

# **Shildon Masterplan Update**



**Durham County Council**

**December 2016**

## Context for Masterplan Update

Masterplan Updates are being developed for the majority of the largest towns in County Durham. This Masterplan Update for Shildon is an update to the 2013 Masterplan. It provides an update on what has been delivered across Council services in the recent past and sets out key activities for the future, including in the town centre, in employment, housing, in retail, in leisure and tourism, and in highway infrastructure.

Key Priorities:

- Encouraging new business start-up along with supporting the growth of existing local businesses;
- Seeking to maximise the economic benefits to the Town from visitors to Locomotion;
- Supporting private sector investment in the town;
- Encouraging the provision of the education and skills required for the modern employment market;
- Working with the private sector to deliver successful and sustainable housing expansion; and,
- Enhance the quality, appearance and function of the town centre.

## Profile

Shildon is located in the south of County Durham, with Darlington to the south, Bishop Auckland to the north-west and Newton Aycliffe to the south east. The A1(M) runs to the east of Shildon, with the town providing linkages to junctions 58, 59 and 60. In terms of rail links, the town benefits from a train station on the Bishop Line, which has connections to the East Coast Mainline via Darlington.

Shildon has a population of 10,079, with 7,131 of working age (2011 Census). Approximately one third of households live in social housing, with around 16% of households in Shildon living in privately rented properties. It is likely that this profile will change as new private sector housing is developed to the south eastern edge of the town.

The main retail area in the town is located at the junction of Main Street and Church Street with further retail units extending along Church Street to the north east. In terms of employment Shildon has four specific employment areas: Dabble Duck Industrial Estate, All Saints Industrial Estate, the Future Business Park, Hackworth Industrial Estate and Furnace Industrial Estate.

Shildon will always be associated with the age of the steam engine. The town is referred to as the 'cradle of the railways' as in 1825, the first steam hauled public train ran from Shildon to Darlington. Its first line connected collieries near Shildon with Stockton on Tees and Darlington. The railway industry dominated the town until the closure of the Shildon Works in 1984. The town's connections with the birth of the railways are marked at Locomotion National Railway Museum, which has proved an extremely popular visitor attraction since opening in 2004.

Shildon was originally a rural village however and through the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the landscape became overlain with collieries and quarries.

Based on the older village core and the Shildon Lodge colliery (opened 1830), 'Old' Shildon grew at the top of the hill. Separately, on the original Stockton and Darlington railway, 'New' Shildon grew around the engine works (opened 1825). This became the 'Soho' Works under Timothy Hackworth and the site is now part of the Locomotion Museum which is now a major tourist attraction. Old and New Shildon coalesced and were infilled in the earlier 20th century to form the town as it now is. In the 1960's the town expanded westwards.

## What has been delivered?

### Employment

Manufacturing remains the dominant sector in Shildon. The following employment areas are located in the town:

- Dabble Duck Industrial Estate:
  - Dabble Duck Industrial Estate is located just 2 miles south east of Bishop Auckland within easy access of the A6072 and Junction 58 of the A1(M). The estate consists of nine units / workshops ranging from 2,000 sq ft to 3,700 sq ft.
  - One of Business Durham's tenants using this industrial estate is Liberty Drums, a leading bespoke drum manufacturer with an international profile.
  - Shildon Business Centre is also located at Dabble Duck Industrial Estate, a facility consisting of eight



modern offices ranging in size from 115 to 228 sq ft.

- All Saints Industrial Estate:
  - This site is within easy access of the A6072 and Junction 58 of the A1(M). The estate consists of five units of 2,900 sq. ft.
  - The All Saints Industrial Estate has proven popular with a number of firms locating here including PPG Aerospace Sealants and Coatings which is a global supplier of paints and coatings for the aeronautical industry.
- The Future Business Park (formerly George Reynolds Industrial Estate)
  - The CreateCity Group by the end of 2015 had invested £9 million in expanding the park and undertaking landscaping improvements. The new investment, which follows planning consent from Durham County Council, will take the site to around 500,000sqft of warehousing, logistics, office and retail space.
- The Hackworth Industrial Estate contains several waste recycling facilities.
- Furnace Industrial Estate is predominantly used for general industrial and storage/distribution.

