Wider Economic Benefits of the Ashington-Tyne Passenger Rail Service

Prepared by: Susie Crawford ....
Susie Crawford
Principal Consultant

Checked by: ....
Kevin Brady
Associate Director

Approved by: John Finnegan ....
John Finnegan
Regional Director

Rev No	Comments	Checked by	Approved by	Date
1				

Ground Floor, Grand Canal House, Upper Grand Canal Street, Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland
Telephone: +353 (0) 1 238 3100 Website: http://www.aecom.com

Contents

Executive Summary

AECOM has been commissioned by Northumberland County Council to assess the possible economic benefits of the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the existing rail line currently used solely for freight between Ashington, Blyth and Newcastle. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line is hereafter referred to as the ABT.

This study examined the planning context and economic background for areas that would be likely to be affected by the ABT and has concluded that the ABT would provide vital economic support for the areas it serves by boosting regeneration efforts and providing access to employment, and education.

The approach to assessing these benefits incorporated several elements including:

- Economic profiling of the catchment area of the proposed stations using Census data and identifying an area to which the catchment area surrounding the proposed stations could be compared. This comparison highlights the need for economic interventions in the area surrounding the ABT.
- Estimating the GVA impact of additional employment in the catchment area.
- Reviewing relevant planning documentation to identify and quantify the employment land allocations and housing plans that would be supported by the rail line.
- Reviewing planned regeneration efforts that the new service would support and, where possible, estimating the value to the economy of these efforts.
- Identifying other benefits such as improved labour supply to Cobalt Business Park and reduced congestion and reduced journey times for commuters.

The ABT Catchment Area

The catchment area of the ABT experiences a high level of social and economic exclusion. This could be addressed by improving the access of residents and businesses in the area to the employment, educational and market opportunities provided in the Tyne and Wear conurbation.

An analysis was undertaken to compare the catchment area of the ABT to an area nearby that is served by rail - the Comparator area chosen was the catchment area of the existing rail line serving Newcastle to Pegswood. Despite the comparable age profiles, the proportion of those of working age who are employed differs significantly between the ABT rail service catchment area and the Comparator area. Only 67% of those in the ABT catchment are in employment while 72% of those of working age in the Comparator area are employed.

The population of the ABT catchment area suffer from relatively limited access to educational opportunities. This contributes to only 17% of the population of the ABT catchment area holding a qualification of degree level or above, compared with 27% of the population of England. This, combined with a lack of access to employment opportunities, leads to them working in jobs involving relatively lower levels of skills and responsibility. A full 55% of those employed in the Comparator area work in administrative, professional or managerial jobs (“occupation categories 1 to 4”), while only 43% of those in the catchment area of the ABT service hold this type of job. The population of this area has less access to cars than the rest of the region so a public transport initiative such as the ABT has the potential to address these issues.

A Target for Growth

This study, by setting the Comparator area level of employment as a benchmark, estimated the potential increases in jobs and GVA that could be achieved in the ABT catchment area. If the employment level in the ABT catchment area were to reach the levels recorded in the Comparator area, a benchmark for a reasonable level of economic progress in the area, a further 2,873 residents of the ABT rail line's catchment area would be brought into employment. This would lead to an increase in annual incomes and GVA of over £70m.

It is not suggested that the ABT alone would achieve this, rather that the ABT would provide improved access to jobs and underpin a wide range of other initiatives and development objectives in the area that *together* have the potential to regenerate the area and increase employment. A number of opportunities for the development of employment land, regeneration and increasing access to jobs are set out within the report, bringing together the aspiration and the means of achieving the desired employment.

Opportunities for Achieving Growth

The additional employment that would result in this GVA boost could be brought about in a number of ways. This study determined that development of the allocated employment land in the vicinity of the new service could generate 600 jobs, while the regeneration of Ashington aims to create 1,000 new jobs. In addition, the rail service would improve access to jobs at Cobalt Business Park, where expansion is expected in the coming years and at Tyneside, where in-commuting is required to ensure that labour supply keeps pace with demand.

Employment Land

The Local Plan (LP) for Northumberland County emphasises the strategic importance of the South East, with a third of all new employment land being allocated in the areas served by the ABT, not including the Strategic Employment Zone at Blyth. Similarly, a third of the dwellings required in the LP are located in towns surrounding the ABT. These allocations are based on the needs of the community as estimated in a number of studies and the locations are such that the development of the allocated land is likely to be accelerated by the provision of the ABT. Indeed, the allocations are often within walking distance of the ABT stations. Thus the ABT would greatly enhance the attractiveness of the allocated land to investors and increase the likelihood of development.

The allocated employment land would support approximately 600 jobs and the GVA resulting from these allocations, were the net land required to be developed in full, is estimated at £15 million per annum. This estimate is deemed to be conservative as it makes no account of profits generated or for indirect employment that would arise in adjacent areas.

Jobs Arising from Regeneration

Regeneration plans are under way and the relevant towns would naturally benefit from increased accessibility. Blyth has been the focus of regeneration plans in recent years and a new plan for the regeneration of Ashington has been announced. These efforts would be much enhanced by the provision of a passenger rail line. Ashington in particular is well placed to benefit from the combination of increased accessibility and regeneration efforts.

The ABT and regeneration efforts could have the combined impact of increasing employment in the ABT catchment area, through increasing access to jobs in places like Cobalt but also through increases in the number of jobs available in towns such as Ashington and Blyth.

Accessibility of Jobs in the Wider Area

Accessibility to jobs in areas such as Newcastle and Cobalt Business Park is limited for residents of towns along the rail line. Bus services provided have not, in the past, succeeded in attracting commuters due to journey times and Cobalt Business Park has testified to having had difficulty in recruiting from these towns for that reason. The analysis of the economic profile found that there is lower car availability in the ABT catchment area, which further reduces access to employment. The rail line would therefore be mutually beneficial to the areas concerned; providing additional labour supply and offering job opportunities where jobs are needed.

A Unique Opportunity

The rail service linking Ashington and Newcastle is a necessary one. The catchment area of the ABT service is in a disadvantaged economic position arising from its history and the lack of infrastructure and access to jobs. This ABT service, combined with the targeted development and regeneration aims of Northumberland County Council create a unique opportunity to reverse this trend and create a resilient economy in the area. If successful, there is a possible benefit of up to £70 million GVA added per annum in the catchment area of the rail line alone.

The benefit of the development of the employment land allocated in the Local Plan and the benefit of job creation via the regeneration of Ashington have been quantified in terms of their GVA benefit within the report. However it is important to note that these benefits are not supplementary to the estimated £70 million value of increased employment; instead, these are elements that inter alia comprise means of achieving increased GVA.

1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned by Northumberland County Council to assess the possible wider economic benefits of the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the existing rail line currently used solely for freight between Ashington, Blyth and Newcastle. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line is hereafter referred to as the ABT.

The study sets out a vision and aspiration for economic improvement, through increased employment, in a significantly disadvantaged area: the catchment area of the ABT. Thereafter, possible sources of additional employment, which would help to achieve those aspirations, are identified.

The approach to assessing the benefits incorporates several elements including:

- Economic profiling of the catchment area of the ABT stations using Census 2011 data and identifying an area to which the catchment area surrounding the ABT stations could be compared. This comparison highlights the need for economic interventions in the area surrounding the ABT.
- Estimating the GVA impact of additional employment in the catchment area.
- Reviewing relevant planning documentation to identify and quantify the employment land allocations and housing plans that would be supported by the rail line.
- Reviewing planned regeneration efforts that the new service would support and, where possible, estimating the value to the economy of these efforts.
- Identifying other benefits such as improved labour supply to Cobalt Business Park and reduced congestion.

The structure of this Report is as follows:

Section two provides economic profiles of catchment areas surrounding the ABT and a comparator, namely the existing rail line serving Cramlington, Morpeth and Pegswood. The purpose of this comparison is to highlight the advantages afforded to those living in a nearby area which has had a greater level of investment in transport infrastructure. This provides a benchmark for the levels of economic activity and employment that the ABT catchment area could aspire to. The research estimates the increase in GVA that would arise based on an increase in employment in the ABT catchment area. The increase estimated is such that the employment gap between the ABT catchment area and the Comparator closes.

Section three summarises the key features of the spatial and economic planning in place for the area that will be served by the new rail service. The plans identify the potential for increased population, economic activity and employment in the area and the role of the ABT in fulfilling this potential. This section of the report collates the level of development, and hence employment and GVA that will be underpinned by the ABT rail link. In doing so, this section identifies a means through which the desired increase in employment in the ABT catchment area (as set out in section two) might arise.

Section four identifies a sample of specific business and regeneration activities that would benefit from the ABT. The primary benefits identified include: the benefit to Cobalt Business Park of increased accessibility to labour and increased attractiveness of the park to inward investment, as well as the benefit of the ABT in underpinning regeneration efforts at Ashington. This section supplements sections two and three. Section two estimates the value to the catchment area of the ABT of a brighter economic future, while sections three and four take account of the allocated employment land in the catchment area as well as important existing sources of employment that could provide the means of achieving the level of employment aspired to. The role of the rail line in this is to provide access to jobs and draw additional inward investment by improving the overall attractiveness of the area as a place to live, work, and operate a business.

Section five outlines the advantages of increased accessibility including reduced journey times for commuters, the option to use the stations at Ashington as park and ride facilities for towns to the north of Ashington as well as the possible interaction of accessibility benefits with Metro 2030, Nexus' long term strategy for the metro network.

Section six completes the analysis, bringing together the variety of advantages the ABT would afford to the County and beyond. The concluding section of the Report brings together the results of these different strands of work to assemble a full picture of the wide social and economic benefits of this new rail service.

2. Analysis of Economic Activity

2.1 Introduction

A significant amount of official data about economic and social conditions in the catchment area of the proposed new ABT rail service, other parts of Northumberland and the wider region, is available. This data can be analysed to measure the extent of the relative social and economic disadvantage in the catchment area of the ABT. The data can also provide insight into the underlying causes of this disadvantage such as a lack of access to educational and employment opportunities. Finally, the ABT catchment area can be compared with an area that benefits from the level of accessibility (rail connection) that the ABT service would bring to its catchment area.

The Comparator area thus provides a benchmark for economic activity and employment to which the ABT catchment can aspire. The analysis goes on to assess the potential number of jobs and thus the potential GVA that would be created were successful economic interventions to improve employment levels in the ABT catchment area.

It is not suggested that the ABT alone would achieve this, rather that the ABT would underpin a wide range of other initiatives and development objectives in the area that together have the potential to regenerate the area. Sections three and four outline a number of opportunities for the development of employment land and for increasing access to jobs. Thus the aspiration and the means of achieving the potential outlined in this section are brought together.

Study Area

The area included in this analysis is South East Northumberland, specifically the areas that would be served by a station on the ABT line. The analysis centres on the urban areas of Ashington and Blyth, but also covers Bedlington and Seaton Delaval. However, other areas such as Cramlington, Ellington, Lynemouth and Amble could also benefit from reduced congestion and increased accessibility. Many of these areas were built around the mining industry which has seen a significant decline over the last 30 years. The result has been a high level of economic disadvantage and the ABT line is part of a range of activities and investments that are planned to regenerate the area and provide employment and economic growth.

2.2 Approach

This section of the report compares the socio-economic profiles of the catchment area of the ABT against that of a comparator. The Comparator chosen was the catchment area of the existing rail line serving Newcastle to Pegswood. This area was chosen based on its geographic proximity to the ABT. Comparing the data for an area further afield would increase the likelihood of results being influenced by factors such as physical geography and proximity to cities of different sizes and/or economic activity. For example, the Durham Coast Line, although comparable in many respects, was not deemed to be suitable on the grounds that there were additional opportunities at Sunderland, which would influence results. Furthermore the frequency of service on the Durham Coast Line is considerably less, at once per hour, than the preferred option for the ABT, which would run half hourly at peak times.

Once the catchment area had been defined, the following data was compared for the two areas:

- Population
- Age profile
- Qualifications and education
- Occupations
- Car availability
- Incomes
- Economic status

The data used in the analysis is largely sourced from Census 2011. The Census data was chosen as it is the only relevant dataset available that represents sufficiently detailed geographic areas to allow the identification and analysis of the catchment area of the ABT rail stations. Furthermore, although the areas are expected to have changed somewhat since 2011, there is no evidence to suggest that the disparity between the ABT and Comparator catchment areas would have contracted in that time.

2.3 Defining the Catchment Area

The first step in the analysis was to define the catchment areas. The catchment areas are groups of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), the smallest spatial division available for Census 2011 small area statistics.

This facilitates the use of recent and comprehensive data (Census 2011) that most closely approximates the true catchment areas around the relevant existing and ABT train stations.

Both lines serve Newcastle city and so comparison of the Tyneside area stations is not relevant. Furthermore, residents living near the proposed Northumberland Park stop are already served by the Metro. Thus, in both cases, the socio-economic analysis was restricted to stations to the north of these areas.

The parameters used in defining the catchment areas are as follows. Figure 2.1 maps the LSOAs included in the analysis.

