

- Denton Island has recently seen an upsurge in economic activity with the successful establishment of the Enterprise Centre and the Newhaven campus of Sussex Downs College. Lewes District Council have secured funding from Coastal Communities Fund to extend Enterprise centre and provide improvements to the adjacent college and community centre (Newhaven growth Quarter).
- Newhaven is seeing strong interest from various organisations focussed on sustainable energies. An opportunity has been identified to link the sustainability narrative to the emerging green technology sector within the town, potentially creating new education, training and employment opportunities for local residents.

*Information Sources: Lewes District Council Economic Land Review*

## **Retail**

Retail offer within the town centre has significantly declined with a significant number of vacant units. It has been an issue for a while that the town centre has been in serious decline. Investment is needed and urgent attention.

The majority of retail development in recent years has occurred on former industrial land on the east of the river with larger out of town type of retail provision.

Surveys of Lewes District's town centres were undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. In that time the vacancy rate in Newhaven had increased suggesting that the town's local economy is not performing well. In addition, some of Newhaven's factories and industrial units are no longer in operation, a number that has been added to by the closure of the Parker Pen factory in 2010.

In the Lewes District Council Shopping and Town Centre Study 2012, questions were asked of local people as to what improvements could be made to encourage shopping. In Newhaven 27% of people said that improvements should be made to the town centre compared with 7% of local people for Seaford, 8% for Lewes and 11% for Peacehaven.

Newhaven town centre is focused upon the High Street and Newhaven Square shopping precinct and the latter is anchored by a Co-op store (1,500 sqm net). The shopping core is pedestrianized; however, it is fully contained by an often congested ring road (North Way and South Way) which has the effect of cutting the town centre off from the rest of the town.

Peacocks, Poundstretcher and Boots are the only significant national comparison multiples in Newhaven. There are a number of vacancies including a number of larger, more modern premises.

Whilst Newhaven town centre is not a particularly strong retail location, it does have a range of other town centre uses including cafes and restaurant premises, take-away food outlets, pubs and A2 professional service uses.

The Lewes District Shopping and Town Centres Study 2012 suggested the following strategy for Newhaven Town centre:

- Reclassify as a District Centre on the basis the town will not be able to establish itself as a prominent retail destination in the District but acknowledging the role it has to play in meeting local needs.
- Limited scope for further in-centre floorspace but the aim should be to enhance the existing main food anchor.
- Enhance the centre's wider appeal to tourist visitors.

In managing development in the town centre it was suggested that there was a need to:

- Resist any out-of-centre retail development and include a criteria-based policy reflecting the appropriate PPS6 tests.
- Promote enhancement of town centre along with Denton Island, the marina and the Fort, ensuring any development in these areas is well-linked to the centre.
- Support the identified primary shopping area (Newhaven Square and the High Street) and the identification of the ring road as the town centre boundary.

Specifically the study suggested:

- Newhaven Square (area around the Co-op): redevelopment, including reconfiguration of the car park, is supported to enhance the food retail offer in the town centre.
- Royal Mail sorting office (54 High Street): mixed-use development opportunity if the site becomes available over the plan period, subject to Royal Mail moving their sorting operations elsewhere
- 1-13 Bridge Street: mixed-use redevelopment including A1 (retail) and A3 (restaurants and cafes) uses.

Additional initiatives were also recommended:

- Encourage residential development through the town centre to reinforce vitality and viability.
- Develop a tourist/visitor strategy to promote the marina, the Fort and beach,



including enhancement of linkages to the town centre.

## Tourism

Newhaven has a Premier Inn hotel falling within a budget stand with 70 rooms (30 rooms were added in 2006). The possible expansion of Newhaven Port facilities and development of Newhaven. Rooms were previously available in The Habourside and Bridge Inn, pubs which are currently closed.

Looking at future market prospects have identified that Eastside could generate increased demand for hotel accommodation in Newhaven from the corporate and contractors market in the longer term. Housing development here may also generate increased demand from the visiting friends and relatives market.

*Information source: Lewes District Council Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study*

## The Port

Newhaven Port & Properties is the relevant operating authority for Newhaven Harbour. Although the port land does not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan area of designation, evidence on port activities provides useful context for the town in terms of employment and tourism.

Today the main services operating from the harbour are the cross-channel ferry to Dieppe and commercial trade in aggregates and scrap metals. There is also a commercial fishing fleet and a small marina. . However there is currently a threat of closure of the ferry service which has run for some 50 years.

The port has recently been selected as the shore base for the maintenance port for the proposed Rampion offshore wind farm (estimated to create 85 jobs for the life of the wind farm). The wind farm will generate enough energy to power some 450,000 homes (two-thirds of homes in Sussex).

