

Vision

An attractive environment that supports the development of a vibrant community⁽¹⁾ within its historical setting and contributes to the area's tourist and visitor experience.⁽²⁾ The parish will be a safe and healthy place to live and will offer high quality pre-school and primary education for all children.⁽³⁾

Development will reflect the needs of the people in the parish, will maintain the integrity of each village within the parish and will enhance the natural beauty of the land and buildings that lie within conservation areas.⁽⁴⁾

Any new housing will be environmentally sustainable and energy efficient. It will recognise the desire to encourage families with children to come to the parish and will cater for older parishioners who may need smaller homes and a level of support to help them to remain independent.⁽⁵⁾

Other developments that contribute to the economy of the parish and provide work should be created in a way that is sympathetic to the historical setting and natural beauty, environment and status of the location.⁽⁶⁾

We acknowledge that this is not a manifesto for the status quo and that change is inevitable if the parish is to remain sustainable, support the next generation and to flourish in the coming 15-20 years.⁽⁷⁾

*The table below is the 'evidence' to support the vision.
Cross reference 'Vision' statements (above) with detail in first column of table.*

Vision section	Questions to ask	Evidence/Further Research
	What makes Lesbury an attractive environment today	
<p>⁽¹⁾ Lesbury will be an attractive environment that supports the development of a vibrant community....</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">OVERVIEW</p>	<p>The North Northumberland Coastal Plain is a narrow, windswept strip that runs from the Scottish border south to the mouth of the River Coquet, bounded by the sea to the east and the Cheviot hills to the west. The parish of Lesbury sits within this description.</p> <p>The gently undulating inland plain is dominated by arable farming, with large, regular fields bounded by gappy hedgerows and occasional sandstone walls, with some pasture for beef cattle and sheep. Woodland cover is sparse and predominantly confined to the river valleys that meander across the coastal plain and the estate woodlands.</p> <p>The dramatic coastline is exceptionally varied, with rocky headlands and cliffs contrasting with long, sweeping sandy beaches backed by dunes, and extensive intertidal mudflats and salt marsh. The coast and coastal fringe are of national and international nature conservation importance for their geology, dune and coastal cliff habitats, offshore islands and intertidal habitats which support internationally significant populations of birds, grey seals and scarce plants.</p> <p>The openness of this landscape setting is underpinned and amplified by a relative absence of obtrusive development or structures, reflecting its arable use and remoteness. The low-lying and open character of this area, the absence of heavy tree cover, low hedges and sparse and scattered elements of human habitation and infrastructure lead to strong feelings of tranquillity and remoteness. The huge skies, striking views and natural beauty of this area draw large numbers of visitors and tourism is now a very important part of the local economy.</p>
	<p><i>1. Has there been any landscape character assessment undertaken or landscape designations?</i></p>	<p>The entire North Northumberland coastline is of national and international nature conservation importance and is described in Natural England's National Character Area profile for the North Northumberland Coastal Plain. A number of environmental designations have been made: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites. The coastline is a recognised Heritage Coast and designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p>
	<p><i>2. What are the natural features in the neighbourhood area. E.g. topography, watercourses, trees and hedgerows?</i></p>	<p>The River Aln, its banks lightly wooded along some sections, flows west to east through the centre of the parish and is tidal up to the Lesbury road bridge (A1068). Scattered areas of woodland are also to be found in the southern half of the parish. There are a few minor streams which flow into the estuary at Alnmouth. There is an area of intertidal mudflats and salt marsh around the Aln estuary. Inland the</p>

