

Newton on the Moor and Swarland Neighbourhood Plan

Key Views Background Paper

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The rural character and landscape setting of Newton on the Moor and Swarland Parish were identified by the Neighbourhood Plan consultation questionnaire and public meetings, as priorities for protection and management by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 As part of the contextual assessment of local character, and the value people attribute to local landscape and townscape, the understanding of which particular views local people particularly appreciate is useful to define the sense of place and deliver good design in accordance with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide¹ (NDG).

National Design Guide

5. A place is more complex and multi-faceted than a building:

- it is a setting for a diverse range of uses and activities, and is experienced by many people in many different ways;*
- it is made up of buildings, and also landscape and infrastructure, which are likely to endure longer than the buildings themselves;*
- most places evolve over a long period of time once they have been established, with many incremental changes that can affect their quality;*
- the quality of 'delight' includes a richness of experience gained from all of our senses, not only the visual; and*
- beauty in a place may range from a long view down to the detail of a building or landscape.*

- 1.3 The NDG explains that views, vistas and landmarks are influencing factors defining local identity and sense of place. These views are positive elements of character of places for their users. Views may be important for a number of reasons and can help inform the character of an existing or new development, which is a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 This assessment seeks to provide a robust and objective evidence-base to inform and underpin a Neighbourhood Plan policy defining and managing key views.
- 1.5. The Design Code produced for the Neighbourhood Plan by AECOM(2025) sets out 6 key views based on the feedback from the Questionnaire of the residents of the Parish. These are the Key views by area:

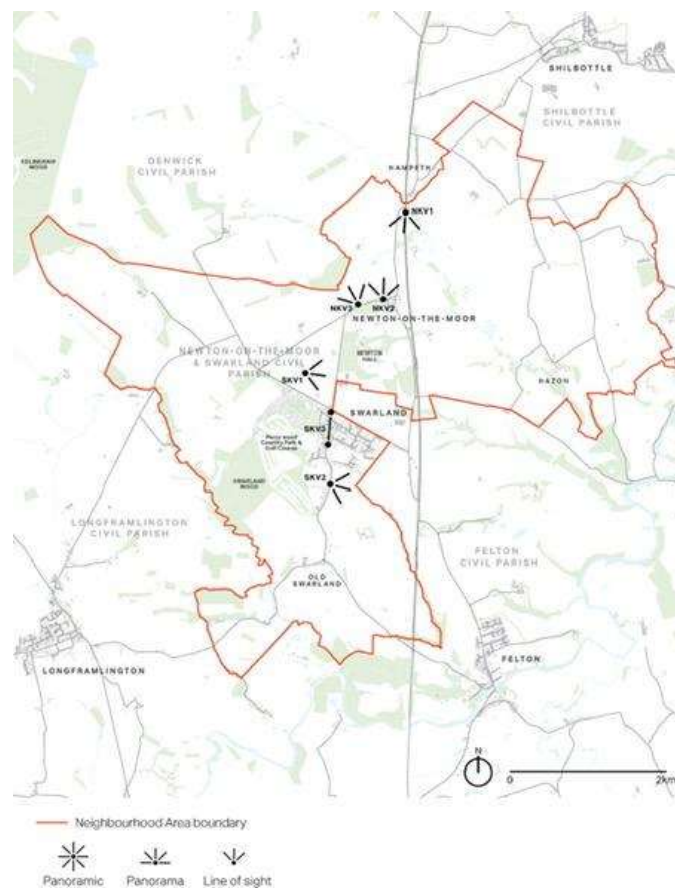
Newton on the Moor

1. View into village from A1;
2. View from the back of the houses on the north side of the village road and also at the west end of that road towards the north and north west;
3. Views north and west to Shiel Dykes;

Swarland

4. Chesterhill top, Swarland- view east to Coquet Island and Warkworth;
5. Park Road - panorama over fields looking to coast and Felton;
6. The Avenue - tree lined vista reportedly much enjoyed by HM The Queen Mother who often asked to drive along the road when returning to London from visits to Northumberland;

The above are shown on the following map –



A number of the views identified in the public consultation process, whilst important, will not affect development within the Settlement Boundaries of either Newton on the Moor or Swarland. Some of the views are also effectively of the same view but from a different viewpoint. In producing the Neighbourhood Plan we have therefore looked at which views are important in terms of planning and therefore need to be taken into consideration in any proposal for development. Consequently, we have now identified the following views for the Neighbourhood Plan:

Plan Reference	View
NKV1	Newton on the Moor from A1
NKV2	North from Main Street, Newton on the Moor
NKV3	Towards Shiel Dyke from Main Street, Newton on the Moor
SKV1	East from Chesterhill towards the coast
SKV2	East over fields and Nile Park towards the coast from Park Road
SKV3	Along the avenue of trees in The Avenue, Swarland

2. Methodology

2.1 One dictionary definition of a ‘View’ is *“A sight or prospect that can be taken in by the eye from a particular place”*.

