

Newton Aycliffe

County Durham

'Mark One' New Town – Designated 19 April 1947

Following a period of decline resulting from the collapse of the coal-mining industry in the area, in 1945 the premises of a Second World War Royal Ordnance factory were handed over to private industry and over 60 firms located to the town. The Government proposed a New Town of 20,000 people (subsequently revised down to 10,000 after protests from Durham County Council), initially to provide housing for the employees of the industrial estate created by the disposal of the Royal Ordnance factory. However, housing expansion and industrial growth were later seen as complementary aims for the future development of the New Town. In 1966 a large extension increased the projected population by 2,000 people. Today Newton Aycliffe has an important sub-regional economic role as a main town in South Durham.



Durham County Council

Key facts:

- **Location:** 10 kilometres north of Darlington, 14 kilometres south of Durham.
- **2011 Census population:** 26,633, in 11,462 households.¹
- **Local authority:** Durham County Council.
- **Local Plan status:** Prior to 2009, County Durham was a two-tier authority, and Newton Aycliffe fell within Sedgfield Borough. It now lies within the unitary Durham County Council area. The Development Plan is the forthcoming County Durham Plan. Saved policies from the Sedgfield Borough Local Plan (adopted 1996) are a material consideration.

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 19 April 1947.
- **Designated area:** 350 hectares, subsequently expanded to 1,015 hectares and then 1,248 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 10,000, later revised to 20,000 and then 45,000 (population at designation: 60).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to accommodate workers in a major industrial estate and to create a South East Durham growth point. The masterplan emphasised the need for a balanced community, providing suitable accommodation for all possible income groups and encouraging interaction between them. The Development Corporation was merged with Peterlee Development Corporation in 1963. Development Corporation wound up 31 March 1988.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- Nearly one-third of housing is socially rented (26.3%), which is a higher proportion than the UK New Towns and UK averages. Owner-occupation is in line with the UK average and higher than the UK New Towns average.
- Newton Aycliffe has a slightly higher than average level of deprivation than the English New Towns and England averages.

- The 2011 Census reported that the proportion of the population in 'good' or 'very good' health is lower than the UK and UK New Towns averages, and that the proportion in 'bad' health is higher than the UK average.

Employment/economic profile:

- Newton Aycliffe has become 'a major housing and employment centre in the south west of the County'.² Car manufacturer Gestamp Tallent is the biggest employer.
- The regionally significant Aycliffe Business Park is home to 250 companies, employing 8,000 people in mainly manufacturing industries.
- The forthcoming Hitachi train factory at Merchant Park will bring significant employment opportunities to the town and surrounding areas.
- Within the North East LEP.

Development Corporation legacy:

- The small intended population made planning for cultural facilities difficult, but this was later remedied by the Development Corporation.
- The sense of space, the quality of environment and the foresight displayed in planning the town are still valued today.
- Although there is a railway station, most people in employment (67%) drive to work (67%), compared with the national figure of 57%.

Key issues for the future:

- Regenerating the town centre – due to its ageing architecture and infrastructure and the constraints of covenants much of the town centre is in need of regeneration.
- Retaining and building on balanced employment provision.
- Future housing expansion and the direction of growth.
- Implementing the County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy. The New Town incorporates a very large amount of valued green space.

¹ Great Aycliffe (parish) Census data used

² *Building Altogether Better Lives: A Housing Strategy for County Durham 2010-2015*. Issues and Options Paper. Durham County Council, 2010. para. 3.21. http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/Issues_and_Options_Final_version.pdf

Did you know?

Lord Beveridge, father of the welfare state, considered Newton Aycliffe to be his progeny's flagship. He went to live in the town in 1948 and, among other things, organised weekly tree-planting sessions.