The South Tyneside Local Plan
Justification for extending the High Landscape Value boundary southwards on the South Tyneside Coast and amendment to proposed Boldon Downhill Area of High Landscape Value

(July 2019)
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1.1 This paper provides evidence to support the extension of The Coast: Area of High Landscape Value as proposed in the draft Local Plan (2019). The justification has been provided by the Council’s Senior Landscape Architect.

1.2 The South Tyneside Landscape Character Study Part 3 (2012) argued the case for the original area of High Landscape Value along the coastline. The area of coast originally recommended for inclusion in the landscape designation ran from Trow Point to Whitburn Coastal Park (See Fig.1). The southern boundary has been drawn to include Whitburn Coastal Park, and followed the edge of the Shearwater housing estate. However, the boundary was drawn to exclude the coastline further south.

1.3 The Council feel that there is merit in extending the candidate Coast Area of High Landscape Value and that there is justification for the area south of Whitburn Coastal Park to City of Sunderland Boundary being included this within the proposed designation. Therefore council proposes that this boundary should be amended to extend southwards following the coastline to the boundary with City of Sunderland.

JUSTIFICATION AND EVIDENCE: COAST AREA OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE

1.4 The coastal corridor between Whitburn Coastal Park and the City of Sunderland boundary becomes quite narrow in areas as it extends south through Whitburn, however the same essential character is present throughout. The expansive views north, south and out to sea are the outstanding feature of this character area, along with the limestone cliffs and outcrops. The same recreational activities are carried out as further north, which includes the coastal path along the grassy clifftops.

1.5 The natural boundary of the proposed designation to the north is at Trow Point where the coastline does become much more of a built up, and urban character but consideration should be given to extending the boundary of the High Landscape Value southwards.

1.6 Using the same approach as detailed in the South Tyneside Landscape Character Study Part 3, the tables below provides justification for the amendment of the boundary to include this area as High Landscape Value.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Landscape Character</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Justification for extended boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typicality</td>
<td>Elements of landscape character which are particularly common within the assessment area as a whole.</td>
<td>Limestone outcrops continue along this stretch of coast and distinctive of the underlying Magnesian limestone and lend a sense of place to the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarity</td>
<td>Particular aspects of landscape character which are rare or unique in the area.</td>
<td>The limestone cliffs have rarity value in the context of South Tyneside and in the wider area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>The degree to which individual characteristics of landscape character are in a good state of repair or health.</td>
<td>Coastal areas are considered to be in particularly good condition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Landscape Qualities

<table>
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<th>Landscape Qualities</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>Aspects of the landscape and our reaction to it which contribute to its natural beauty and aesthetic appreciation.</td>
<td>The coastline continues to be unquestionably scenic, with a strong contrast between the steep cliffs, the grassy cliff tops and the adjacent urban areas. The cliffs offer attractive views across Whitburn Bay to the south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Aspects of the landscape and our reactions to it which contribute to its potential for reaction and amenity.</td>
<td>Key footpaths include the coastal walkway that continues all the way down to Whitburn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Aspects of the landscape and our reactions to it which contribute to the understanding of its historic character and the wider cultural record.</td>
<td>Cultural heritage most obviously contributes to the landscape in the form of historic mineral workings, as represented by old limestone quarries, limekilns, and the restored colliery sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalness</td>
<td>Aspects of the landscape and our reactions to it which contribute to naturalness.</td>
<td>All areas of South Tyneside are strongly man-modified, and no parts of the borough are far from a built up area. Naturalness has been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
considered with reference to the Biodiversity Assessment carried out by the Council in 2011. This classed all open land within the borough into areas of very high, high, medium and low biodiversity value.

Locations within the study area with the greatest concentration of high and very high value include the coastal strip.
Fig 1. Candidate Areas of High Landscape Value – Landscape Character Study 2012
Fig 2. Proposed Coast Area of High Landscape Value
The Landscape Character Study (2012) proposes a new boundary for the Boldon Downhill area of High Landscape Value. These boundaries are described as follows:

‘The boundaries of the candidate area are as follows:
- The western boundary follows Downhill Lane and the track at the foot of the scarp;
- The southern boundary follows the borough boundary;
- The eastern boundary follows the eastern edge of the golf course; and
- The northern boundary follows the urban/Green Belt boundary.’

The draft Local Plan proposes to allocate an area of land which falls within the proposed AHLV boundary for housing-allocation H3.65 ‘Land West of Boldon Cemetery’. This site currently forms part of the northern boundary of the proposed AHLV.

The allocation will result in this parcel of land being deleted from the Green Belt on the adoption of the Local Plan. Therefore, to maintain consistency with the boundaries identified in the Landscape Character Study, the northern boundary of the Boldon Downhill designation has been amended to follow the proposed Green Belt boundary in the draft Local Plan, and therefore the ‘Land West of Boldon Cemetery’ has been excluded from the AHLV designation. The proposed boundary for the Boldon Downhill designation is shown in Fig. 3.

Fig.3 Boldon Downhill Area of High Landscape Value – Designation Boundaries