		terrain is gently undulating, the fields being generally large and bounded with post-and-wire fence and some gappy hedgerows.
	<i>3. Are there any important wildlife habitats and biodiversity? E.g any national or local designations such as SSSIs or Local Nature Reserves?</i>	The north east part of the Lesbury neighbourhood area forms part of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation (AONB). The Northumberland 4Shores Project has re-instated the natural floodplain between Hipsburn and Alnmouth by removing flood banks and creating scrapes to hold floodwater. This has allowed the natural development of new habitats for birds and other wildlife.
	<i>4. What is the agricultural land quality?</i>	The characteristic soils of the North Northumberland coastal plain are primarily slightly stony clay loam soils which support productive mixed and arable farming. Much of this area (about 80%) is Grade 3 agricultural land of moderate productivity.
	<i>5. Is there any geological interest?</i>	The landscape is underlain by sedimentary rocks of the Carboniferous age, which consist of repeated successions of limestones, shales and sandstones with local deposits of thin coals. This gently undulating coastal plain is overlain with glacial till with intrusions of Whin Sill geology outcropping at Marsden Rocks and nearby Ratcheugh Crag.
	<i>6. Is there evidence of brownfield land, contamination issues, light pollution, noise or tranquility issues.</i>	<p>Running north/south through the parish are the East Coast railway line and the main coastal road (A1068). Both these give rise to some disturbance - many coastal towns and villages south of this parish are accessed via the A1068. There is a small coal yard at Hipsburn along with the Alnmouth railway station. In the neighbouring parish of Longhoughton there is an active quarry where extraction of whinstone (used as road stone across the north of England) as well as waste processing takes place. The resulting heavy vehicular traffic passing through the village can be a nuisance destroying the otherwise tranquil settings within the parish.</p> <p>It has been recognised by CPRE that Northumberland has the darkest skies in England. The Dark Sky tranquillity of the Northumberland Coast is undoubtedly one of the special features that the Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan (2014-19) plan seeks to protect. Erosion of this tranquillity can be subtle, but once lost, will be almost impossible to regain.</p> <p>Overdevelopment on the outskirts of settlements and in rural locations and poor design of lighting schemes is leading to the steady erosion of the quality of the dark skies in the AONB. Locally, light pollution is mainly confined to RAF Boulmer, isolated and situated north of Lesbury, where night-time security lights operate.</p>

	<i>Should this section include include Northumbrian Water treatment works?</i>
Who are the Community of Lesbury?	
<i>7. What is the profile of Lesbury in terms of age and size?</i>	Northumberland Knowledge Census Fact Sheet (2011) for Lesbury Parish showed that some 1000 people live in the parish. Some 30% of these were in the 65+ years cohort with 56% in the 16-64 years and 14% in the 0-15 years.
<i>8. What is its ethnic background (predominantly white British, mixed race etc?)</i>	The same survey showed that 98% were white British.
<i>9. Where do people work? (inward or outward commuting, homes based, unemployment levels)</i>	<p>In 2011, 60% of the population was economically active. Some 43% were either full or part time employees, 14% were self-employed and less than 2% were unemployed. Over 70% used a motor vehicle to get to work, 11% worked from home, 9% used public transport and 8% on foot or bicycle. Managerial, professional and technical occupations accounted for 48% of the population with skilled trades accounting for 14%, caring and other service work accounting for 8% and other occupations at 17%.</p> <p>Of the rest of the population some 30% were retired, the majority of the remainder being students.</p> <p>Excluding employment at RAF Boulmer, opportunities for work within the parish are limited to the village shop, school, the railway and coalyard, farming, tourism and leisure, and the small businesses complex at Hawkshill. As far as is known, local employment opportunities are not specifically geared to the needs of local residents.</p> <p>The parish economy is not self-perpetuating but is derived largely from the spending power created by residents whose income is derived from outside the parish. Only a small amount of income is generated as 'passing trade'.</p>
<i>10. What are the past and forecast trends in terms of demographic change e.g. is it an ageing population?</i>	There is much to support the argument that, today, Lesbury Parish is a 'retirement' destination although in the past this may not have been the case. There are some young families within the parish but general trends suggest that, upon pensionable age, many will choose to remain knowing that the slow and tranquil pace of village life will provide a suitable environment for retirement.