2.3.1 Catchment Area of Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Service

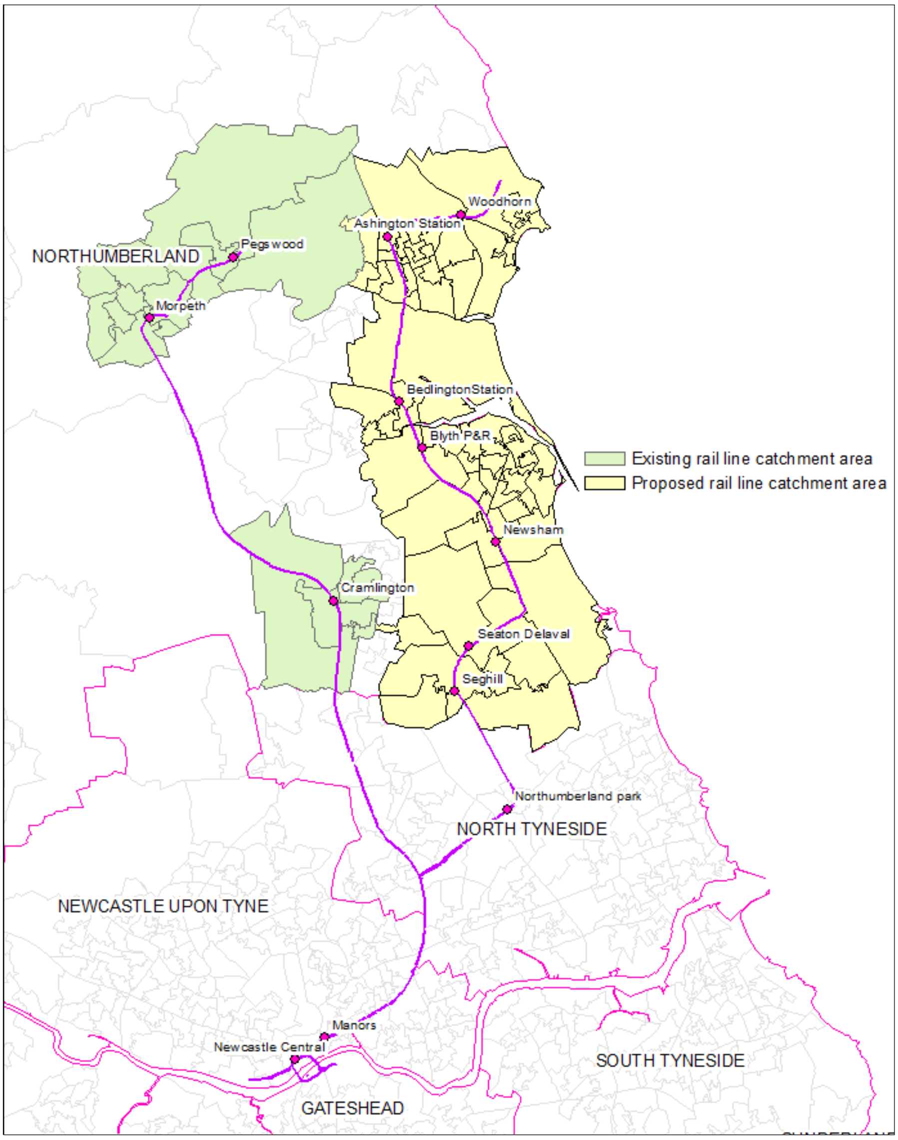
The catchment area includes all LSOAs within 1 kilometre of a stop as well as all LSOAs to the east of Blyth P&R (North of Newsham) in Blyth Valley, which are more than 1 kilometre away but fall into the natural catchment area of the ABT. The LSOAs in the catchment areas of stops south of Seghill were excluded.

2.3.2 Catchment Area of Existing Line

The catchment area was defined initially as the area of all LSOAs within 1km of a stop. This was extended to include two additional LSOAs where the boundary was outside the 1km range but which were as close as the extremities of some of the larger LSOAs. One LSOA was excluded because although part of the LSOA fell within the catchment area, the vast majority of the area did not. All catchment areas for stations south of Cramlington were excluded.

The Comparator area includes only three stations and the catchment area is defined by the LSOAs surrounding those stations. The ABT could add seven new stations (not including Northumberland Park, where there is an existing station serving nearby residents) and so the catchment area is larger. The population of the ABT catchment area is in excess of 95,000 residents as compared to the 31,000 residents of the Comparator catchment area.

Figure 2.1 Map of Catchment Area for the ABT and Comparator Catchment Area



2.4 Age Profile

Although the ABT catchment area is larger, the areas are comparable in terms of age profile. Of the population in the Comparator catchment area, 62% are of working age while 64% of the population in the ABT catchment area are of working age. Table 2.1 sets out the age profile for the both areas, as well as National and regional comparisons.

The proportions of the populations that are of working age and the breakdown within those groups are not significantly different between the two groups. This suggests that, all other things being equal, the economic activity, employment and skills and qualification levels in the two areas should not be significantly different. However, as the analysis that follows sets out, there are significant differences in the economic profiles of the two areas.

The economic differences between the two areas are not the result of an ageing workforce or of regional or national economic circumstances. Instead, the history of these areas and the levels of investment in infrastructure have made the difference. The catchment area of the ABT has experienced disproportionate economic deprivation compared to the country, the region and the chosen comparator area and this is borne out in the data including qualifications held, occupations, employment, wages, and access to transport.

Table 2.1 Age Profile

Age Profile Comparison

	ABT	Comparator	NE	England
of Working Age (16-65)	64%	62%	65%	65%
0 - 16	18%	16%	18%	19%
16 - 24	11%	9%	12%	12%
25 - 34	12%	10%	12%	14%
35 - 49	21%	20%	21%	21%
50 - 64	20%	23%	20%	18%
65+	17%	21%	17%	16%

2.5 Profile of Qualifications Held and Occupations

The Census 2011 data on the highest qualifications held by those in the catchment areas was assessed. 'Highest level of qualification' has been split into four levels, plus categories for 'Apprenticeship', 'Other' and 'None'. Level 1 includes 1 – 4 O levels, GCSEs or similar; Level 2 includes 5+ O levels, GCSEs or similar; Level 3 includes 2+ A levels/VCEs and more while Level 4 and above includes degrees, higher degrees and professional qualifications. A full definition of each level is included in the Appendix.

Table 2.2 sets out the numbers of individuals whose highest qualification falls into each of the categories as well as the percentage holding each level of qualification.

The differences between the two areas are stark; only 17% of those in the ABT catchment area hold a qualification of Level 4 (degree level) or above, compared with 29% in the Comparator area. Similarly, the proportion of the population with no qualifications is much higher, at 29%, in the ABT catchment population than in the Comparator population, at 22%.

Figure 2.2 Profile of Qualifications held

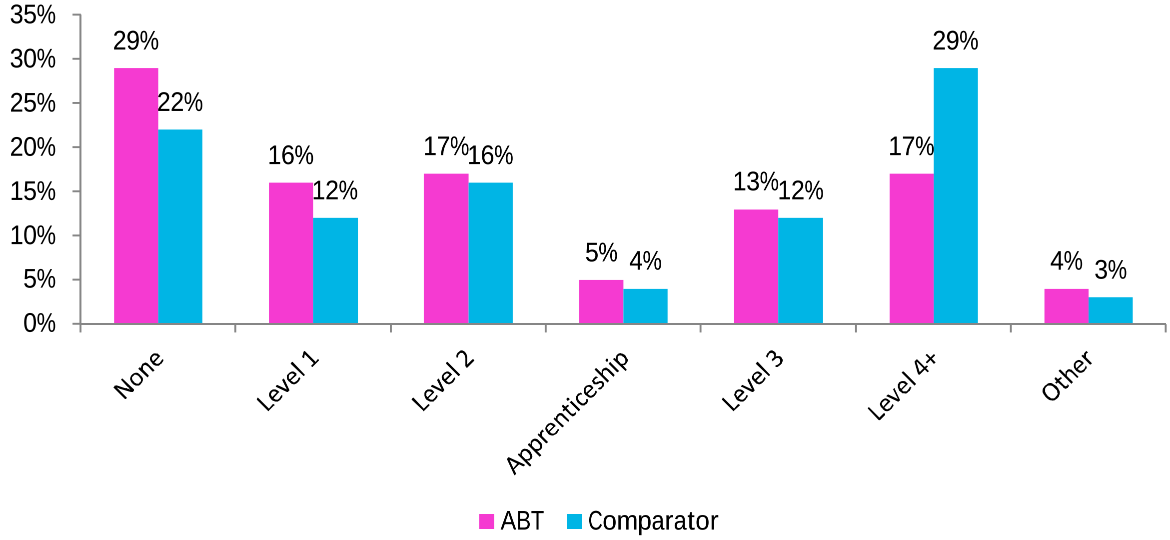


Table 2.2 Highest Level of Qualification Held (for population aged 16 or older)

	ABT	% of total	Comparator	% of total
None	22,482	29%	5,844	22%
Level 1	12,371	16%	3,220	12%
Level 2	13,555	17%	4,261	16%
Apprenticeship	3,793	5%	1,176	4%
Level 3	10,004	13%	3,247	12%
Level 4 and above	12,884	17%	7,651	29%
Other	2,971	4%	905	3%
Total aged 16 and older	78,060		26,304	

Table 2.3 and Figure 2.3 below show the comparable levels of qualification held in the North East and England. The Comparator area results are in line with those for England as a whole while the ABT catchment area lags behind England and the North East.

Figure 2.3 Percent of population (16 and over) with no qualifications: regional and national comparison

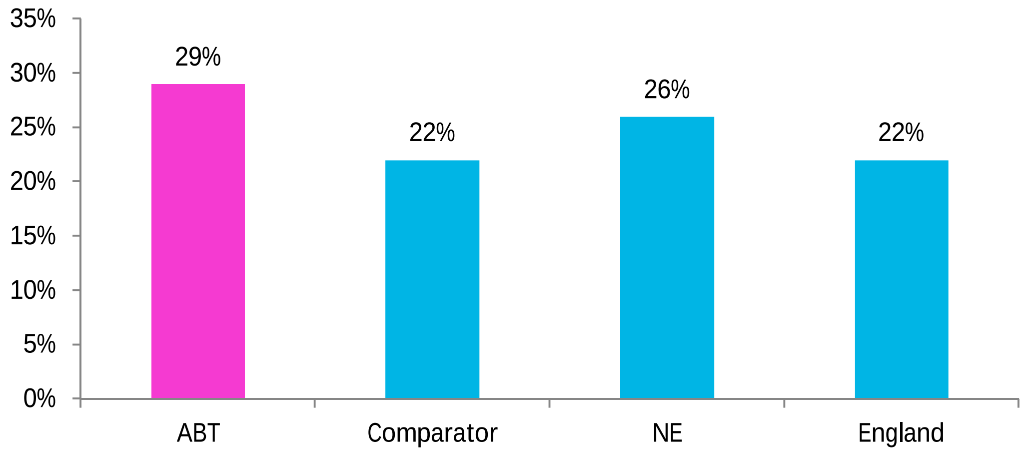


Table 2.3 Highest Level of Qualification Held (for population aged 16 or older) including Regional and National Comparison: % of Total

	ABT	Comparator	NE	England
None	29%	22%	26%	22%
Level 1	16%	12%	14%	13%
Level 2	17%	16%	16%	15%
Apprenticeship	5%	4%	5%	4%
Level 3	13%	12%	13%	12%
Level 4 and above	17%	29%	22%	27%
Other	4%	3%	4%	6%
Total aged 16 and older	100%	100%	100%	100%

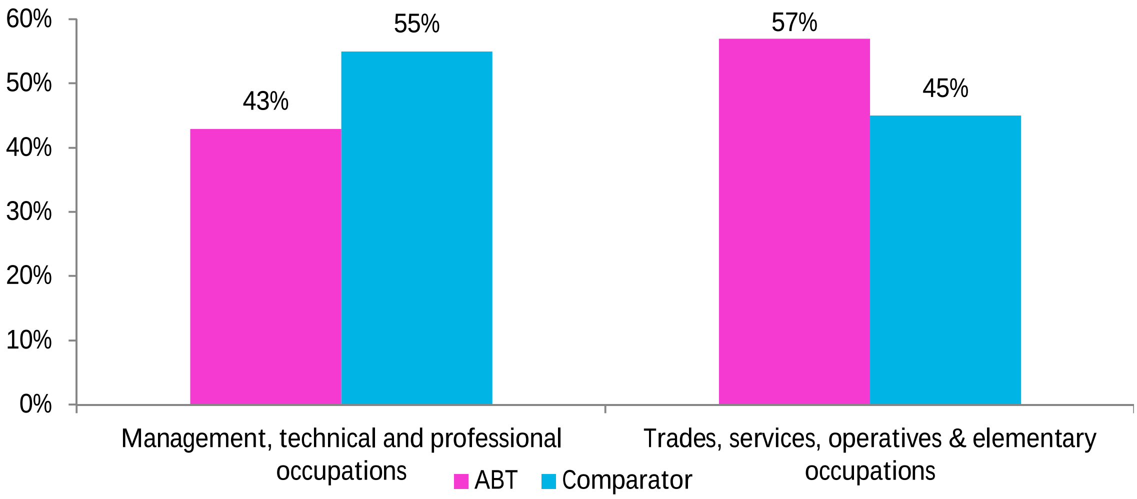
In general, greater proportions of residents in the Comparator catchment are employed in what are usually considered the better paid occupations than in the ABT catchment area. Here again the Comparator catchment area performance is in line with that of the country as a whole but the ABT catchment lags behind. Table 2.4 sets out the occupation breakdown for the two catchment areas, the region and England overall.

