



Northumberland
County Council

Design Principles

Blyth Town Council – Trial options for partnership

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A partnership driven by quality

BTC priority is to enhance appearance of gateways into town. Increase cutting frequency from current position of circa 12 days between cuts to circa 7/8 days between cuts. This frequency will impact on our ability to cut amenity grass.

We need to understand, quantify and explain the impact this will have on amenity grass.

We anticipate the average number of gateway cuts required per season is circa 20 cuts (frequency will be higher earlier in the season, then drop off – quality/appearance constantly monitored and cut frequency adjusted accordingly).

We anticipate the average number of amenity grass cuts required per season is circa 13 cuts, potentially a return to core standard (frequency will be higher earlier in the season, then drop off – quality/appearance constantly monitored and cut frequency adjusted accordingly).

Driven by quality – supported by data

Total SqM of amenity grass in Blyth (including gateways) is 1,262,829 SqM. In 2022 we averaged 15 cuts, this equates to 18,942,435 SqM cut in the year.

197,150 SqM is now categorised as gateway grass.

1,065,679 SqM is now categorised as amenity grass.

- 20 gateway cuts @ 197,150 SqM = 3,943,000 SqM (Batwing) – (swap some work from Batwing to Tractor – to free up capacity).
- 13 amenity cuts @ 1,065,679 SqM = 13,853,827 SqM

3,943,000 SqM Total gateway cuts + 13,853,827 SqM total amenity cuts = 17,796,827

The difference in capacity between 18.9 million SqM achieved last season compared to 17.8 million SqM detailed above frees up enough time for enhanced strimming work.

Further explanation of grass cutting (existing compared to gateway trial)

Staffing numbers will be reduced due to removal of the floral seasonal, which will be moved to watering.

The number of machines being used to cut grass will reduce by two (ride on mowers).

- One of will be dedicated to weed control and will be fitted with the weed ripping brushes
- The other will be retained as a spare

The grass cutting fleet will therefore be made up of 6 John Deere ride on mowers, 1 batwing and 1 tractor.

Gateways will be cut approx. 20 times (an **increase on existing standard**)

Remaining amenity grass will be cut approx. 13 times and will be monitored for quality and appearance which will dictate cuts (a **decrease on existing standard** – but still at core frequency)

Additional capacity will be created by moving to the model described above. This additional capacity will be used to significantly enhance the aesthetic appearance of all grass plots by undertaking additional strimming of wall backs, lampposts and street signs.

Dropping to the agreed frequency levels of cutting with higher quality strimming should satisfy the Town Councils desire to move to a quality over quantity model for grass cutting.

Further enhancing this model for all identified gateways into the town should achieve the welcoming and cared for image the Town Council is seeking.

Moving away from a focus on achieving a set number of cuts to a quality focused model will need a new approach to performance monitoring/management. NCC officers will work with BTC to establish an inspection standard which will be reported monthly – effectively signing each month off as acceptable to BTC or not.

Projected Staffing Grounds Maintenance

Amenity Grass Cutting

- 6 staff Members x John Deere Ride On Machines
- 1 Staff Member x John Deere Ride On for Weed and Strimmer work
- 1 Staff Member x Floral (Watering)
- One John Deere Spare for maintenance

Wide Area work

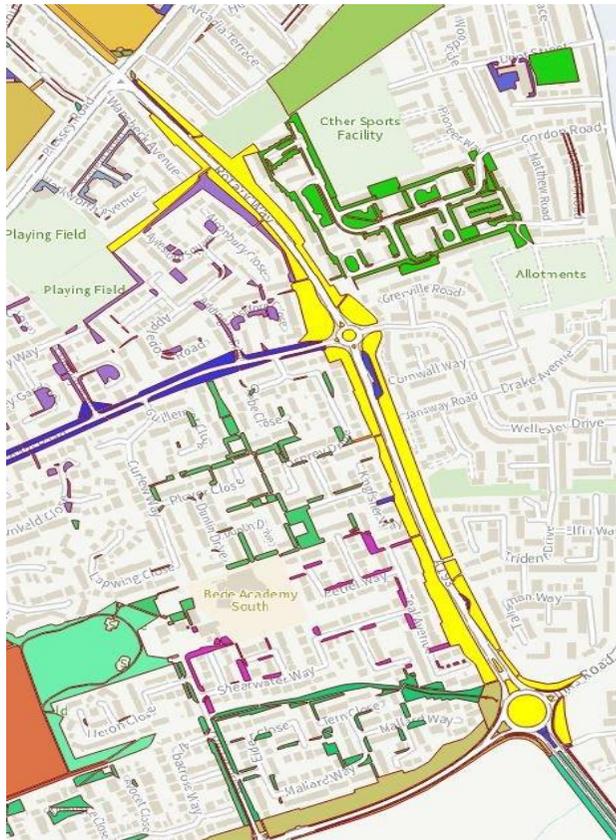
- 1 Staff Member x Tractor and Deck

Blyth Gateway Work

- 1 Staff Member x Batwing Grass Cutter.