<p>(2) within its historical setting and contributes to the area's tourist and visitor experience...</p>	<p>What is Lesbury's historical setting?</p>	
	<p>11. <i>Are there any important heritage assets in Lesbury?</i></p>	<p>One of the Parish's endearing features are the attractive stone cottages which line the main route through Lesbury village . The old bridge, St Mary's church, post office and shop, public house (The Coach) and village hall add to the appeal. Bilton, which lies within the Parish boundary, is enhanced by similar local stone-built cottages with tiled roofs and a cluster of interesting structures, central to which is Bilton House.</p> <p>Many Parish structures are protected by Listed Buildings status. The Old Bridge is classified as Grade I and a Scheduled Ancient Monument and St Mary's Church is classified Grade II*. There are 24 other listed structures within the Parish.</p>
	<p>12. <i>Has a historic character assessment been undertaken?</i></p>	<p>The village of Lesbury has a long history. The Anglican Church of St. Mary was mentioned in records dating back to 1147, and records from the end of the 13th century state that there were thirteen residents eligible to pay tax. In the 18th century, a schoolroom and master's house were built, paid for by Algernon Percy, 4th Duke of Northumberland. By 1897, the village had a reading room with 500 volumes in the library.</p> <p>For 600 years, a prominent feature of the village had been the water mill and mill race. This mill was referred to in a 1352 survey and was a working concern for more than 600 years. It ceased operating in 1925 and was burnt down in 1964. Records from 1786 refer to the Bilton Flint Mill but sometime afterwards this became a corn mill.</p> <p>The church, originally Norman, was restored in 1846. It has a square 13th-century tower with a pyramidal roof and a lofty arch on round columns. The 13th-century chancel has a 15th-century roof with oak beams decorated at intervals with little carvings of foliage. The heavy eight-sided font, boldly carved with the Percy locket and crescent, is of about the same age.</p>
	<p>13. <i>What is the quality of the built environment and is there a local distinctiveness? e.g. settlement pattern, linear or radial villages, design characteristics, building materials?</i></p>	<p>The parish is characterised by small nucleated settlements of early medieval origin, located on higher ground or at river crossing points as demonstrated by the three parish settlements (Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton). Over the centuries the nature of these villages has changed and whilst Lesbury still has a nucleus (church, village hall, shop and public house), ribbon development and infill means that it now appears as a linear settlement. Today, Hipsburn is a radial settlement with hubs at the railway station and the A1068 / B1338 crossroad whilst Bilton retains its original linear structure. Neither Hipsburn nor Bilton has any 'public' buildings.</p> <p>Many buildings within Lesbury Parish exude the image of old England. The Percy Family presence</p>

		<p>began in 1309 and eventually held influence over Lesbury which came within the Barony of Alnwick. A degree of influence remains today through the Northumberland Estate's continued ownership of significant tracts of land and buildings. Existing visual evidence includes several houses bearing the family crescent.</p> <p>Original buildings within the area show a simple vernacular, usually single storey, built with grey sandstone rubble and red pantile or grey slate roofs. Larger mansions and churches show more embellishment and are built with local Fell Sandstone. Early 20th century developments using red brick construction are to be found, whilst more recent developments have tried, with varying degrees of success, to emulate the original style.</p> <p>There is no doubt that the individuality of some local settlements and traditional building styles have been compromised. Some settlements have expanded rapidly beyond established boundaries: and building styles, materials and technology have developed beyond the scope of local traditions. Also, many small scale alterations and maintenance takes place without the need for planning permission and are difficult to influence. The individual and cumulative impact can lead, and in some settlements has already led, to loss of character.</p>
	14. <i>Is there a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings?</i>	<p>The central part of Lesbury Village has Conservation Area status although a wide range of building styles and materials within the area is evident.</p> <p>The Old Bridge is classified as Grade I and a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Saint Mary's Church is classified Grade II*. There are 24 other listed structures within the Parish including The Glebe (the old vicarage), village hall (previously school), old schoolhouse, Lesbury House (circa 1800), Bilton House (circa 1825-50), and the eighteen arch railway viaduct built by Robert Stephenson 1848/49.</p>
(3) The parish will be a safe and healthy place to live and will offer high quality preschool and primary education for all children.	What is the current health and well being of Lesbury parish?	
	15. <i>Have you undertaken an audit of the community facilities in or adjoining the neighbourhood area (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public buildings, places of worship.)</i>	Infrastructure Survey
	16. <i>What community activities are</i>	Regular features of village activities include bowls club and tennis court, a film club, an art club,