In 2010, 253,000 passengers travelled through the port, a 23% reduction in the number that travelled in 2007. The amount of freight handled declined to its lowest level for ten years at 824,000 tonnes. There are a number of derelict and under-utilised sites that offer significant opportunities for regeneration, near to or adjoining the harbour and there has been significant recent water-front redevelopment at West Quay.

### Key Issues and Comments relating to the Economic profile.

- The gradual decline of the town's manufacturing and industrial base has compounded Newhaven's decline although a high proportion of jobs are still in manufacturing
- Less self-employed than the town of Lewes and East Sussex
- Relatively higher unemployment with 13% claiming out of work benefits
- Less retired
- Higher rate of long term unemployment (both male and female) including the 16-24 years age range

- Higher long term sickness
- Significant number of contaminated sites which could impact on viability of sites for development
- Economic activity growing with Enterprise centre and its proposed extension to provide 'move on' space
- Impact of ring road on town centre
- Decline of town centre with few multiples and a number of empty shop units.
- Shift of retail offer from west to east of the river.
- Town centre would benefit from for visual enhancement of public realm
- Lewes District Council has identified Newhaven as area to encourage green technology sector potentially creating new education, training and employment opportunities, with 'clean green and marine' focus.
- Future market prospects for increased visitor accommodation
- Port activity will influence local job market



# Environmental Profile

Newhaven is located on the River Ouse, which flows southwards through a gap in the South Downs. The historic core of the town is located on a slight spur of the downs that projects into the west side of the river valley from the lower end of Bridge Street to the old workhouse on Church Hill.

Due to the location of the town in relation to the sea and the River Ouse there are areas of the town that are susceptible to periodic flooding, with the latest event taking place in winter 2013.

Overlooking the town from the south is Newhaven Fort, a scheduled ancient monument. The cliffs to the south at Castle Hill are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for their geological interest with the hill being a designated Local Nature Reserve. Much of the land along the river is in employment and industrial use with port related uses located along the southern section.

The majority of the residential development is located west of the river, with some development in the area of Denton to the north east which has several areas of archaeological interest. A significant proportion of the urban development is fairly elevated but along dry valleys or with mature trees forming a backdrop and therefore relatively concealed from outside views. Its impact on the surrounding countryside is therefore reduced except for the waste incinerator that dominates the southern end of the Ouse Valley.

The South Downs National Park designation lies to the west, north and east of the town, and provides a natural constraint to development spreading much beyond its current extent. The Downs form a green and valued gap between the urban areas of Newhaven and Peacehaven, while the Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve and Tide Mills - a large low lying area between the River Ouse and Downs to the east - provides an important undeveloped gap between Newhaven and Seaford.

The East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment describes and records what makes the different landscapes in East Sussex distinctive and different. This includes urban as well as rural landscapes. The following characteristics, special features and problem and pressures have been written about **Newhaven** in this document as follows:

## Characteristics

- The town has a salty, maritime flavour, as befits a working port and gateway to Europe.
- The scale of the heavy industry on the riverbanks, huge wharfs and the size of the ferry when it is in port contrasts with the rows of small terraced cottages clustered up the hillsides
- The marina and new housing on the west side of the river are bright, jaunty and colourful in character
- The boat, the fish market and the jumble of fishing equipment that litters the quaysides gives the quays a distinct identity

- The town centre is circled by main through routes cutting it off somewhat from the rest of the town.

### Special features

- Newhaven Fort has a rich history and from its entrance there are dramatic views across the town
- The swing bridge punctuates the flow of traffic across the river
- Features of the working port are retained, such as the fishing boats moored in the creek beside Denton Island and the huge grey timbered quays intensify the character of the town.
- The historic ruins at Tidemills

### Problems, Pressures and detracting features

- Industrial clutter at North Quay
- Modern housing estates blanketing valley sides at Valley Road, Gibbon Road, also at Denton across the valley
- Harsh open built up edges to countryside and South Downs National Park
- Meeching Quarry
- Dauntingly dreary underpass below the ring road to access the town centre
- The severance impact of the ring road
- Impact of waste incinerator (measures have been taken to reduce the impact with tree planting which has yet to grow sufficiently to soften impact).

*Information Source: East Sussex County Landscape Assessment*

### Designations

Ouse Valley Nature Reserve lies between Newhaven and Seaford and is partly within the Newhaven Parish. It was created to conserve wildlife and provide flood management when the business park and new road were built in Newhaven.

### Public Realm

The Lewes District Public Realm Framework 2013 identified the following challenges for the public realm of Newhaven:

- Poor orientation, legibility and connectivity
- Poor arrival experiences dominated by roadway infrastructure
- An isolated and disjointed town centre
- Poor connectivity of outer residential areas to the town centre
- Poorly promoted sites of interest.