Table 2.4 Occupations of all usual residents aged 16 and over in employment the week before the Census

	ABT	Comparator	NE	England
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	8%	10%	9%	11%
2. Professional occupations	11%	19%	15%	17%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	11%	13%	11%	13%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	13%	13%	12%	11%
5. Skilled trades occupations	12%	10%	12%	11%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	12%	10%	10%	9%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	11%	9%	10%	8%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	9%	6%	9%	7%
9. Elementary occupations	13%	10%	12%	11%
All categories	100%	100%	100%	100%

The mix of occupations in catchment areas reflects the qualifications held, with 55% of those employed in the Comparator area holding positions in occupation categories 1 to 4, while only 43% of those in the ABT catchment hold positions in these categories. The differences for these groups of categories are illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.

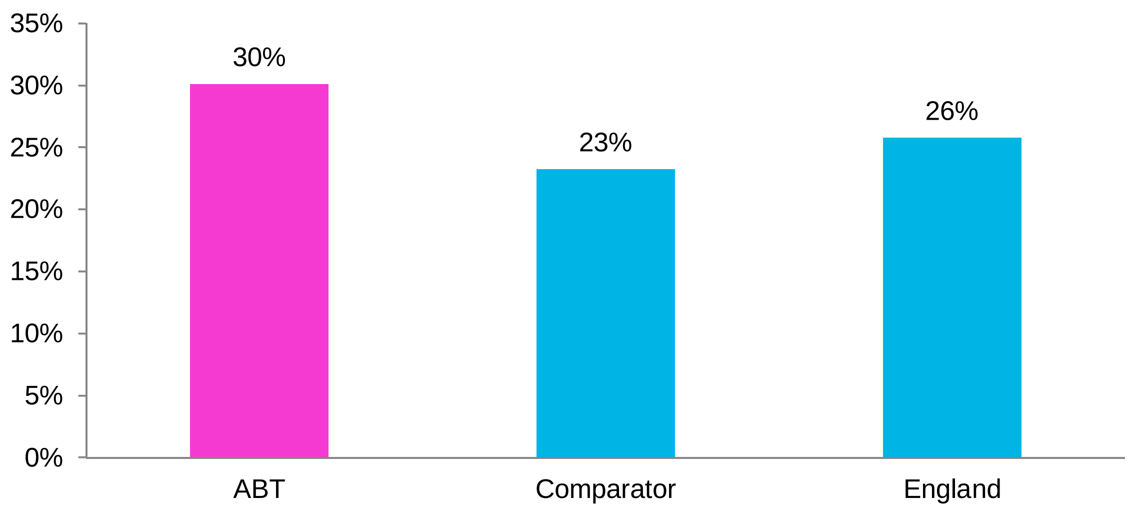
Figure 2.4 Occupation groups comparison



Furthermore, of those aged 16 – 24, 42% of the Comparator population are full time students, while only 33% of those in the ABT catchment are. The young people in the Comparator catchment area have convenient access to universities in Newcastle via the rail line, perpetuating the advantages already afforded to the area. Access to third level institutions is restricted for those from low income households; this effect can be compounded by longer effective distances to university.

Access to Newcastle's universities for those on the main line from Newcastle to Pegswood is greater than access for those in Ashington. The ABT area lacks a passenger rail line, which would provide an efficient and affordable mode of transport to education and other services but due to the level of income disparity and social exclusion, there is also much lower car ownership. The chart below illustrates the percent of households with no car or van available in the ABT relative to the Comparator area and England overall.

Figure 2.5 Percent of households where no car is available



2.6 Economic Activity and Incomes

Data on incomes at detailed spatial levels is not published regularly. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern that incomes would be lower in the ABT catchment area based on the occupations and qualifications of the population.

Furthermore, ONS estimates of income are available at the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) level (2001 boundaries) and for the period 2007/2008. MSOAs cover larger areas than LSOAs and incorporate groups of LSOAs. Thus the relevant MSOAs for this analysis are defined as those which are mainly comprised of LSOAs in the catchment areas, although there is not always an exact match in the boundaries. Catchment areas were generated using the MSOA boundaries for use in the income analysis to closely match the LSOA catchment areas. The median income for the MSOAs in the ABT catchment area was 13% lower than in the Comparator area.

Annual data are available for the median weekly earnings (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) - Office for National Statistics) by place of work and by place of residence. The data are not sufficiently detailed for comparison between the catchment areas but provide an indication of the incomes for the area overall in the context of national and regional incomes.

The relevant data for 2013 are set out by residence in Table 2.5 and by workplace in Table 2.6. Incomes earned by residents of Northumberland as a whole are relatively high, higher than those for the North East, but for those who *work* in Northumberland incomes are lower. A large number of Northumberland's residents commute out to other areas where incomes are higher but incomes earned within the county are lower. In addition, the earnings of those living in the constituencies of Blyth Valley and Wansbeck in the South East of Northumberland are somewhat lower than those in Northumberland overall. However these differences should be interpreted with caution, as the confidence intervals for the estimates for these constituencies and Northumberland county overlap.

Workplace earnings in Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside are relatively high and these are often the destinations of employees who reside in the areas of Northumberland served by the existing rail line and the ABT.

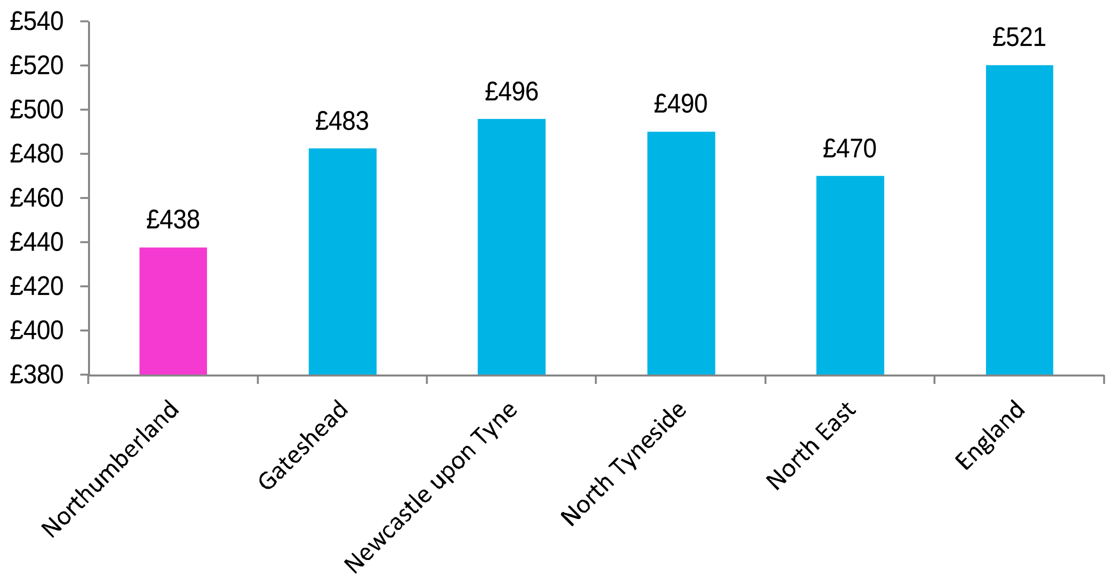
Table 2.5 2013 Median weekly pay – gross £, by residence

2013 Median weekly pay – gross £, by residence	
County: Northumberland	479.4
Constituency: Blyth Valley	468.0
Constituency: Wansbeck	447.9
North East	472.3
England	520.7
ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 18 November 2014], Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	

Table 2.6 2013 Median weekly pay – gross £, by workplace

2013 Median weekly pay – gross £, by workplace	
County: Gateshead	482.6
County: Newcastle upon Tyne	495.9
County: North Tyneside	490.3
County: Northumberland	437.9
North East	470.2
England	520.5
ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 18 November 2014], Annual survey of hours and earnings	

Figure 2.6 2013 Weekly pay by workplace



2.7 Workforce and Potential for Increased Employment

Despite the comparable age profiles, the proportion of those of working age who are employed differs significantly between the ABT and Comparator catchment areas.

As set out in Table 2.7, 67% of those in the ABT catchment are in employment while 72% of those of working age in the Comparator area are employed. The rail line would be a significant driver in facilitating access to jobs in Newcastle city centre, the Cobalt Business Park and the Silverlink Shopping Centre for those who are not in a position to access these markets currently.

The data on economic activity for the catchment areas echoes the analysis outlined previously; unemployment and inactivity are higher in the ABT area than in the Comparator area.

If the employment level in the ABT catchment area were to reach the levels recorded in the Comparator catchment area, a further 2,873 residents of the ABT rail line's catchment area could be brought into employment. Table 2.8 shows the relevant population and employment rates used in estimating the potential.

Table 2.7 Economic Activity Comparison (Number & Percent of Population of Working Age)

	Comparator		ABT		% Point Difference
Employed	71.9%	14,094	67.2%	41,323	-4.7%
Unemployed	5.2%	1,029	7.9%	4,857	2.7%
Inactive	22.9%	4,490	24.9%	15,322	2.0%

Table 2.8 Potential Additional Employment in ABT Catchment

Potential Additional Employment in ABT Catchment	
Population of Working Age (ABT)	61,502
Employment (ABT)	41,323
Employment Rate (ABT)	67.2%
Employment Rate (Comparator)	71.9%
Potential extra employment in ABT (increase to 71.9% Employment)	**2,873**

The data above was sourced from Census 2011. More recent data is not available at a sufficiently detailed level to allow comparison of catchment areas. Nevertheless, examining the more recent, albeit less detailed, information is worthwhile.

The annual population survey shows that unemployment fell between 2011 and the early part of 2013 but has increased somewhat since then. The most recent annual data shows that unemployment is at 7.3% in the Wansbeck constituency and 8.3% in the Blyth Valley constituency. Both constituencies cover parts of both of the catchment areas described above and thus cannot be used for comparative purposes.

The value of assessing the more recent data is that it confirms that unemployment in these areas remains high. Furthermore, since there is no evidence to suggest that the ABT catchment area employment statistics have come into line with those in the Comparator catchment area in the intervening years, the above estimate of the potential for additional employment is deemed to be realistic.

2.8 GVA Impact of Additional Employment

GVA (Gross Value Added) is the combination of wages and salaries paid, including costs to employers such as pensions, and profits earned. GVA for a region represents a measure of economic activity in that area; therefore changes in employment and productivity are reflected in GVA changes.

An investment in transport such as the ABT can lead to additional investment, employment (and hence GVA) in its catchment area. This is sometimes called a regeneration effect, and can be a highly desirable effect of a transport investment in an area with limited economic opportunities for its residents. In particular, residents of settlements such as Ashington will now have effective access to labour markets in Tyneside and beyond. This has the potential to increase employment in these settlements, representing a net increase in the income/GVA of these areas.

As set out above, a potential 2,873 people could be brought into employment, were the employment rate in the ABT catchment to come into line with employment in the Comparator catchment area. Median annual earnings for the areas can then be used to estimate the GVA impact of these additional jobs, albeit a conservative estimate given that it does not include the additional value of pensions, national insurance or profits.

The 2013 Annual survey of hours and earnings shows that residents of Northumberland who work full time earn a gross annual wage (median) of £25,190, while those who work in Newcastle-upon-Tyne earn an annual gross wage (median) of £25,222. Estimates are available for smaller areas but due to wider confidence intervals, the estimates for the larger spatial category were deemed most suitable for this analysis. There is little disparity between the earnings of residents of Northumberland and workers in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, reflecting a large amount of commuting between the two. As described, the earnings of employees in Northumberland are lower than those of residents due to a high degree of out-commuting to areas where wages are higher; the opposite is true in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The resident income for Northumberland was deemed to be the most suitable for use in the GVA calculation but, since a lot of those residents would be expected to commute out, the workplace estimate for Newcastle-upon-Tyne is presented below as an upper sensitivity[1].

The GVA estimates for an increase in employment in the ABT catchment area, such that the employment rate would come into line with the Comparator catchment area, are set out in Table 2.9 below. This potential increase would have an annual GVA impact of over £70 million.

Additional sensitivity tests were undertaken - the results are presented in Table 2.9 below for comparison. The first test assessed the annual GVA impact based on Wansbeck resident median income from the ASHE (2013) data, rather than the (higher) values for Northumberland residents and Newcastle workplace earnings. The result in this case would be £65 million added, however, as stated above the confidence intervals for the smaller spatial areas are wider and so the estimate for Northumberland is deemed to be more suitable. In addition, the most recent data on the employment rate for the North East LEP (70%) as a whole was tested: increasing employment levels in the ABT to the levels recorded for the North East would result in a more conservative estimate of added GVA of £44 million.

It should be noted that it is also possible that the true values for the impact could be greater than those presented below. The sensitivity tests assess the lower ranges for the GVA impact.

[1] Wage levels for other unitary authorities, such as Gateshead, were considered but Newcastle-upon-Tyne was chosen due to the narrower confidence intervals for the estimate.

Table 2.9 GVA estimate for potential employment increase in the ABT catchment area.