	<i>available in the parish?</i>	mothers and toddlers club, as well as bridge, table-tennis and pilates groups. An annual village fete is held and the Women's Institute is well supported. During the summer months Lesbury Cricket Club is very active and there is also a football pitch adjacent to the school. Foxton Golf Club has a large regional membership and is well supported by local golfers. Lesbury is also a 'Dementia Friendly' village and many activities are arranged with this in mind.
	<i>17. What education facilities are available in the parish?</i>	<p>Hipsburn Primary school is a small rural school with 140 pupils on roll. It has a Preschool offering morning and afternoon sessions to children aged between 2 and 4. In addition 'Allsorts Fun Club', a Not-for-Profit company, operates from the school premises and is open from 7.45-8.45am and 3.15-5.45pm offering 'wraparound care' during term time. At its last Ofsted inspection in 2009 Hipsburn was rated Outstanding.</p> <p>The school was converted from a first to a primary school in September 2016. To meet this increase in school population required the addition of two separate classrooms. The main school building (now over 40 years old) has 5 classroom spaces, a main hall, a catering kitchen, administration offices and a staff room. The school also benefits from a large playing field and pond, yards and an outdoor 'forest' classroom for Preschool and Reception children.</p>
	<i>18. Where are the public open spaces?</i>	Surrounded by farmland, Lesbury's parishioners also have access to a community garden, an area by the old bridge and another area by the footbridge which links Steppey Lane and the school with Lesbury village. There are seats and benches in these areas and all are accessible to people with reduced mobility. There is also a children's play area (The Pond Field) in Hipsburn which is equipped with swings and slides.
	<i>19. What is the access to green space, including public rights of way like?</i>	There are many public rights of ways within and surrounding the parish. Using these footpaths it is possible to take extensive riverside walks as well as exploring the countryside within the northern and southern parts of the parish. Providing further access to the countryside, the Aln Valley Railway will, on completion, provide a footpath/bridleway from Alnwick to Hipsburn. Also running through the parish is the National Cycle Route 1 providing yet further access to some of the parishes green spaces.

<p>(4) Development will reflect the needs of the people in the parish, will maintain the integrity of each village within the parish and will enhance the natural beauty of the land and buildings that lie within the conservation area...</p>	<p>What is the character of each village and can they be individually characterised to show their qualities and differences?</p>	<p>Each with a distinct character yet barely separated from each other, the three settlements within this parish form an almost continual line of development. In the centre lies Hipsburn with a mix of housing - cottages built for railway workers, council housing, and family houses developed from the 1930's to the present day. In contrast, Bilton (to the west) has retained a small scale, agricultural feel whilst Lesbury (to the east) has grown significantly in the post-war period with the addition of much executive style housing.</p> <p>Post-office, church and pub are all to be found in the centre of Lesbury reinforcing its position as the most significant of the villages.</p>
<p>(5) Any new housing will be environmentally sustainable and energy efficient. It will recognise the desire to encourage families with children to come to the parish and will cater for older parishioners who may need smaller homes and a level of support to help them remain independent...</p>	<p>What does the current picture of Housing across the Neighbourhood area look like?</p>	
	<p><i>20. What is the type, age and condition of the existing housing stock?</i></p>	<p>Northumberland Estates is the principal landowner in the parish. Historically, housing has been developed to meet the needs of the Estate and local farming community. The 19th century development of the east coast railway was probably responsible for the early growth of housing in Hipsburn, followed in the 20th century by some interwar housing and, later, a limited amount of local authority housing. Also during the 20th century individual developments took place along Steppey Lane.</p> <p>Housing development in Lesbury has been much slower. Traditional farmworker and estate housing is to be found in the centre of the village with postwar developments extending the village's built periphery. Most of this development has tended towards larger and more affluent properties. Over the last 20 years there has been a trend towards infill developments with a recent focus on smaller properties.</p> <p>Bilton has a variety of type of housing with some traditional stone terracing alongside more recent bungalows etc. There have only been a handful of new houses built since the 1980's.</p> <p>A number of isolated properties are to be found towards the parish's periphery. Some of these are working farms but others have been developed as very desirable residences.</p>
	<p><i>21. What is the tenure e.g. in terms of scale of scale and mix?</i></p>	<p>Almost all dwellings in the parish are in the form of whole house or bungalows (50% detached, 33% semi-detached and 16% terraced) the remainder being flats/maisonettes or apartments. By tenure about 10% are social-rented, 17% are private rented, 26% are owned with mortgage and 46% are owned outright.</p>