The following suggested priority areas for improvement:

- Connection and sense of arrival
- Connection and definition of Denton Island
- Access to the National Park



- Promotion of the town's maritime and built heritage
- Promotion of open spaces, points of interest and conservation areas

## Conservation areas and Listed buildings

### Denton Conservation Area: Key Positive Characteristics

- Location between the South Downs and the River Ouse;
- Small linear village based around two streets;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, many of which are listed;
- The prominent position of St. Leonard's Church;
- Graveyard detached from the church;
- Concentration of historic buildings around church;
- Attractive mix of cottages, houses and converted farm buildings;
- Semi-rural character reinforced by the flint walls and tree groups;
- Use of vernacular materials including flint, brick, clay tiles and slate;
- 20th century development, while prominent, has not spoilt the historic core of the village;
- The lack of significant vehicular traffic through the village;
- The tranquil atmosphere.

### Recommendations of Conservation Area Appraisal

- That the quality of new development, particularly residential alterations and extensions, be better controlled through the planning process. Suggested that an Article 4 Direction to reduce permitted development rights and allow the Local Planning Authority greater control over minor development.
- That the semi-rural character of the conservation area be protected.
- Minor alterations to the conservation area boundary are proposed.

### Church Hill Conservation Area

The Conservation Area comprises three main elements, the Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels, the Old Rectory and the Listed walls. The buildings are detached structures set within spacious separate contained areas.

*Information Sources [http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan\\_NewhavenCAA.pdf](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_NewhavenCAA.pdf)*

### Listed buildings

Newhaven has eight buildings that date from 1540 – 1845, six dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and two from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

*Information Sources: Historic Character Assessment Report for Newhaven, Roland Harris 2004*

## Allotments

There are 47 allotments located adjacent to the Newhaven Cemetery with 37 people on the waiting list

## Water

The whole of the South East of England, including land within the Lewes District, is classed as a Water Stressed Area, meaning that prudent use of the Plan Area's water resource is sought.

Despite this, water use in the Southern area of the country is higher than the national average. The river water quality in the district is far below average in all three of the Environment Agency's categories for assessing rivers and lakes.

## Coastline

Cliffs in the Lewes District are subject to erosion by wind, wave and tide. Erosion rates are typically 0.3 metres per year. This rate however is not regular, as significant cliff falls are often followed by several years of stability.

The focus of Lewes District's coastal defences is on the frontage from Saltdean to Peacehaven, where a 50 year strategy covering major renewal works for current defences exists. The cliffs between Peacehaven Heights and **Newhaven**, and at Seaford Head, do not have any coastal defences, nor are any proposed. At these locations, as there is little or no development to protect, the cliffs will continue to erode naturally without additional protection.

The policies for the coast in Lewes District are set out in the Beachy Head to Selsey Bill Coastal Management Plan, which recommends individual approaches for separate units as follows:

- The Newhaven Harbour to Peacehaven Heights unit: no active intervention for the first 50 years and then managed realignment.
- The Seaford and the Newhaven Harbour and River Ouse units: hold the line for the next 100 years
- The Seaford (Tide Mills) to Newhaven Harbour unit: no active intervention for the first 20 years and thereafter managed realignment.

A key issue are the impacts of climate change, including increased storminess and frequency of extreme events, combined with a continued trend of rising sea levels and insufficient sediment supply, are the major issues for the future of coastal and river defences. Without continued investment in coastal and river protection measures, the District's coastline will be at increased risk of erosion and/or inundation from the sea.

*Information source: Lewes District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2014 and Lewes District Council Local Plan Part 2 Sustainability Appraisal*

## Flooding

### Flood risk zones



The Environment Agency have identified Newhaven as an area that has seen a change at the coastal frontage impacting on the extent of Flood Zone 2 and 3. This means that there is an increased coastal flood risk. Much of the flooding now comes from wave overtopping and not from high tides. The new flood depths associated with the new outlines are generally shallow and the overall risk of flooding is likely to be low.

***Changes to Flood Zone 3 as a result of New Modelling***



[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) Blue - New flood zone, Red - Previous flood zone

The Environment Agency is currently reviewing the Ouse Valley Flood Plan.

## Air Quality

Levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in the South Way area of Newhaven have recently reached maximum levels, and so an Air Quality Management Area is proposed to be designated in the near future by Lewes District Council.

### **Key Issues and Comments**

- Improvement needed to public realm within town centre for community and visitors
- Strengthen connectivity of retail areas east and west of the river
- Improvement to quality and signage of routeways within the town to join up different neighbourhoods
- Severance impact of ring road on town centre
- Severance impact of river between east and west sides of the town
- Poor environmental quality to town centre gateways
- Industrial 'clutter' on North Quay (outside Neighbourhood Plan scope as not within NP designated area)
- Visual impact of older industrial/employment areas
- Stark contrast between urban and rural landscapes
- Importance of urban and rural landscapes on tourism when approaching town from the sea
- Flood risk identified to areas within the town
- Unprotected cliffs
- Impacts of Climate Change
- Poor air quality in congested parts of the town