	Gross Annual Pay £ (2013 ASHE Estimate)	Potential Increase in Employment	GVA Added £m
Increase to Comparator level			
Northumberland: Resident	25,190	2,873	72.37
Newcastle upon Tyne: Workplace	25,222	2,873	72.46
Wansbeck: Resident	22,508	2,873	64.67
Increase to North East LEP level			
Northumberland: Resident	25,190	1,728	43.53

The Comparator area thus provides a benchmark for economic activity and employment to which the ABT catchment can aspire. It is not suggested that the ABT alone would achieve this, rather that the ABT would underpin a wide range of other initiatives and development objectives in the area that together have the potential to regenerate the area. Sections three and four outline a number of opportunities for the development of employment land and increasing access to jobs, thus illustrating possible means of achieving the potential outlined in this section.

2.9 Conclusion

The catchment area of the ABT experiences a high level of social and economic exclusion. This could be addressed by improving the access of residents and businesses in the catchment area to employment, educational and market opportunities.

The population of the catchment area of the ABT suffer from relatively limited access to educational opportunities. As a result only 17% of the population of the catchment area of the ABT hold a qualification of degree level or above, compared with 27% of the population of England. A combination of this and a lack of access to employment opportunities leads to them working in jobs involving relatively lower levels of skills and responsibility. A full 55% of those employed in the Comparator area already served by rail work in administrative, professional or managerial jobs (“occupation categories 1 to 4”), while only 43% of those in the catchment area of the ABT hold this type of job. The population of this area has less access to cars than the rest of the region so a public transport initiative such as this has the potential to address these issues.

Despite the comparable age profiles, the proportion of those of working age who are employed differs significantly between the catchment area of the ABT and the Comparator area. Only 67% of those in the ABT catchment are in employment while 72% of those of working age in the Comparator area are employed.

This study, by setting the Comparator area level of employment as a benchmark, estimated the potential increases in jobs and GVA that could be achieved in the ABT catchment area. If the employment level in the ABT catchment area were to reach the levels recorded in the Comparator area, a benchmark for a reasonable level of economic progress in the area, a further 2,873 residents of the catchment area of the ABT would be brought into employment. This would lead to an increase in annual incomes and GVA of over £70 million.

It is not suggested that the ABT alone would achieve this, rather that the ABT would provide improved access to jobs and underpin a wide range of other initiatives and development objectives in the area that together have the potential to regenerate the area and increase employment. A number of opportunities for the development of employment land, regeneration and increased access to jobs are set out in the following sections, bringing together the aspiration and the means of achieving the desired level of employment.

3. Relevant Spatial Plans

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the relevant spatial plans for Northumberland with particular emphasis on the plans that would be affected by the ABT. The 'Local Plan' and its aims are described, in light of the benefit that the ABT would provide in achieving those aims.

The housing and employment land allocations as well as the strategy for town centres and the importance of the areas served by the ABT in the wider plans are assessed.

Thereafter the planning aims of the towns and villages that would benefit directly from the ABT and the role of the ABT in supporting those plans are set out. This is complemented by a discussion of the 'Green Belt' objective and benefit of the ABT to that objective.

Section two provided a benchmark for the employment aspirations of the ABT catchment area and estimated the GVA of such an increase in employment. This section examines the potential in the employment land allocations for the purposes of fulfilling the objective of increasing employment. As such, the value of developing the land in the areas close to the ABT, in terms of employment and GVA, is estimated using employment land conversions.

3.2 Local Plans

Local Plans are required of planning authorities and should be in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, i.e. should have the aim of achieving sustainable development while reflecting the aspirations of the community. Local Plans set out the planned growth areas and spatial distribution of housing, jobs, employment, leisure facilities, Green Belts and more. A local plan provides the planning context for development and investment decisions for the long-term future. Northumberland's Local Plan (the LP) is currently comprised of the adopted Core Strategies and saved policies of the Local Plans of the former local planning authorities that made up Northumberland prior to Local Government reorganisation in 2009.

However a new Core Strategy is being prepared to replace those policies and to guide development to 2031. The Strategy will be informed by research and consultation currently underway. This study refers to the elements of the new Strategy (hereafter 'the LP') that are available publicly as drafts for consultation as these are likely to give a reasonably accurate picture of the final document and are more relevant to the future of the catchment area of the ABT than the older documents, which will no longer be in force.

The two consultation papers currently in the public domain are:

- Stage one of the Core Strategy Preferred Options, which sets out the spatial vision for Northumberland, the objectives for the Local Plan and proposes 57 policies, and;

- Stage two, the 'Core Strategy Preferred Options for Housing, Employment and Green Belt', which is to be read in conjunction with Stage one and sets out a detailed approach to certain elements not covered in detail Stage one.

These two existing consultation papers are likely to form the key elements of the Full Draft. The spatial planning documents with regard to housing, employment, and retail centres referenced in this document are those drafted to date and hereafter are referred to as the 'Local Plan'.

3.3 The Local Plan for Northumberland

The Local Plan (LP) seeks to balance the concept of Northumberland as a commuter area for Tyneside and support for the number and quality of Northumberland based jobs.

It is acknowledged that without sufficient housing, population growth will be stunted and there will not be a large enough labour force to support economic growth. With this in mind, the Plan sets out a vision for the development of housing to attract families into the County and for supporting locations in the South East as cost effective alternatives to Tyneside for industrial development.

These proposed developments will have the additional impact of supporting 'diverse and resilient communities', a key aim of the LP. The importance of sufficient modern public transport options in attracting employment, industry and residents and in supporting communities cannot be overstated.

The LP is based upon economic and population projections that give rise to land requirement estimates.

The LP sets out the locations for housing and employment to be delivered broken down by Delivery Areas, Main Towns and Service Areas. The relevant areas for this analysis, i.e. those that would be affected by the ABT, are within the South East Northumberland Delivery Area including the Main Towns of Ashington, Blyth and Bedlington, as well as Service Areas Seaton Delaval/New Hartley/Seghill/Holywell and to a lesser extent Newbiggin-by-the-Sea.

3.3.1 Housing Requirements

The projected requirement for dwelling numbers for the South East Delivery Area over the period covered by the LP is set out in Table 3.1 below. More than 50% of the required dwellings in the area are planned within for towns surrounding the ABT stations, including 12% at Ashington, 2% at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, 9% at Bedlington, 27% at Blyth, and 2% at Seaton Delaval. The same areas comprise 31% of the total for the County as a whole.

The areas surrounding the ABT are of key strategic importance to the County and it is critical that the necessary services are provided to support development in these towns. The ABT would provide a viable alternative to travel by private car for many of the additional commuters to Tyneside and would act as a beacon to those (businesses and individuals) considering a move to the area by contributing to the image of the area as a convenient location with modern facilities and outlook.

Table 3.1 Housing numbers by Main Town and Service Centre for the South East Delivery Area

Area	Number of Dwellings	% of Total for the South East DA
South East Northumberland Delivery Area	12,820	
Main Towns:		
Amble	740	6%
Ashington	1,600	12%
Bedlington	1,200	9%
Blyth	3,480	27%
Cramlington	3,480	27%
Service Centres:		
Guidepost / Stakeford / Choppington	420	3%
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	320	2%
Seaton Delaval / New Hartley / Seghill / Holywell	800	6%
Rest of Delivery Area	780	6%

Source: Core Strategy Preferred Options for Housing, Employment and Green Belt ('the LP')

3.3.2 Employment Land Allocations

An Employment Land Review (2011)[2] was commissioned by Northumberland County Council to assess the available employment land, as well as the important sectors for the area and trends in supply and demand. The study was commissioned to inform the LP and suggested that 293 – 313 hectares of land be allocated.

The LP makes reference to the findings of the study but concludes that the estimate of land required was too high and develops a policy, 'Policy 1: Employment land supply and distribution' for consultation on that basis, suggesting a range of 133 – 161 hectares of employment land to be allocated.

The relevant sites, i.e. those that would benefit from the wider economic impacts of the ABT are set out in Table 3.2 below.

The policy makes provision for additional employment land at several locations relevant to this study (in addition to the 133 – 161 hectare requirement allocated): it plans for the strategic employment area at Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone (of circa. 200 hectares) and includes a proposal for an additional 5 hectares of employment land in Blyth, immediately south of Bebside.

[2] Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners Ltd (2011) Employment Land Review, Northumberland County Council

Table 3.2 Employment Land Sites for the Main Towns and Service Areas served by the ABT

ABT Town	Site	Hectares
	Employment Site Protected for B-Class Uses (available land only)	
Ashington	Ashington - Ashwood Business Park	16.1
Blyth	Blyth Riverside Park (Coniston Road)	6.0
Ashington	Wansbeck Business Park (Ashington)	5.1
		27.2
	Employment site flexible employment use (available land only)	
Ashington	Ashington - North Seaton	6.0
Ashington	Ashington Jubilee	0.4
Blyth	Blyth Riverside Park	4.2
Blyth	Cambois - West Sleekburn Industrial Estate	2.1
Ashington	Lintonville Enterprise Park	1.1
Seaton Delaval	Seaton Delaval - Double Row	0.3
		14.1
	Possible re-development for other land uses	
Blyth	Crofton Mill	0.7
Seghill	Seghill	1.8
Blyth	Blyth Bebside	1.4
Ashington	Ellington Road End	0.4
Bedlington	Bedlington Station	6.4
		10.7

Source: Core Strategy Preferred Options for Housing, Employment and Green Belt ('the LP')

3.3.3 Town Centres

Northumberland's town centres have suffered a decline resulting from the wider economic malaise and this is acknowledged within the LP. The preferred strategy outlined focuses on minimising further declines in order to support and deliver sustainable communities over the plan period. In line with national policy, the LP provides a hierarchy of town centres, by way of illustrating the levels of growth planned for.

The preferred strategy designates Ashington and Blyth 'Level A Town Centres', while Bedlington is designated 'Level B District Centre' and Seaton Delaval, Bedlington Station and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea are 'Level C Local Centres.' It is estimated that sufficient floorspace is available either within the existing town centres or in adjacent sites to accommodate planned new development and so the focus of the plan is the regeneration of existing shopping areas.

The development aim is to ensure that the developments will be concentrated in the existing centres to ensure that they remain vibrant. In order to maintain the vibrancy of town centres and to focus developments in the desired areas, boundaries were set out for the Town Centres and Primary Shopping Centres within the LP.

The proposed location of the train station at Ashington is adjacent to the designated Town Centre. This will provide increased access to the Centre and support the aim of ensuring a vibrant centre by allowing customers to travel easily to and from the area. The centres for Blyth and Bedlington are both in the region of 2 – 3 kilometres from the proposed stations.

3.4 Delivery of the Local Plan in ABT-served Areas

This section outlines the strategic context for each area likely to be affected by the rail line and the role of the rail line in delivering the developments identified in the LP.

The delivery plans for housing, employment and town centre development for each of the Main Towns and Service Centres that would be served by the ABT are outlined and the extent to which the sites allocated could be supported by the service is drawn out. This section also identifies the role of the rail line in generating attractive urban areas and thus supporting green belt preservation.

The numbered subsections of the LP (Stage 2: Core Strategy Preferred Options for Housing, Employment and Green Belt) that relate to employment and housing locations are included in Boxes 3.1 to 3.4, along with the images showing the planned development locations provided in the local plan. It should be noted that the maps in the LP (i.e. those reproduced below) do not always highlight all of the allocated land; the maps show the locations of some sites in broad terms while the locations of additional allocations were described verbally without visual representation.

3.4.1 Ashington (Main Town) and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea (Service Centre)

The LP recognises Ashington's decline from its days as a coal mining centre and resultant persistent economic problems, while also highlighting the strategic importance of the town, in terms of employment and services for the County. The ABT includes proposals for stations at Ashington and Woodhorn, which would serve both Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. The proposals for Ashington are set out in Box 3.1 below.

Increased population is required to regenerate the town and the LP proposes to allocate land previously not developed in the east of the town and to the south of Wansbeck General Hospital and other areas. These proposed development sites are between 1 and 4 kilometres from the proposed station at Ashington but in many cases could be within 1 - 2 kilometres of the proposed station at Woodhorn. This is classifiable as walking distance and thus the planned housing areas are entirely consistent with the planned rail station. As per Table 3.1, 1,600 dwellings are required for Ashington with a further 320 required for Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. A large proportion of the planned sites at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea are within the catchment area for the proposed Woodhorn station

In addition, the employment land portfolio includes such sites as Wansbeck Business Park, Lintonville Enterprise Park and Ellington Road End that would be easily accessed from the proposed Ashington Station. In many cases, these sites could be accessed on foot. To the south of the town, sites at North Seaton, Ashwood Business Park and Ashington Jubilee are not within walking distance of the proposed stations but are nearby nonetheless and would benefit from the increased accessibility and variety in transport options afforded by the ABT.