	22. <i>Are there any affordability issues in the area?</i>	See Housing Needs Survey and further work by Chris Anderson.
	23. <i>Briefly describe the availability, suitability and viability of housing land.</i>	All the land within this parish is owned by Northumberland Estates and is released for housing development according to their own planning purposes. There have been no large scale 'estate' type developments and, to date, most new building projects have taken the form of in-fill and linear housing development. Much of the land within the parish is designated as farmland and unlikely to be used for housing purposes. The farms are tenanted and should these tenancies not be renewed there is a possibility that the farmhouses and outbuildings could be redeveloped as further housing stock.
(6) Other developments that contribute to the economy of the parish and provide work should be created in a way that is sympathetic to the historical setting and natural beauty, environment and status of the location...	What does business and the economy look like in the Neighbourhood area?	
	24. <i>What businesses are located in the neighbourhood area?</i>	Other than enterprises related to agriculture, leisure and tourism, the economic infrastructure of the parish is undeveloped. Agriculture, the railway, the coalyard, Foxton Golf Club, Hawkhill Business Centre and Hipsburn Primary School are the main centres of employment within the parish. Additionally, the pub and post-office provide some employment; there are also a number of self-employed tradesmen ie electrician, plumber and joiner. Most residents of the parish who are economically active commute to work.
	25. <i>Are there any anticipated business and employment trends in the future?</i>	It is most likely that future business and employment trends will focus on leisure and tourism. It is probable that much of this will be small scale and in the hospitality sector. On completion of the Aln Valley Railway project there will also be increased hospitality demands to satisfy the needs of these visitors.
	26. <i>What are communications, including tele-communications and broadband, like?</i>	Tele-communications are good - fibre optic broadband is available and internet speeds up to 80 Mbps are possible. Basic postal and post office services, sufficient for the community, are available in the Lesbury village shop.
	27. <i>What are the barriers to future investment and development?</i>	There are no indications that Northumberland Estates is interested in proposing any form of economic development within the parish. In 2007 Northumbria County Council produced the Alnwick District Local Development Framework- the Core Strategy. It was argued that the north east region as a whole had an over-provision of employment land and that this should be re-assessed and perhaps re-allocated for housing. Strategic studies emphasised that there was an ongoing demand for employment land in Alnwick town and, in

		<p>the interests of social and economic regeneration, provision should be made for new business development in Amble. Whilst recognising the important role that the tourism industry played, this document also argued that the number, scale and location of housing and industrial developments should not compromise the particular qualities that attract visitors and should not generate adverse impacts on the Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA).</p> <p>This view is widely supported by most residents of the parish.</p>
	28. <i>Can you define a quantity and quality of land required for future economic activity</i>	Brownfield sites, generally felt to be appropriate for industrial or other form of economic development, are absent within the parish.
	29. <i>How does the area currently support the rural economy? E.g. agricultural diversification, leisure and tourism activities, conversion of buildings</i>	
	What is the current Infrastructure of the area like?	
	30. <i>What is the quality and capacity of infrastructure within the area e.g. transport and car parking, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy, telecommunications, utilities, waste, health facilities, social care.</i>	For a rural area it is generally thought that the transport infrastructure is very good with local and national services provided by train and bus companies and two international airports within easy reach. The A1 trunk road is only 4 miles away and train services, stopping at Alnmouth Station (Hipsburn), provide a frequent and fast service between London (3.5 hours) and Edinburgh (1 hour). Newcastle is only 30 minutes away. There are parking facilities at the mainline railway station which are heavily used; the resulting road side parking creates many hazards. There is a good water supply along with mains gas and electricity. Over the years, small developments have been added to the public wastewater system with occasional discharge problems. Domestic waste is collected regularly. There is no GP service but all health facilities are provided within easy travel distance.
	31. <i>Are there any future trends or anticipated demands?</i>	Since 2015, a significant number of large scale housing developments have taken place within a 10 mile radius of Lesbury Parish, notably in Alnwick, Warkworth and Amble. At the same time the use of the mainline train station at Hipsburn has increased significantly. Although parking facilities have improved it has been insufficient to meet this increasing demand and roadside parking is now a significant problem for residents living near Alnmouth Station. This problem will be exacerbated should any large scale (or multiple smaller scale) housing developments occur within Lesbury Parish.

<p>(7) We acknowledge that this is not a manifesto for the status quo and that change is inevitable if the parish is to remain sustainable, support the next generation and to flourish in the coming 15-20 years.</p>		
--	--	--

References

Natural England: National Character Area
North Northumberland Coastal Plain

Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Management Plan 2014-19

Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Design Guide for the Built Environment (undated)

Northumberland County Council
Alnwick District Local Development Framework (2007)

Northumberland Knowledge 2011 - Census Fact Sheet 1

Lesbury Parish Plan 2009

Housing Needs Survey (Lesbury Parish 2017)

Infrastructure Survey (Lesbury Parish 2017)

Desktop research

Observations