Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Plans provide a real opportunity to protect heritage. Whilst generic heritage policies are largely inconsequential, policies that address specific local heritage issues in the area can be of considerable value. For the proposed Berwick-upon-Tweed Neighbourhood Plan, the following could be considered:

- Identification of opportunity sites and specifying development principles for such sites (for example the Quayside in Berwick Town Centre and the Pavilion and adjoining land in Spittal).
- Identification of poor-quality buildings, where remodelling or demolition and redevelopment could regenerate and enhance the Conservation Areas.
- Designation of Local Green Space for key green areas, for example Spa Park in Spittal (subject to meeting NPPF criteria). Local Green Space status recognises community value, so can complement conservation area status.
- Recognition of key landscape settings or public realm settings, such as the churchyards in all three of the Conservation Areas.

- Design policies to ensure that development compliments the key elements of character, but without suppressing creativity and promoting green design.
- Landscape policies, which protect biodiversity and also character associated with green infrastructure.
- Policies on materials, boundary treatments, planting and other aspects of character.
- Use policies for different parts of the area, in particular, encouraging mixed use (15-minute neighbourhoods). This is especially important in Spittal, where the predominant land use is housing and there has been some loss of community facilities.
- Policies on the development potential and restraints for the river front, including the Spittal Promenade.
- Support for the creative and sensitive adaptation of historic buildings.
- Policies to recognise that loss of heritage is also an economic loss and environmental loss (including loss of embodied energy), in addition to a cultural loss.

More information on planning for heritage is given in the National Trust's Heritage in Neighbourhood Plans (2019).

At present, dispute over the Town Council administrative area has been a barrier to progress on the neighbourhood plan. There is a solution for this. The Town Council could apply to designate its administrative area, excluding the disputed part. This would be a standard application, requiring 6 weeks of publicity and then designation by the Local Planning Authority (rather than the usual fast-track process for parish councils designating the entire administrative area). This approach would allow the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed.

Some of the above issues could also be addressed through the Local Plan process, though at a more strategic level.

#### **6.5.4 Enforcement**

Effective heritage protection depends on enforcement of planning breaches, including for works controlled by Article 4 Directions and other unauthorised alterations.

Enforcement action for deteriorating properties could include use of Urgent Works or Repairs notices, to arrest further deterioration. An indication that such action is being considered may be sufficient in some instances to encourage owners to act.

In cases where the heritage asset is at severe risk, compulsory purchase should be considered, possibly followed by transfer of the asset to a community sector body.

#### **6.5.5 Planning Guidance**

Planning and design briefs should be prepared for key sites and development opportunities in the three Conservation Areas. These should include:

- Requirements to complement key characteristics of the site and context, but avoiding prescriptive requirements on stylistic matters and positively encouraging creative and green design solutions.

- An integrated approach to design, with emphasis on architectural quality, townscape character, movement, and the quality of the public realm.
- Requirements to ensure that development connects to surrounding paths, especially for pedestrians, including links to waterfront, public spaces, and community facilities.
- Design and landscape features to reduce carbon use and promote biodiversity.

Thematic guidance is already prepared on matters like doors and windows and a shopfront guide is in preparation.

### 6.5.6 Character Appraisals

Conservation Area character appraisals can be useful in informing planning policy and decisions, but only if carefully written, against the context of heritage protection planning legislation.

The current character appraisals for Berwick-upon-Tweed and Tweedmouth have proved to be difficult to use due to their length and descriptive nature. Such descriptive materials would be better in a background document perhaps, rather than forming part of the character appraisal itself.

To ensure that future character appraisals are effective tools for planning policy-making and decision making, the following is recommended:

- They should be concise, with a clear and user-friendly structure, to meet the needs of time-pressed officers;
- The document should clearly describe the main aspects of the 'special architectural or historic interest' of the area and identify key elements of 'character';
- To be useful in the planning system, the term significance should relate to 'special architectural or historic interest' and not to other definitions;
- There should be an emphasis on layout, townscape and spatial characteristics, as these are often the most timeless aspects of character and translate most readily into planning policies and guidance;
- Different aspects of harm should be clearly identified;
- Illustrations can be used to demonstrate key aspects of special interest and character.

## 6.6 Recommendations (Management - Positive Planning)

The following are recommendations for positive planning.

13. A limited Article 4 Direction (not area-wide) should be considered for the Spittal Conservation Area and Tweedmouth Conservation Area, for housing where there is a reasonable survival of historic timber doors and windows.
14. The boundary of the Spittal Conservation Area should be amended to include the coastal area to the north, to create a more consistent and logical boundary.
15. The boundary of the Tweedmouth Conservation Area should be amended, extending along the Dock Road. The amended boundary should encompass structures that would contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the area, include the lifeboat station, the adjacent jetty and stone walls, and the railway viaduct. The amended Conservation Area boundaries could be based on the river edge and railway. Inclusion of railway structures would entail the inclusion of some of the wooded area. The amended boundary should avoid linking to the Spittal Conservation Area, due to their very different and distinctive characters.
16. The buildings identified as potential candidates for listed building status in Chapter 6 should be submitted to Historic England for consideration. Similarly, buildings that may warrant a higher grade should be discussed with Historic England. Similarly, Historic England should be asked to consider potential additions to the Historic Parks and Gardens register.
17. A Buildings at Risk survey should be undertaken to provide a clear picture of vacancy and condition, following on from COVID and other recent changes. This could build on the current volunteer project.
18. Future planning policies and guidance, which falls under the remit of both Northumberland County Council and Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, should take account of the analysis in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this report and:
  - Help realise the economic potential;
  - Identify opportunity sites;
  - Set key development and design principles;
  - Protect of green infrastructure;
  - Promote good design and support creative and green design.
  - Support 15-minute neighbourhoods.
19. All decisions including application of the special statutory duties for heritage under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 should involve heritage specialists, to ensure legal compliance.
20. Whilst enforcement action is a last resort, it should be used to address building deterioration where owners are failing to take necessary steps.

## D. Acknowledgements & References



## 7. Acknowledgements

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Andi Herring, BID consultant.

Nonconform (graphics).

Report prepared by:



**Urban Vision Enterprise CIC**

uvecic.co.uk

info@uvecic.co.uk

01538 386221 (main office)

**Northwest Office:** Suite 15 Oriel Chambers, 14 Water Street, Liverpool, L2 8TD.

**Midlands Office:** Foxlowe Arts Centre (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), Stockwell Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6AD.



Company No. 7690116

Registered Address: Foxlowe Arts Centre (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), Stockwell Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6AD

## 8. References

Documents and web sites reviewed as part of the process of preparing this report have included:

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Visit Berwick: [visitberwick.com](http://visitberwick.com)

Visit Northumberland: [visitnorthumberland.com/explore/destinations/towns-villages/berwick-upon-tweed](http://visitnorthumberland.com/explore/destinations/towns-villages/berwick-upon-tweed)