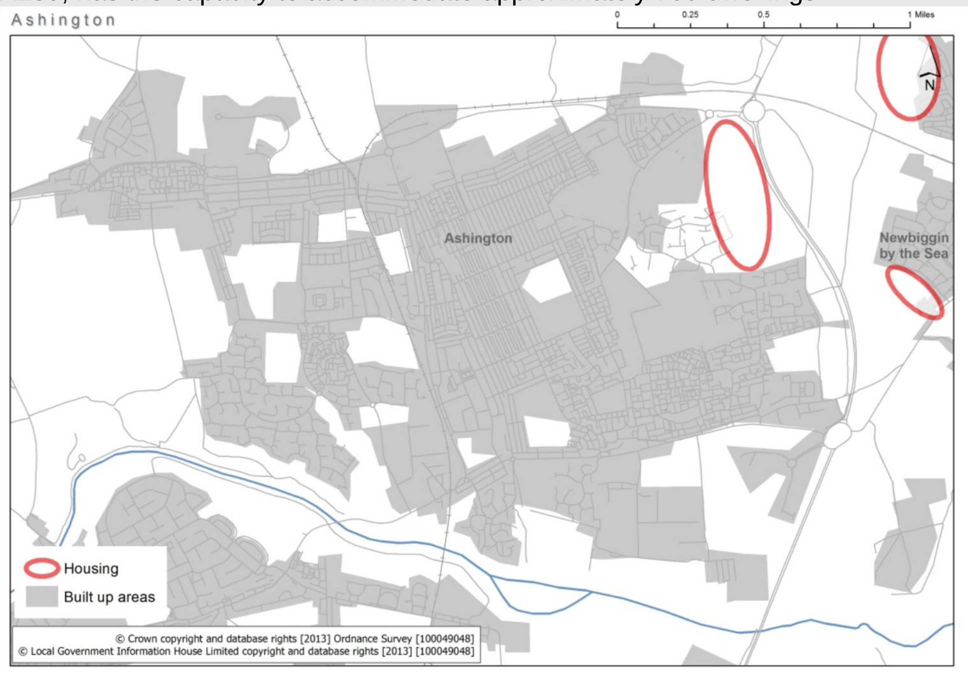
The existing built-up area of Ashington, which is the subject of a £74 million regeneration project, is in the immediate vicinity of the station at Ashington. The details of the regeneration project are set out in Section 4.4.

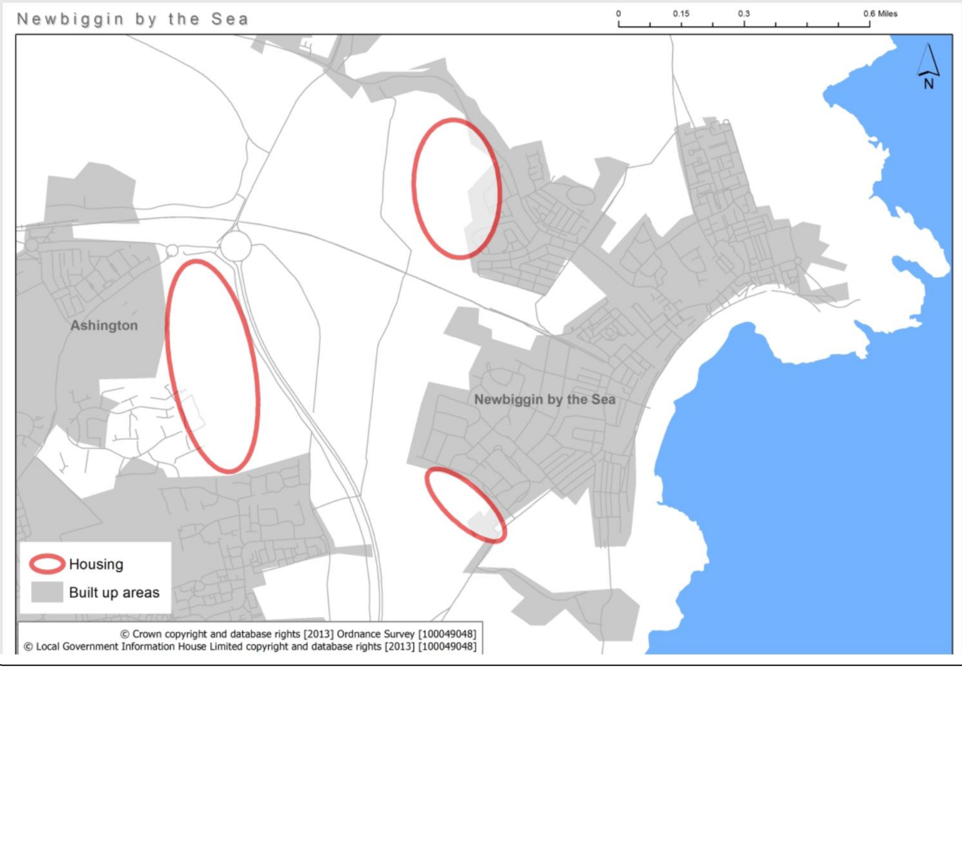
Box 3.1 Ashington and Newbiggin by the Sea Delivery Development Locations

9.13 Ashington plays an important strategic employment role in the County and includes the modern Ashwood Business Park which is a key economic asset. Employment sites within Ashington are generally located to the north and south of the town, benefitting from relatively close proximity to the strategic road network, residential areas and services within the wider area. As a consequence, it is proposed to retain all existing employment land in the town.

9.16 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies deliverable and developable sites to accommodate around 1,780 dwellings. This includes land within the town on previously developed land, some of which has consent for significant housing schemes, including that south of Wansbeck Hospital and the former NCB Workshops.

9.17 The preferred strategy is to accommodate the majority of new housing on land to the east of Ashington. This strategic area, which is well related to the town centre and easily accessible by the A189, has the capacity to accommodate approximately 700 dwellings.





3.4.2 Blyth (Main Town)

The LP notes the potential for economic growth in Blyth is significant, based upon assets such as sites with Enterprise Zone status, the National Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) and the Port of Blyth. The LP specifically identifies BEREZ (Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone) as a strategic employment area including approximately 200 hectares prioritised for development in the low carbon and environmental goods, offshore engineering and energy generation sectors.

Blyth is of strategic importance to the County and two locations are proposed for housing development in the area within the LP. The first is Chase Farm, which has planning permission and capacity for an additional 700 dwellings. The second is at South Newsham, which could accommodate 1,000 dwellings. The sites at Chase Farm and South Newsham have easy access to the proposed stations at Blyth and Newsham and in many cases would be within a 1 kilometre walk[3].

A great deal of employment exists and is planned for Blyth. The built-up area of Blyth is to the east of the proposed station within a short walk. The employment development sites proposed within the LP include two at Blyth Riverside Park, which are located sufficiently close to the Blyth P&R to benefit from the increased accessibility it would offer. In addition, the site at Blyth Bebside and the site immediately to the south of Bebside are adjacent to the proposed station at Blyth.

[3] In fact, a requirement for over 3,000 dwellings was set out in the LP but detailed information on the proposed locations of the additional dwellings was not available at the time of writing.

Box 3.2 Blyth Delivery Development Locations

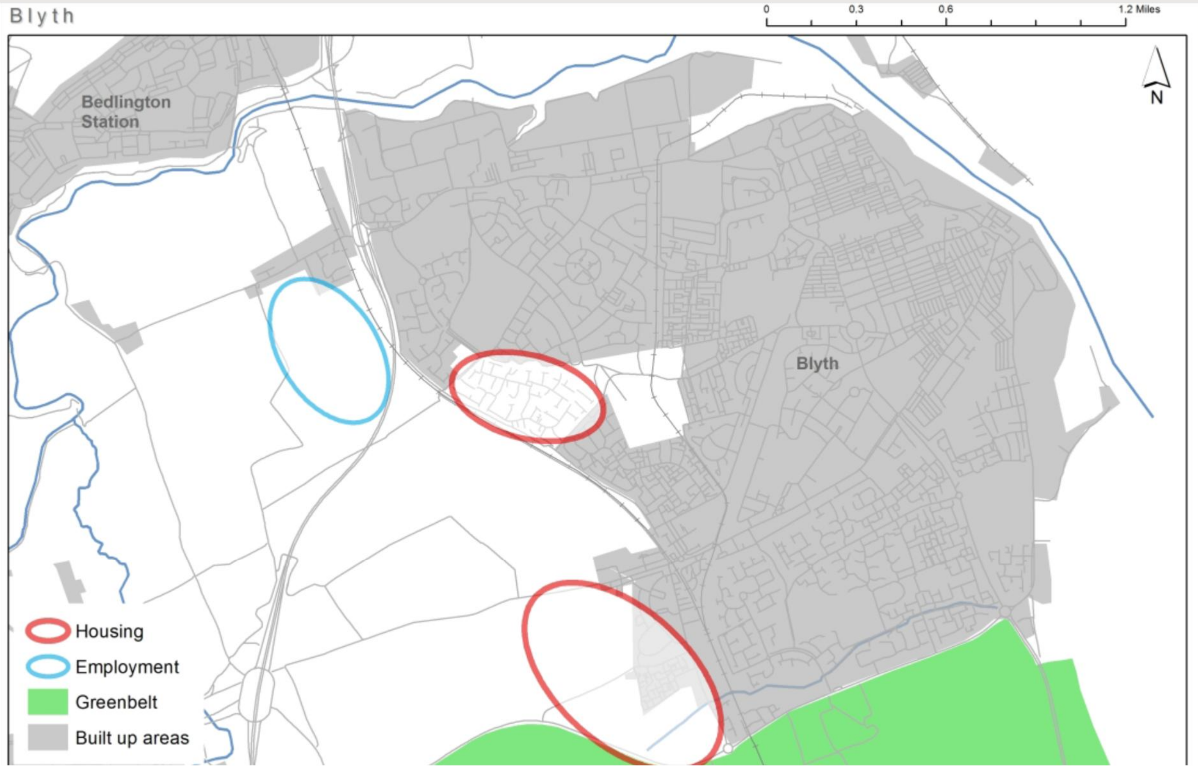
9.30 The SHLAA identifies deliverable and developable sites with the capacity to accommodate almost 2,790 dwellings. This includes land within the town on previously developed land, some of which has consent for significant housing schemes such as the former Wellesley Children's Home, Blyth Links and the former Bates Colliery.

9.31 A large site to the west of the town at Chase Farm also benefits from planning permission, and while a number of units have been constructed here already, the site is considered a strategic location for future housing, with the capacity to accommodate an additional 700 dwellings.

9.32 Another strategic growth area, with a capacity to accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings is located at South Newsham. Development here will add to the existing housing offer, be well located for schools, and have good access to bus services and the strategic road network. Development would enhance the viability of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, with new and existing developments benefiting, should passenger services be reintroduced and a rail halt provided.

9.33 Employment land within Blyth is largely located on the northern and eastern outskirts of the town, running along the banks of the river Blyth to the north and towards Blyth Harbour to the east. Whilst there are limited opportunities for expansion of existing employment areas, Blyth, and Cambois to the north, offer large-scale strategic development opportunities, which are being promoted to the low carbon and renewable sectors, advanced manufacturing, off-shore sectors and Port related activity.

9.34 An additional allocation of 5 hectares of employment land is proposed to the south of Bebside. Given the coal resource within the area there will be a requirement to explore whether it is feasible and environmentally acceptable to extract the coal so not to sterilise the resource. While this location was also considered for strategic housing growth, the location, next to the A189 spine road with good access to the highway network is more suited to employment land. Land towards the roundabout on the A1061 and A192 to the west of Blyth was considered as an alternative for employment land. However, this location is considered somewhat detached from Blyth and may result in a coalescence of Cramlington and Blyth.



3.4.3 Bedlington (Main Town)

Bedlington's importance is identified as a residential base for those commuting to work in nearby towns and Tyneside.

A need for 1,200 additional dwellings was identified in the LP. The preferred housing strategy is to accommodate the majority of these to the north west of the town for easy access to the A1068.

Nevertheless, based on the information available, it would appear that a large proportion of the dwellings would be expected to be located within walking distance of the proposed station.

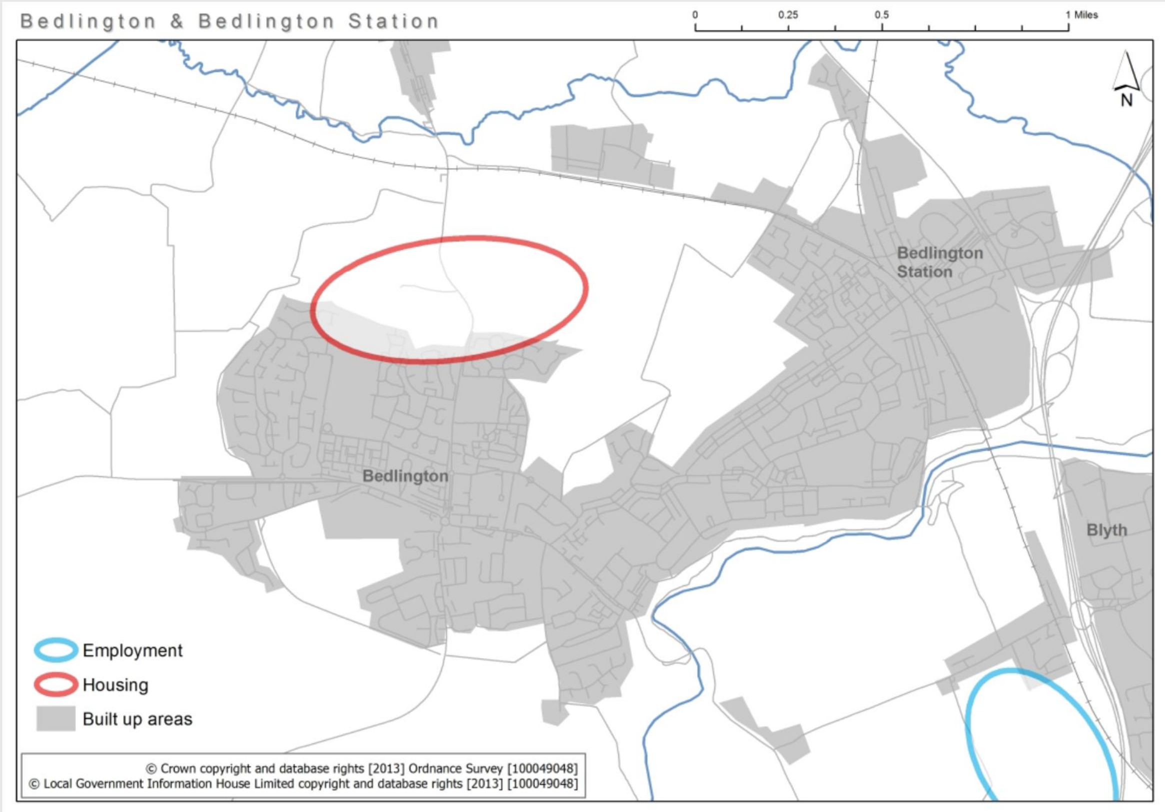
The employment land portfolio set out in the LP describes an allocation of 6.4 hectares in the Bedlington Station area (although this was not included in the LP map of developments, see Box 3.3). This site will be accessible to the new station at Bedlington and would benefit significantly from such a facility.