Gateways to Blyth

Rotary Way

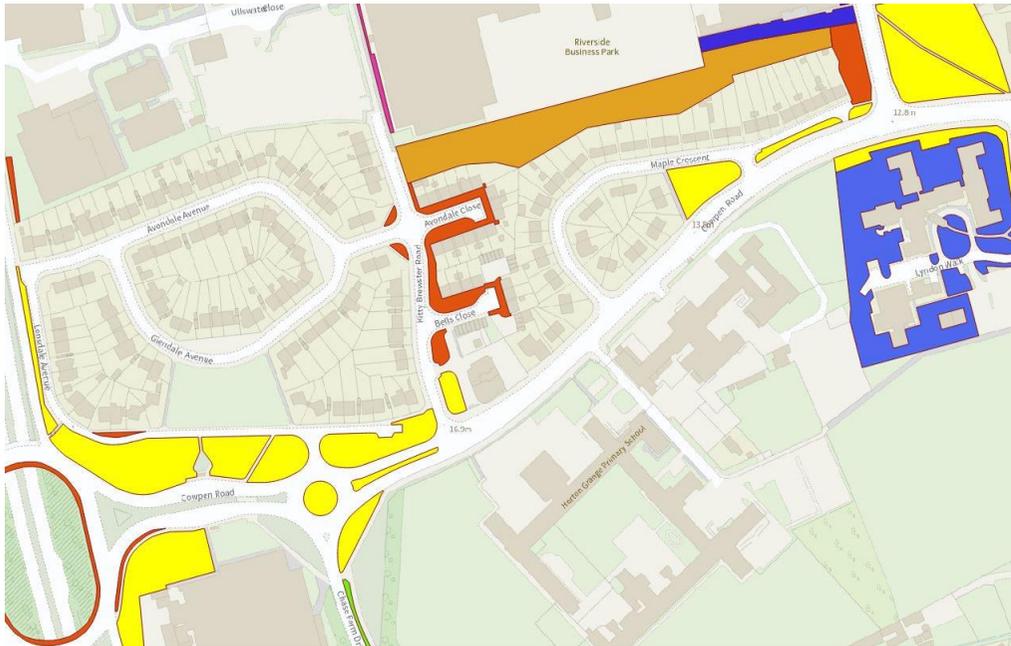


Old Wellesley School and Bandstand



Gateways to Blyth

- Cowpen Road 1 Asda to Tynedale

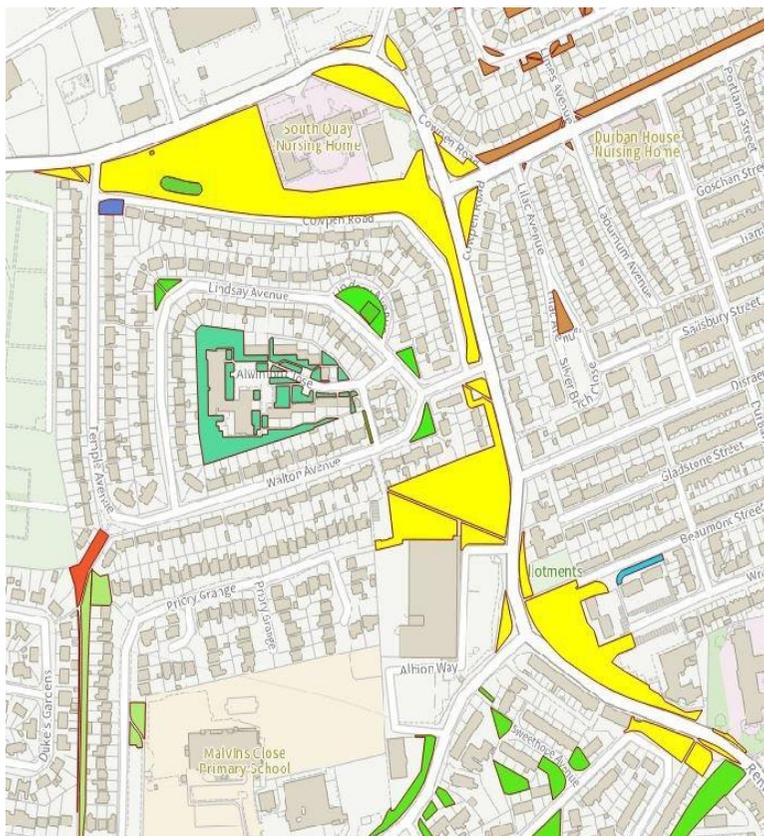


- Cowpen Road 2 Sydney Garden to Craigmill Park