Since 2014 Durham County Council's Employability Team has supported 14 apprentices into employment in Shildon.

The town is within close proximity to the significant employment area at nearby Newton Aycliffe including the Hitachi site and the University Technical College.

## **Housing**

- There is a high proportion of social rented property in Shildon. The Registered Housing Provider Livin currently owns around 1,100 properties and as of 2015 had delivered over £9.5 million of investment in Shildon.
- In addition, housing development has come from the private sector including a current development comprising of up to 270 dwellings at a site east of Spout Lane to the north of Locomotion. With another 300 units following planning approval for the Dale Road Industrial Estate site to the south of Locomotion.

## **Town Centre and Retail**

The Town centre is characterised by independent retailers rather than multiple high street retailers, with the exception of B & M Stores.

- The vacancy rate for 2016 was 8.3%. This represents 8 vacant units, the same as in 2015. Units in retail use reached their highest level in the last 5 years at 46.9% during 2016. An increase of 3% from 2015.
- Shildon town centre has seen a £100,000 improvement scheme delivered to replace seating and bins, and open up the town square through removal of heavy dark canopies, renewal of paving blocks and introduction of a floral display in the disused water fountain.

## Recreation and Leisure

Shildon has several recreational facilities and amenity open spaces across the town including the following:

- Shildon Library is located in the town centre and is used by local schools and community organisations.
- Hackworth Park has a skate park, tennis courts, outdoor gym area and play area with regular fun runs and events.
- Shildon-Sunnydale Leisure Centre, which has recently been refurbished, comprises a gym, sports hall, indoor bowls green, playing fields and an athletics stadium. The centre is co-located with the school offering extended amenities for the pupils during the day.
- Durham County Council owns a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Eldon Bank Shildon comprising of a fully fenced, non-turfed area, marked out and an adequate size for at least two of the following sports; tennis, netball, basketball, or five-a-side football. The Council's Culture and Sport service offers support to local clubs, societies and communities to enhance engagement and participation in such amenities. An example of this is the Parklife Project which takes place at Hackworth Park in Shildon. Sport and Physical activity sessions are part of a three year Sport England and Area Action Partnership funded scheme to get people to try a range of activities that every member of the family can enjoy in their local park. The project engaged 1885 new participants in healthy activities and physical activity sessions from July 2014 to March 2015.

## Education

- Shildon has three primary schools while secondary education is provided in Shildon at the Sunnydale Campus of the Greenfield Community College following Sunnydale's merger with Greenfield Community College (Newton Aycliffe). Greenfield Community College is also a popular 'Specialist Arts & Science School' with the aim of preparing students to be creative learners to take their place in the global, technological community of the 21<sup>st</sup> century becoming responsible citizens with a real concern for the welfare of others. It also is proposed to replace the

windows at the Sunnydale Campus site over the next two years at an approximate cost of £2 million.

- The Foundations Project which is owned by social housing provider Livin and is managed by the Foundation of Light, the charity of Sunderland AFC, is based in Shildon.
  - The project began two years ago and offers a range of training programmes to improve financial wellbeing, digital skills and employment.
  - The Foundations Project offers opportunities for residents and tenants working in partnership with the Foundation of Light, South Durham Counselling Service, Health Express, Durham County Council, Shildon Alive, Greenfield Arts, Bishop Auckland College and The Cornforth Partnership. A variety of courses and activities are run from the Foundations building and out in the community.