Box 3.3 Bedlington Delivery Development Locations

9.22 The preferred level of growth to deliver the overall strategy will require an additional 1,200 dwellings over the plan period.

9.23 The SHLAA identifies deliverable and developable sites to accommodate around 310 dwellings. This includes the Welwyn Factory. In order to deliver the preferred strategy a number of sites such as Broadway House Farm in Bedlington and brownfield sites such as land at the former Vald Birn site in Cambois will need to come forward, and an urban extension would be required.

9.24 The preferred strategy is to accommodate the majority of new housing on land to the north of the town. The preferred strategic housing location will accommodate approximately 800 dwellings. It is considered the most appropriate location in the town due to its proximity to the town centre and access onto the A1068.



3.4.4 Seaton Delaval/New Hartley/Seghill/Holywell (Service Centre)

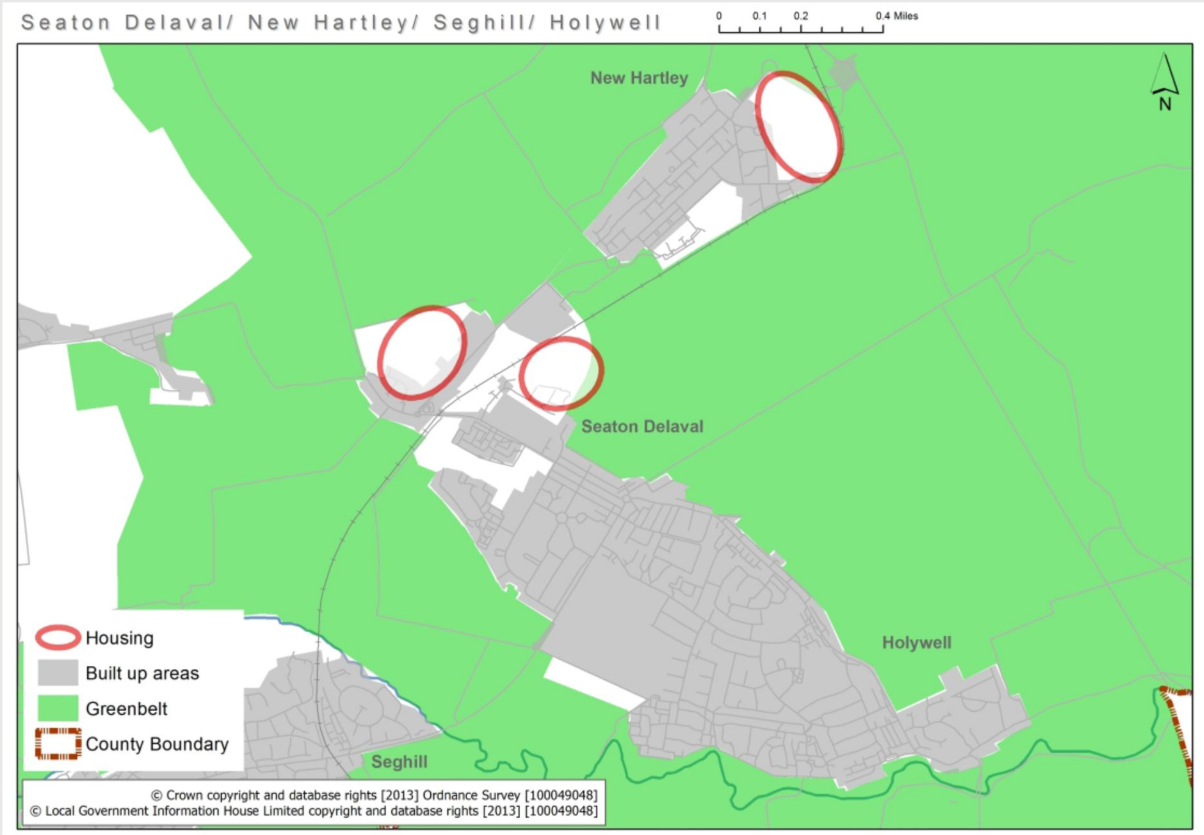
There are opportunities at Seaton Delaval and Seghill to create a more high density area with a significant increase in the number of dwellings.

It is recognised that the area provides important local services. The LP has identified a requirement for 800 new dwellings in the area over the plan period. The proposed housing areas are located at close proximity to the proposed station at Seaton Delaval[4] and so would benefit hugely.

Furthermore, the strategic employment sites in the area are both within walking distance of Seaton Delaval or Seghill stations.

Box 3.4 Seaton Delaval Delivery Development Locations

9.59 To deliver the strategy it is proposed that strategic housing areas are located to the east of New Hartley, and two locations in Seaton Delaval which currently have planning consent. These sites can be developed without a need for Green Belt deletion and are all well related to the settlements.



[4] At the time of writing the exact location of this station had not been decided nor had a definitive decision been made regarding whether there would be 1 or 2 stations at Seaton Delaval and Seghill.

3.4.5 Green Belt Delivery

In addition to the planned developments and aims set out above, the proposed passenger rail link would support the Green Belt (GB) objectives of the plan.

GBs are areas where development is restricted to ensure that the openness of the land is preserved. The purposes of the GB, as per the NPPF, are set out in Box 3.5 below.

Introducing passenger rail stations at existing urban centres such as Ashington, Blyth, Seaton Delaval and Seghill will contribute to the attractiveness of the areas. In this way, the station will act as a magnet for development, encouraging developments at central rather than peripheral locations, as the balance of desirable locations moves towards central rail stations rather than peripheral road networks.

This in turn will contribute to urban regeneration, as areas around stations attract residents, businesses such as corner shops and recreational activities will open to meet the additional demand generated.

Box 3.5 Purposes of the Green Belt

The NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- Prevent the neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.5 Potential GVA Impact of Development in ABT-served Areas

This section assesses the quantum of employment land allocated within the LP that could be supported by the rail line. The land allocated is assessed in terms of its potential to deliver floorspace[5] and thereafter the potential of that floorspace to deliver employment[6]. The section concludes with the value of the employment, should this land be developed, with the support of the ABT.

The employment land portfolio for Northumberland County was drawn up, as mentioned above, based upon the Employment Land Review (ELR). The work undertaken in the ELR suggested that, for Northumberland, a central estimate net of 19.3 hectares required would reflect a gross requirement of 316.7 hectares. The difference between the gross and net figures is based on losses of 13.8 hectares of employment land to other uses per annum and an additional ‘margin of choice’ allowance of 20.8 hectares for the forecast period. The total gross area of land required reflects three stages of estimation as follows:

i) Employment Land: Land allocation required based on employment forecasts. Over the forecast period this represents the following changes from the existing supply: a decrease of

[5] This analysis uses the conversion factors set out in GHK (April 2009) North East Business Accommodation Project Baseline Report (report for One North East and North East Assembly)

[6] Based on HCA employment densities as set out in Drivers Jonas Deloitte (2010) Employment Densities Guide 2nd Edition (report for Homes and Communities Agency and Office of Project and Programme Advice and Training).

4.1 hectares in the Lower growth scenario, and increases of 19.3 hectares in the Central scenario and 30.9 hectares in the Higher scenario

ii) Employment Land including a buffer for losses to other uses: This stage encompasses (i) above and an allocation required to maintain the current area of employment land. Additional land is required based on expected losses of employment land to other uses. This brings the required land to an approximate range of 290 and 310 hectares depending on the scenario. The process involves adjusting for 13.8 hectares lost to other uses per annum.

iii) Gross Employment Land: Hectares allocated over and above the estimates of what is required: this is included to ensure that even if some land does not come forward for development, sufficient land is allocated and to ensure a reasonable choice of sites is available to developers.

These components resulted in the ultimate gross requirement of 293 to 317 hectares being suggested in the ELR. However, based on land uptake, vacancy rate and employment land requirement data, the requirement forecast adopted in the LP was lower, at 133 to 161 hectares.

52 hectares of the total gross allocation set out in the LP have been allocated within the catchment area of the ABT. These sites are listed in Table 3.2[7]. In addition, the LP allocated 5 hectares at Blyth south of Bebside, which was also included in this analysis, to bring the total relevant land to 57 hectares. This is the Gross Employment Land value for areas that would be affected by the ABT.

The process involved in estimating the net employment land required *for the ABT area* is as follows:

- The ELR proposed a central estimate of 19.3 hectares as the net requirement for Northumberland.
- This 19.3 hectares was estimated (in the ELR) to be equivalent to a gross requirement of 317 hectares for Northumberland.
- The LP revised the requirement downwards to 161 hectares in gross terms.
- AECOM, by assuming that the relationship between net and gross requirements prevails, estimated that this would be equivalent to a *net* requirement of 9.8 hectares for the County.
- Similarly, the gross estimate of 57 hectares (including the 5 additional hectares at Blyth south of Bebside) that would be affected by the ABT can be converted to a net area.
- AECOM, by assuming that the relationship between net and gross prevails, estimated that this would be equivalent to a net requirement of 3.5 hectares for the ABT area.

This net land allocation of 3.5 hectares was assessed in terms of its potential to deliver floorspace[8] and thereafter the potential of that floorspace to deliver employment[9]. AECOM estimates that, were they to be developed, the sites in the range of influence of the ABT would add approximately 590 jobs with a GVA of approximately £15 million per annum. GVA (Gross Value Added) is the combination of wages and salaries paid, including costs to employers such as pensions, and profits earned and, as such, this is considered to be a conservative estimate.

[7] Table 3.2 is derived from the employment land portfolio set out in the LP.
[8] This analysis uses the conversion factors set out in GHK (April 2009) North East Business Accommodation Project Baseline Report (report for One North East and North East Assembly)
[9] Based on HCA employment densities as set out in Drivers Jonas Deloitte (2010) Employment Densities Guide 2nd Edition (report for Homes and Communities Agency and Office of Project and Programme Advice and Training).

The estimate of value assumes that the parcel of 3.5 hectares would be taken up by equal portions of the five B-use classes (B1a, B1b, B1c, B2, B8). Table 3.3 below shows the employment that would be generated (by town) if all of the land was to be taken up for the most employee-intensive use class, B1a: offices. The result in that case would be over 1,500 jobs and £38 million GVA. This represents an upper bound for the GVA impact by basing the estimate on full development of the net required land and most labour-intensive use class.

For the purposes of the above estimates, the possible employment boost from the Strategic Employment Area at the Blyth Estuary (of circa. 200 hectares) has also been excluded. The added benefit of development at that location is difficult to estimate since, as described in the LP, a single tenant could employ most of the land and the possible use classes and thus staffing requirements of such a development are highly varied.

Table 3.3 Maximum labour intensity values for the net employment land requirement

Use Class: B1a (Max Labour Intensity and Upper Bound for Employment)							
ABT Town	**Gross Empl. Land (Ha)**	**Empl. Land (Ha)**	**GEA m^2**	**Basis for Density**	**m^2 for relevant basis**	**Employment Potential**	**Annual GVA (Mn)**
Ashington	29.1	1.77	10,729	NIA	8,552	777	£19.58
Blyth	14.4	0.88	5,309	NIA	4,232	385	£9.69
Blyth Additional	*5*	*0.3*	*1,843*	*NIA*	*1,469*	*134*	*£3.36*
Seaton Delaval	0.3	0.02	111	NIA	88	8	£0.20
Seghill	1.8	0.11	664	NIA	529	48	£1.21
Bedlington	6.4	0.39	2,360	NIA	1,881	171	£4.31
					Total	**1,523**	**£38.36**

It is important to note that GVA value estimated above are not supplementary to the estimated £70 million value of increased employment; instead these are elements that comprise possible means of achieving increased GVA.

4. Benefits of Support for Economic Development

4.1 Introduction

The ABT will provide significant benefits to local businesses where labour supply will increase and to the planned regeneration of areas near the rail line.