2.2 Views can be important to the visual amenity of an area. The Landscape Institute explains *“The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provide an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or traveling through an area.”* The more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value that may be attributed, i.e. a view identified by numerous people as important, might be considered more valued than one selected from an isolated point in the parish that few people frequent. Views enjoyed by pedestrians using a footpath are likely to be valued ~~over~~ than views experienced by traffic speeding past along a main road.

2.3 There are not any statutory landscape designations in the Parish, although there is a conservation area designated in Newton on the Moor. A set of criteria has therefore been developed to focus on the ‘local’ value of any KV.

2.4 The following definition was proposed by the Steering Group:

A Key View is a publicly accessible viewpoint in the Newton on the Moor and Swarland Parish, that is reflective of what makes our settlements distinct as a rural community. The views are memorable and appreciated. They provide an attractive setting or backdrop, encompassing an important feature of settlement history and the way the built and natural landscape has been shaped by those who live or work within and by nature.

2.5 The selection of views is a result of people’s perceptions, so is somewhat subjective. The Key Views listed were suggested by the residents of the Parish in their responses to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation questionnaire, as well as in public meetings. These were assessed using the criteria, devised to assess their value that follows the principles of The

Landscape Institute section *TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations*. The proforma at Figure 1 has then been completed for each Key View.

2.6 To ensure a clear and thorough methodology to assess Key Views within the Neighbourhood plan area, the following criteria has been adopted -

- Key Views must be accessible by the public and visible from the public highway, the rights of way network, open spaces, or proposed or designated local green space.
- Key Views should show a range of physical (natural or man-made) features and an expanse of the Parish, not one particular object unless this is a building or feature of particular cultural heritage
- Key Views should merit at least one of the following values: aesthetic, biodiversity, cultural heritage, functional, recreational, or tranquility.
- Aesthetic – Views with strong aesthetic qualities that appeal to the visual senses that may include memorable / distinctive views of features, or a combination of features, of landscape or townscape (such as an attractive and distinctive group of buildings).
- Biodiversity – Views containing the presence of valued natural assets that contribute to ecosystems, habitats and ecological networks.
- Cultural heritage - Presence of historic landmark structures (designated or non-designated heritage assets) or designed landscape elements / parkland.
- Functional – View of the landscape that have strong physical or functional links with landscape designations, including Special Landscape Areas, or are important to the appreciation of the landscape and its special qualities.
- Recreational – From a place offering recreational opportunities where experience of a view(s) is important to the enjoyment of the activity.
- Tranquility – A location offering high levels of tranquility or perceptions of tranquility, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. Places may also exhibit a general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting.

Figure 1 – KEY VIEW assessment proforma

Ref:	NKV1
View Direction:	NORTH & NORTH WEST
Description:	View of Newton on the Moor from the A1
Aesthetic:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Heritage:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Functional:	
Recreational:	
Tranquility:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COMMENT/ACCEPT/REJECT ACCEPT	

Ref:	NKV2
View Direction:	NORTH
Description:	View North from the main street Newton on the Moor
Aesthetic:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity:	
Heritage:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Functional:	
Recreational:	
Tranquility:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COMMENT/ACCEPT/REJECT ACCEPT	

Ref:	NKV3
View Direction:	NORTH & WEST
Description:	View to Shiel Dyke from the main street Newton on the Moor
Aesthetic:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Heritage:	
Functional:	
Recreational:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tranquility:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COMMENT/ACCEPT/REJECT ACCEPT	

Ref:	SKV1
View Direction:	EAST
Description:	View east from Chesterhill towards the coast
Aesthetic:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Heritage:	
Functional:	
Recreational:	
Tranquility:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COMMENT/ACCEPT/REJECT ACCEPT	

Ref:	SKV2
View Direction:	EAST
Description:	View east over fields and Nile Park towards the coast from Park Road
Aesthetic:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Heritage:	
Functional:	
Recreational:	
Tranquility:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COMMENT/ACCEPT/REJECT ACCEPT	

Ref:	SKV3
View Direction:	NORTH & SOUTH
Description:	View along the avenue of trees in "The Avenue"
Aesthetic:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Heritage:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Functional:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recreational:	
Tranquility:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COMMENT/ACCEPT/REJECT ACCEPT	