## **Health**

- Health Express is actively working in the Shildon community and is supporting people to lead a healthier lifestyle.
- Durham County Council has launched the Warm and Healthy Homes Project available across the County including Shildon; with the aim to help vulnerable residents in private sector accommodation access to energy advice, efficient heating and insulation measures. The project will help clients who have a health condition resulting from living in a cold damp home.
- Wellbeing for Life is a service commissioned by Durham County Council and delivered, in several locations by partners who have years of knowledge and experience of working and supporting local people across County Durham. In Shildon the focus is building capacity, emotional resilience, optimism, wellbeing and reducing social isolation.
- CREE projects are funded through Durham County Council Public Health supporting drop-in groups for men, women and young people who may be suffering from social isolation. For example, there is a CREE for men located at the Jubilee Fields Community Centre.
- Healthy Living Pharmacy - delivery of a broad range of high quality services through community pharmacies to meet local need, improving the health and wellbeing of the local population and helping to reduce health inequalities.

## **Heritage and Tourism**

The main leisure attraction in the town is Locomotion (the National Railway Museum at Shildon) which had 436,245 visitors in 2015. Locomotion incorporates the Timothy

Hackworth Museum which celebrates the renowned locomotive engineer. Whilst it is a free attraction, it does make a significant contribution to the local economy in terms of bringing visitors to the local area as well the County as whole. Locomotion also provides significant ongoing opportunities for businesses in Shildon as well as in terms of opportunities for voluntary activities and developing skills. Locomotion is associated with a very successful events programme.

Part of the museum is located in the Shildon Conservation Area and is focused on the surviving elements of the old Stockton and Darlington Railway and the Soho Works associated with the railway pioneer, Timothy Hackworth. It includes a number of listed buildings associated with these works including an engine shed and stables, as well as a length of surviving track, paths marking the course of the former tracks and sidings, coal drops, workers' housing, non-conformist Methodist Hall and boundary walls.

Highlights include:

- Coal Drops ○ Comprise a grade II listed structure dating from 1846/47. It was used for fuelling the tenders of railway locomotives. Wagons loaded with coal would go to the top of the coal drops and coal would be released from an open bottom on the wagon into a chutes and then into the locomotive tenders below. The method was efficient and cost effective.
- Hackworth House ○ In 1824 George Stephenson recruited Timothy Hackworth to oversee the building of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, engines houses and stationary engines. He became the railway's superintendent in 1825 and was responsible for building locomotives for the company. Timothy Hackworth moved into this house in 1831.
- Soho Shed
  - This is the oldest surviving industrial building in Shildon. It was originally built as an iron merchant's warehouse in 1826 and was later used by the North Eastern Railway from 1863.

## **Transport**

Shildon is well connected by road and rail to nearby towns and employment centres. The A1(M), A68 and A688 are within easy reach of the town providing links with the rest of the region. There is a bus station to the east end of Church Street which provides regular services to Darlington, Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland and connections to Durham.

The town is also served by a railway station with direct links on the Bishop Line to Darlington and the East Coast Mainline. The rail line is recognised as a key asset running through the core economic area of south Durham; connecting the main towns of Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Newton Aycliffe and providing a key gateway to the Durham Dales. Together with the Weardale Railway it forms a strategic railway

tourism corridor linking the Darlington Railway Museum, Locomotion at Shildon and Weardale heritage railway.

Durham County Council delivered 'Local Motion to Work' a sustainable travel behaviour change project across South Durham, including Shildon, until 2016. This project, funded by the Department for Transport, encouraged the adoption of lowcarbon travel habits through a package of sustainable transport measures for businesses, schools and local communities in South Durham. It targeted communities where connections between people, jobs and training are a significant issue. It focused on improving sustainable travel between where people live and key employment growth sites (including Aycliffe Business Park, one of the largest employment sites in the North East and location for Hitachi Rail Europe) and reducing traffic congestion to keep people and goods moving. It delivered a complementary package of measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport and encouraged low-carbon travel behaviour to support the sustainable transport capital schemes being delivered through the Local Transport Plan as well European Structural Investment and Local Growth Fund managed by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP).