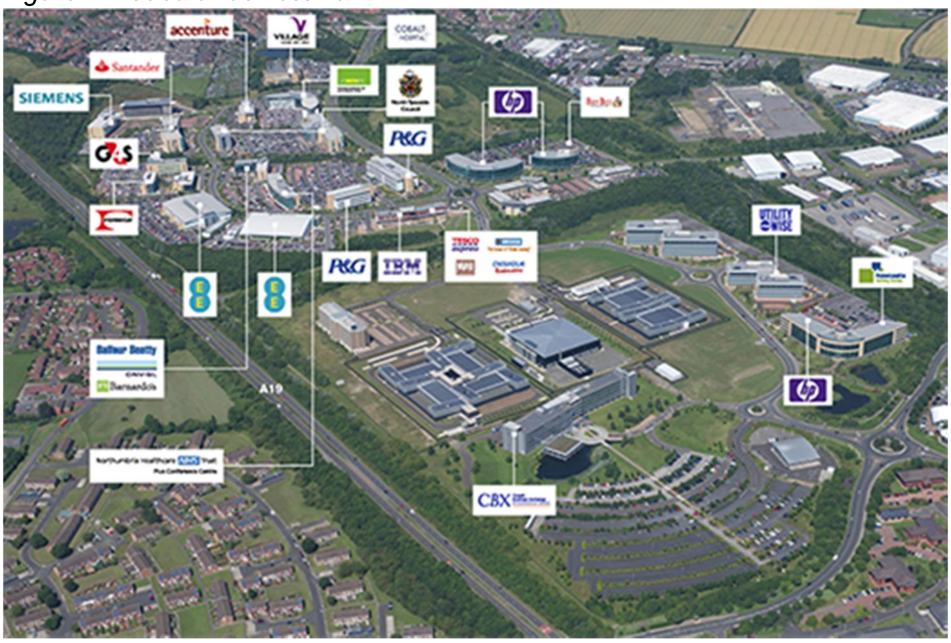
This section assesses the labour supply and investment impact at Cobalt Business Park as a representative case study. The labour supply impact for Tyneside is also discussed.

The primary regeneration benefit of the ABT would be the vital support provided for the planned regeneration of Ashington. The regeneration plans and the potential for the ABT to underpin these efforts are outlined. As the regeneration of Blyth would also benefit from the ABT, a brief description of this impact is also included.

4.2 Impact on Cobalt Business Park

By way of estimating some of the wider economic benefits of the rail line, Cobalt Business Park, the UK's largest office park, was consulted. The objective of the consultation was to ascertain the importance of improved transport connections to the expansion of the park. This section sets out the details of Cobalt in terms of its size and employment and of the findings of the consultation. Figure 4.1 shows the extent of the park and a sample of the tenants at the park.

Figure 4.1 Cobalt Business Park



Cobalt is a business park the size of Newcastle city centre that has been in existence for 16 years. It is home to over 20 companies and employs over 12,000 people. Tenants represent a variety of sectors including IT, banking and the public sector. As such, the park is an important source of employment in the North East, representing a variety of employers to which other areas might aspire. The consultation with Cobalt is therefore an excellent means of gauging present and future labour supply issues.

Labour Supply and Ease of Recruitment

The primary benefit to Cobalt would be the additional labour supply. Cobalt has traditionally found it difficult to recruit employees from towns to the north east of the park, such as Ashington, due to the difficulties faced by commuters from these areas.

The ABT would connect to Cobalt via the Northumberland Park station; commuters could travel direct to this station (with half-hourly services at peak times) on the ABT line and then walk to their place of work. At present, residents of the ABT catchment would need to either drive or avail of a bus service, such as the number 19 service, which has a typical journey time in the region of seventy minutes and is relatively infrequent (hourly).

Indeed, Cobalt have undertaken recruitment drives in Ashington and surrounding areas, highlighting the bus routes available, in the hope of drawing in additional labour. Cobalt has job vacancies at present and would benefit immediately from access to additional sources of labour if a passenger rail link were to be provided.

Cobalt is expanding and new occupiers are moving onto the park, bringing an additional 1,700 employees by the end of 2015. Moreover the park and its tenants expected to continue to grow in the coming years. Many new tenants move to Cobalt to acquire premises large enough to accommodate expansion in their business: for example, Accenture expects to recruit 150 additional employees while Utilitywise has moved with a view to recruiting 600 staff. This expansion will not be possible without sufficient access to the labour force. Given the problems with unemployment and economic activity in the catchment areas of the ABT, the mutual benefits of the rail service to Cobalt and nearby towns in its expansion would be significant.

Attracting Inward Investment

An additional benefit to Cobalt would be the increased attractiveness of the park to investors. Cobalt does not have planning permission to develop the remaining land – an occupier must have signed for design and build before development can commence. The ABT, as a means of connecting the labour force with sources of employment and as a symbol of the regeneration of South East Northumberland, would provide a boost to Cobalt in terms of attracting the investment needed to continue development beyond the existing footprint. The benefit of increased activity, not just to the park but to the region as a whole, was noted:

'To inward investors public transport and connectivity is vital when looking to locate a business … the opening of the train line will give the region a better advantage.'

4.3 Economic Impact at Tyneside

Labour Supply

The increase to labour supply at Cobalt is analogous to the effect that would be experienced in other centres of employment nearby, such as Newcastle's city centre. A new pool of labour, which is largely inaccessible at present due to journey times, would become available to employers.

Jobs density (jobs per working population) in Newcastle-upon-Tyne has been consistently higher than the density in Northumberland over the period 2000 – 2012; this trend is shown in Figure 4.2.

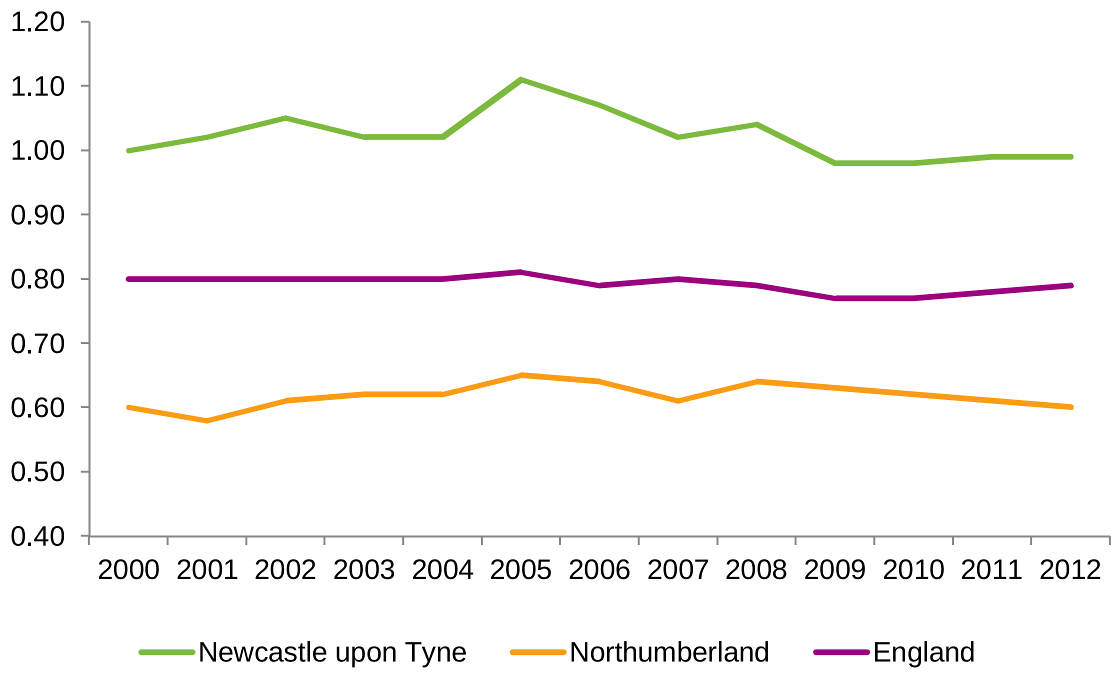
The jobs density in Newcastle-upon-Tyne is slightly below one, indicating that there is a job in Newcastle for almost every person of working age. Given that a proportion of those of working are likely to be unable or not interested in taking up employment, commuters from outside the area are required in Newcastle city centre to fill the demand for labour.

Conversely, there are insufficient jobs in Northumberland and so the opportunities to commute to jobs from Northumberland to Newcastle would be mutually beneficial to these areas. The costs of hiring would decline in Newcastle and additional employment opportunities for those living in the ABT catchment area would be welcomed.

New Business Opportunities

The population of the ABT catchment area is in excess of 90,000. This is a significant market for businesses in the city. The increased access to customers in that market could lead to new enterprises being developed to cater for the increased demand and wider variety of goods and services demanded.

Figure 4.2 Changes in jobs density over time



4.4 Ashington Regeneration

A 10 year plan for the regeneration of Ashington, for which £74 million has been allocated, was recently announced. The proposals are delivered by Arch 'The Northumberland Development Company', an arm's length company, wholly-owned by NCC with a remit to 'attract investment, deliver development and implement regeneration.' The 'Ashington Investment Plan'[10] is published by Arch and sets out the aims of the initiative: to undertake the direct delivery of physical regeneration and to attract new investment to add over 1,000 new jobs to the area.

The investment plan includes several stages and proposed initiatives including the development of the 'North East Quarter' which incorporates:

- A new community and leisure facility (under construction);
- A new office facility for Northumberland County Council has been proposed. The complex would be located adjacent to the new leisure facility and would accommodate 500 – 750 employees; and
- Development of further office space.

Other initiatives relate to the wider town centre with improvements to the flow of traffic and the appearance of Station Road East planned and the regeneration of Hirst.

Rationale for Economic Intervention at Ashington

The motivation for the regeneration in Ashington is as follows:

- The economic position of the area has deteriorated as a result of job losses associated with the decline in coal mining. There is significant unemployment and the supply of jobs is low.
- A two tier economic scenario has developed, with housing developments on the periphery of the town serving commuters who need access to the road network while those who continue to live in the traditional residential areas of the town have diminished access to employment.
- The town centre is seen to be in a 'low demand equilibrium' arising from the decline in income for those living in the town centre. This had led to a decline in the services offered there and thus those who have the least resources to travel elsewhere have become further disadvantaged.
- The retail and leisure opportunities available to consumers in the town centre are weak and so the town centre is not an attractive destination in itself.

It is notable that numerous regeneration efforts undertaken previously in Ashington have failed. There are several reasons for this, as follows. Previously the focus has been on private sector investment, which is difficult to secure in an area such as Ashington; without the appropriate infrastructure, and given the need for regeneration, Ashington is not an attractive investment proposition. In addition, previous strategies did not directly address the issue of joblessness in the area. Therefore this intervention is built upon the premise that public investment in the area is needed to create an attractive proposition for private investors and that generating jobs within the town is vital to its success.

[10] Arch Northumberland, 'Ashington Investment Plan'

Impact of the ABT on the Ashington Regeneration

An important aim of the regeneration plan is securing the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line. With this in mind, in addition to the other regeneration initiatives described above, Arch has acquired the Wansbeck Square office and retail complex above and adjacent to the site of the former railway station.

According to the 'Ashington Investment Plan', the 'scale, nature and precise timeframe' of development of this site is dependent on the reintroduction of the rail service. It is hoped that this will facilitate further development and increase footfall in the area of Station Road. This would strengthen all other planned developments and investments by providing easy access to the town for visitors and by allowing commuters to live close to the town centre, rather than on the periphery.

Jobs that have been attracted to the area in recent years have generally been attracted to the periphery of the town where road network access is increased, rather than the town centre. This has been to the detriment of the town centre, resulting in the two-tier economic state described.

The ABT would thus underpin the aim to create jobs in the town centre rather than on the periphery and to increase demand for the services within the centre.

The ABT would provide access to jobs in areas such as Newcastle city centre and the Cobalt Business Park. These jobs would, in some cases, be taken up by those living in Ashington's vibrant new town centre, with their commute beginning in the vicinity of the train station. This would provide a boost in employment in the area and would begin to reverse the trend of deprivation and lack of demand in the town centre. A boost to employment for those living in the town centre would reinforce the regeneration efforts, increasing demand and thus generating indirect employment.

The ABT service could have a significant effect on Hirst where social exclusion, low employment, and low car ownership inhibit economic progress. The residents of Hirst would benefit from increased access to jobs and this change would complement the council's ongoing work to regenerate the Hirst area.

In addition, the train stations at Ashington and Woodhorn would add momentum to the regeneration efforts. Previous regeneration efforts have failed and a major investment in the town's infrastructure, such as the provision of a much-needed transport service would lend additional confidence to the latest plan. The survey carried out amongst Ashington's residents by Ashington Town Council found that key associative terms for the town centre were 'forgotten' and 'neglected.' The provision of a train station in this area would certainly help to bring about more positive sentiment, particularly given the combined impact of the new service and the regeneration efforts.

Value of Successful Regeneration

Were the regeneration efforts to secure the stated aim of 1,000 new jobs, the average income values in the area would suggest that the annual value to the area would be in the region of £25 million per annum. As with all estimates of GVA set out in this study, the value estimate includes only the value of incomes to individuals, not additional profits or contributions to pensions or similar. The implication being that the estimate of £25 million added GVA per annum is a relatively conservative one for a fully successful regeneration. It is important to note that these jobs and GVA would comprise part of the £70 million estimated value of increasing employment in the catchment area of the ABT set out in section two; to add the values would double-count the impact. This analysis quantifies the extent to which the Ashington regeneration could play a role in achieving a desirable level of employment. One third of the aspirational growth could be achieved through the success of the Ashington regeneration plan. As the success of the plan and, in parts, even its implementation is dependent on the provision of the ABT, the value of the new service is clear.

4.5 Blyth Valley

Blyth Valley is home to the BEREZ, the Blyth Estuary Renewable Energy Zone. The Zone is designated a 'Strategic Employment Zone' in the Local Plan for which over 200 hectares have been allocated.

The land allocation significantly exceeds the total supply required for Northumberland but has been allocated as the sectors it is intended to provide for require very large tracts of land; the LP states that it would be possible for a single occupant to employ most of the land allocated.

Arch 'The Northumberland Development Company' is an arm's length company, wholly-owned by NCC with a remit to 'attract investment, deliverer development and implement regeneration. Arch is currently marketing a number of sites for development in the Blyth region: the details of these sites are set out in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 BEREZ sites currently being marketed by ARCH Northumberland

Site	Area (hectares)	Enterprise Zone Status?
Bates/Wimbourne Quay	11	Yes
Commissioners Quay	2	Yes
East Sleekburn	36	Yes
Dun Cow Quay	0.38	Yes
South Harbour	20	
Sleekburn	35	
Cambois	95	

The area benefits from a wealth of available land, NaREC (National Renewable Energy Centre) and the Port of Blyth. The area is thus poised for a successful regeneration, which would build upon regeneration undertaken up to now. Providing the ABT would increase labour supply and add to the overall attractiveness of the area in the same way as it would affect Cobalt Business Park.

4.6 Improvements to Business Conditions

Businesses in the vicinity of the rail line would stand to benefit from the provision of increased accessibility. The ABT line will support existing employers in areas such as North Seaton, Ashwood, Wansbeck Business Park and others in their efforts to grow. It will also give greater confidence that the economic conditions in the wider area will improve, which in turn will encourage additional investment. A study undertaken previously[11] found that there were possible benefits to existing employers including better access to clients and access to a wider catchment area for their

[11] Capturing Regeneration Impacts of Potential Ashington-Newcastle Passenger Rail Link, Draft Final Report, ERS Research and Consultancy

workforce. With regard to access to customers and job applicants the following results were obtained:

- *Small Companies: 38.89% say a rail link will 'definitely' help access new customers compared to only 33.3% of Medium and Large Companies.*

- *35.3% thought that a rail link to Newcastle would "definitely" help attract more/better [job] applicants, while 21.6% thought the rail link would "possibly" help in this regard.*

5. Additional Accessibility Benefits

5.1 Additional Transport Options and Reduced Journey Times for Existing Commuters

It has been shown that the ABT line would attract additional labour supply to areas such as Cobalt Business Park but benefits would also accrue to those who make these journeys at present, despite the arduous commute.

There are a number of journeys from the ABT catchment area to key employment sites that currently take in excess of 50 minutes, while trips from Cramlington and Morpeth to Newcastle can be made by train hence journey times are generally shorter. Morning peak journey time estimates are is set out in Table 5.1 below. Journeys from Ashington, Bedlington and Blyth are characterised by long journey times with no journey being less than 35 minutes, while a journeys to Team Valley take 90 minutes or more. These results show that despite areas of South East Northumberland being located adjacent to Tyne and Wear the public transport options available at present result in long journey times. These will be expected to improve considerably, with the provision of the ABT line.

Table 5.1 Journey Times from South East Northumberland to Key Employment Sites

		Destination			
		Newcastle City Centre	**Silverlink & Cobalt**	**Regent Centre**	**Team Valley**
Origin	**Ashington**	60	90	55	100
	Bedlington	65	80	35	90
	Blyth	75	52.5	55	100
	Cramlington	35	75	37	60
	Morpeth	30	80	40	70

Source: http://www.traveline.info/ accessed on 12/03/2015, values are representative of typical peak journey times.

5.2 Increased Accessibility to the North of Ashington

Due to the dearth of public transport available to the north of Ashington, the ABT opens up the possibility of Woodhorn being used as a park and ride facility by those living north of Woodhorn.

This would be a viable option if congestion on the route into Tyne & Wear outweighed the convenience of travelling by car without having to switch to train. Similarly, in the event of increases to the cost of travelling by private car, such as increased fuel costs, parking charges and/or of general operation costs, it would be expected that the station at Woodhorn could be used as a park and ride facility.

In addition, the Lynemouth Alcan Smelter could be redeveloped for employment in the North East. Given its location, it would undoubtedly benefit from a passenger rail service to Woodhorn. This would facilitate in-commuting and would be more convenient for business trips, enhancing its attractiveness for inward investment.

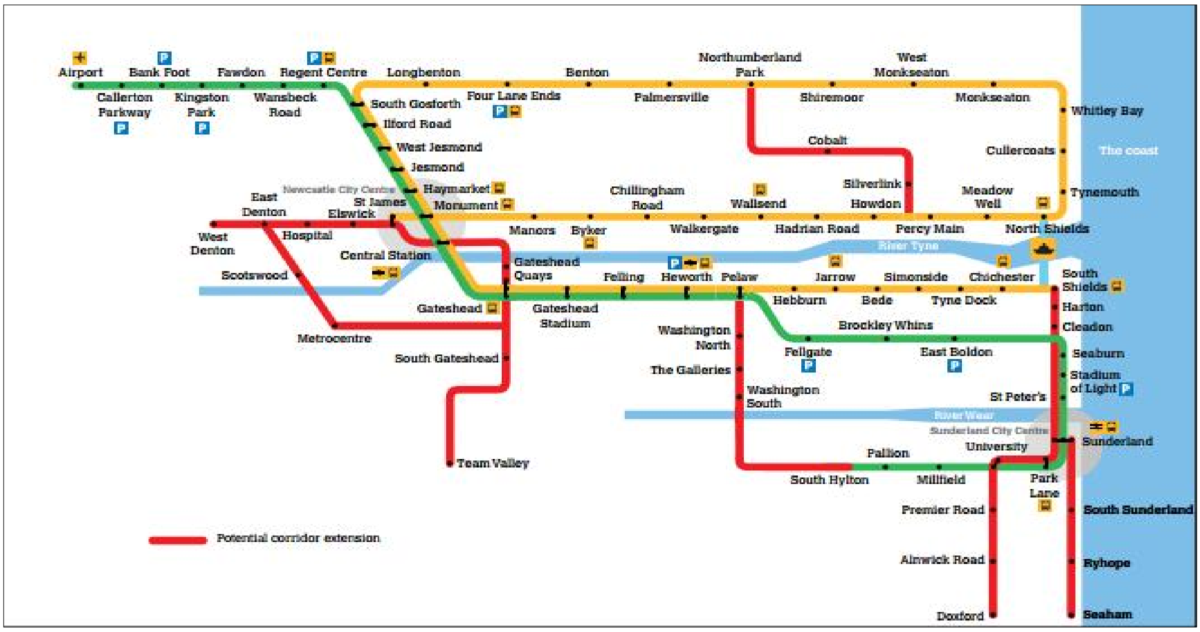
5.3 Accessibility via the ABT and Metro 2030 Combined

The ABT will work in conjunction with other planned transport upgrades, principally the network extensions planned as part of Metro 2030. A map of the planned extensions is included below (Figure 5.1). Residents of the ABT catchment area could switch to Metro at Northumberland Park, rather than walking from the station to the facilities at Cobalt and Silverlink. This is particularly important for commuters with impaired mobility.

Those travelling from the ABT catchment area to Newcastle city will now have the option to travel on to Team Valley if necessary and vice versa. Labour mobility is vital to economic prosperity and the increased access to a wider pool of labour will mean that employers will have a greater likelihood of finding the skills needed for their business in the wider North East region, increasing its attractiveness as a place to start or expand an enterprise.

The combined impact of the services provided by the ABT and the Metro would be significant and it is important not to treat these services in isolation as the interaction effects could be relatively large.

Figure 5.1 Map of Metro 2030 Planned Extensions



6. Conclusions

Key Conclusion: If the employment level in the ABT catchment area were to reach the levels recorded in the Comparator area, a further 2,873 residents of the catchment area of the ABT would be brought into employment. This would lead to an annual increase in GVA of over £70 million.

This study examined the planning context and economic background for areas that would be likely to be affected by the ABT and has concluded that the new service would provide vital supports for areas of economic disadvantage by boosting regeneration efforts and providing access to employment and education services.

The catchment area of the ABT experiences a high level of social and economic exclusion. This could be addressed by improving the access of residents and businesses in the catchment area to the employment, educational and market opportunities provided at Newcastle.

This study, by setting a Comparator area level of employment as a benchmark, estimated the potential increases in jobs and GVA that could be achieved in the ABT catchment area. If the employment level in the ABT catchment area were to reach the levels recorded in the Comparator area, a further 2,873 residents of the catchment area of the ABT would be brought into employment. This would lead to an annual increase in GVA of over £70 million.

It is not suggested that the ABT alone would achieve this, rather that the ABT would provide increased access to jobs and underpin a wide range of initiatives and development objectives in the area that together have the potential for regeneration and increasing employment. A number of opportunities for the development of employment land, regeneration and increasing access to jobs are set out within the report, thus bringing together the aspiration and the means of achieving the desired level of employment.

Additional employment that would result in a GVA boost of £70 million per annum could be brought about in a number of ways. This study determined that development of the allocated employment land in the vicinity of the new service could generate 600 jobs, while the regeneration of Ashington aims to create 1,000 new jobs. In addition, the rail service would improve access to jobs at Cobalt Business Park, where expansion is expected in the coming years and at Tyneside, where in-commuting is required to ensure that labour supply keeps pace with demand.

The benefit of the development of the employment land allocated in the Local Plan and the benefit of job creation via the regeneration of Ashington have been quantified in terms of their GVA benefit within the report. However it is important to note that these benefits are not supplementary to the estimated £70 million value of increased employment; instead, these are elements that inter alia comprise means of achieving increased GVA. Table 6.1 below outlines the developments that would be supported by the rail line and the potential sources of additional employment.

The areas where the development objective has been quantified (Ashington regeneration and the development of employment land allocated within the ABT catchment area) are within the catchment area of the ABT and so will be directly affected by its provision. That is, the level of success in achieving these objectives will be influenced by the ABT. If implemented successfully, these objectives have the potential to contribute over half of the additional employment needed to achieve the benchmark employment level for the area.

In addition, other sources of employment have been identified. The new rail service will provide access to jobs in these areas and so the ABT catchment area will experience the benefit of increased access to employment. Assuming the rail service is provided and the regeneration and development of employment land is successful, there would be scope for a maximum[12] of 1,300 residents of the ABT catchment area to take up employment further afield in areas such as Cobalt and Newcastle. That is, if 1,300 additional jobs are generated in areas such as Cobalt and Newcastle, the full potential of the ABT catchment area could be realised.

To clarify, it is not expected that the provision of the new service will lead to significant job creation at Cobalt or Tyneside. However *independent* jobs growth in these areas is expected and those jobs would be accessible to residents of the ABT catchment area. Given the level of growth expected in the coming year at Cobalt alone, this is an entirely realistic goal.

Table 6.1 Sources of employment for the ABT Catchment area

Potential for increased economic activity in the ABT catchment area	
Employment	2873
GVA	£70m

Potential sources of employment:

1) Ashington regeneration: 1,000 jobs resulting in £25m GVA
2) ABT catchment area employment land allocated in the LP: 590 jobs and £15m GVA
3) Employment at Cobalt Business Park
4) Employment within Tyne and Wear

Up to 1,300 additional jobs

The rail service linking Ashington and Newcastle is a necessary one. The catchment area of the ABT is in a severely disadvantaged economic position arising from its history and the lack of infrastructure and access to jobs. This proposed service, combined with the targeted development and regeneration aims of Northumberland County Council create a unique opportunity to reverse this trend and create a resilient economy in the area. If successful, there is a possible benefit of up to £70 million GVA added per annum in the catchment area of the rail line alone.

[12] This maximum value is estimated based on the assumption that employment rates in the catchment area would not exceed 72%, i.e. the rate recorded in the Comparator catchment area in the 2011 Census. Higher levels would be possible but such circumstances would be exceptional.

Appendix

NOMIS Qualification Data

The highest level of qualification is derived from the question asking people to indicate all types of qualifications held. People were also asked if they held foreign qualifications and to indicate the closest equivalent. There were 12 response options (plus 'no qualifications') covering professional and vocational qualifications, and a range of academic qualifications.

Highest level of qualification

'Highest level of qualification' has been split into four levels, plus categories for 'Apprenticeship' 'Other' and 'None':

- No qualifications;
- Level 1: 1-4 O Levels/CSE/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma, NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic/Essential Skills;
- Level 2: 5+ O Level (Passes)/CSEs (Grade 1)/GCSEs (Grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/ 2-3 AS Levels/VCEs, Intermediate/Higher Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma;
- Apprenticeship;
- Level 3: 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+ AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma, Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma, NVQ Level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma;
- Level 4 and above: Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher Degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree (NI), Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy);
- Other qualifications: Vocational/Work-related Qualifications, Foreign Qualifications (not stated/level unknown).