As part of Local Motion to Work walkers, cyclists, runners and outdoor enthusiasts can now enjoy a new public path, linking the past and the future, between Shildon and Newton Aycliffe. The two-mile tarmacked route called Locomotion Way is now open and traces the route of the old Stockton and Darlington railway line, which first opened in 1825 and was the first public railway in the country to use steam locomotives. The route ends at Aycliffe Railway Station.



Locomotion Way will help cyclists and walkers get to work or school in half the time it would take to get between Shildon and Newton Aycliffe by road. It's also open to anyone wanting to enjoy a leisurely stroll as well as runners and horse-riders, and is fully accessible for wheelchair users and mobility scooters. It will be extended to the Hitachi site which has brought train building back to County Durham thanks to their new facility creating 730 jobs.

### **Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership (BASH)**

The following projects have been specifically delivered in Shildon by the Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership - 2015/16:

- The Shildon Health Express is one of the most exciting projects being developed by Durham County Council under the management for Bishop Auckland & Shildon AAP. Working with a range of partners including Public Health, Durham Dales and Easington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), South Durham Enterprise Agency (SDEA), livin (Social Housing Provider), Primary Care Partnership (PCP) and the local community, it aims to take a strategic approach to tackling health in

one of the most deprived parts of the country. The overall aim of the project is to help residents of Shildon to live longer, be healthier and lead happier, more fulfilled lives.

- The Parklife project takes place at Hackworth Park in Shildon. Sport and Physical activity sessions are part of a three year Sport England and Area Action Partnership funded scheme to get people to try a range of activities that every member of the family can enjoy in their local park. The project engaged 1885 new participants in healthy activities and physical activity sessions from July 2014 to March 2015.
- Other projects benefitting Shildon include:
  - Guerrilla Gardening 2015;
  - Road Safety Initiative Shildon – Coundon Gateway
  - From Plot to Plate - a project which involves two cooking clubs and three gardening clubs to offer support to families who have very limited cooking skills within the community of Shildon.
  - Support for the Brusselton Incline restoration;
  - Salvation Army Kitchen Appliances;
  - Eldon Bank Road Safety;
  - IT Upgrade and support for Community Newspaper;
  - Jubilee Fields Community Centre Heating Upgrade;
  - Shildon Footpath Improvements; and
  - Shildon Station Artwork.

The key achievements delivered 2015/16 by BASH across the AAP area include the following:

- 38 Projects Approved
- £305,502 Grants Awarded
- £391,606 Match Funding declared

- 800 Children and Young People involved in Schemes to help them make Healthy Choices.

## What will be delivered?

### Employment

- Durham County Council will seek to continue to support employment in Shildon through Business Durham and the Shildon Business Centre by creating opportunities for development and growth by overcoming barriers and supporting local businesses.
- The Council will continue to ensure that there is accessibility to both employment and educational opportunities in Newton Aycliffe as well as capitalise upon supply-chain employment opportunities that may arise.

### Transport

- The County Council will continue to support infrastructure improvements to links between Locomotion and the Town Centre as well as capitalise on the access to the railway network. This will include extending Locomotion Way from Newton Aycliffe Railway Station to the Hitachi Plant.

### Town Centre

- Shildon's three decorative arches will remain after local residents voted in favour of their retention. These arches will be refurbished by Durham County Council as part of the continued improvements to the town centre.



### Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership Initiatives

The Main AAP priorities for 2016/2017 have been agreed as follows:

- Children and young people
- Raising community aspiration through employment, education and training
- Crime and community safety

### Durham Tourism Management Plan 2016-2020 (DTMP)

Durham is gradually building its portfolio of family attractions. As part of this the DTMP aims to develop the county's family offer at Locomotion to produce more niche products around railway and mining heritage.

Locomotion presents an opportunity for the county to fulfil its potential as one of England's lead destinations, attracting visitors to the region from across the UK and from target overseas markets.