Gateways to Blyth

- Cowpen Road To Surestart



- Cowpen Road 3



Gateways to Blyth

- Blyth Links and Fort House

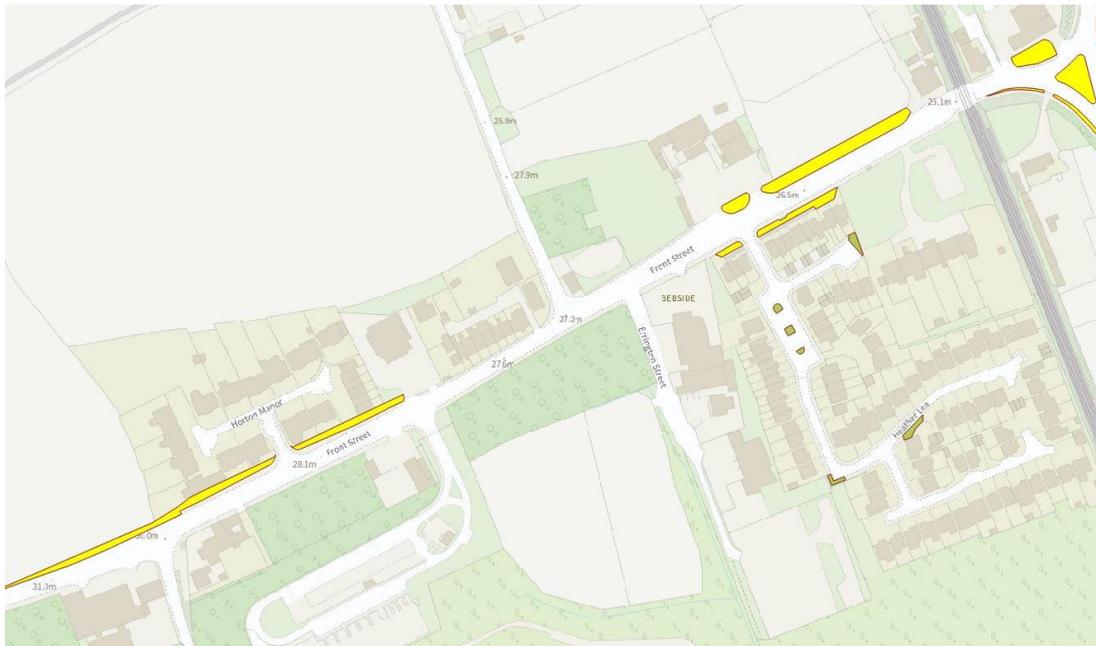


- Bebside 1



Gateways to Blyth

- Bebside 2

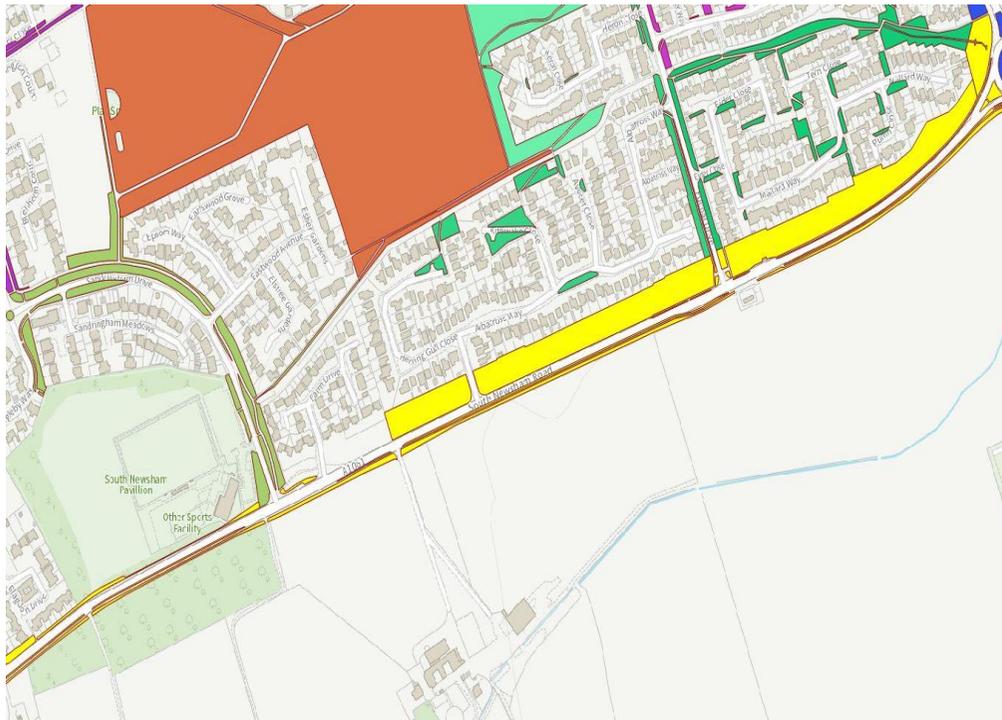


- Hodgsons Road

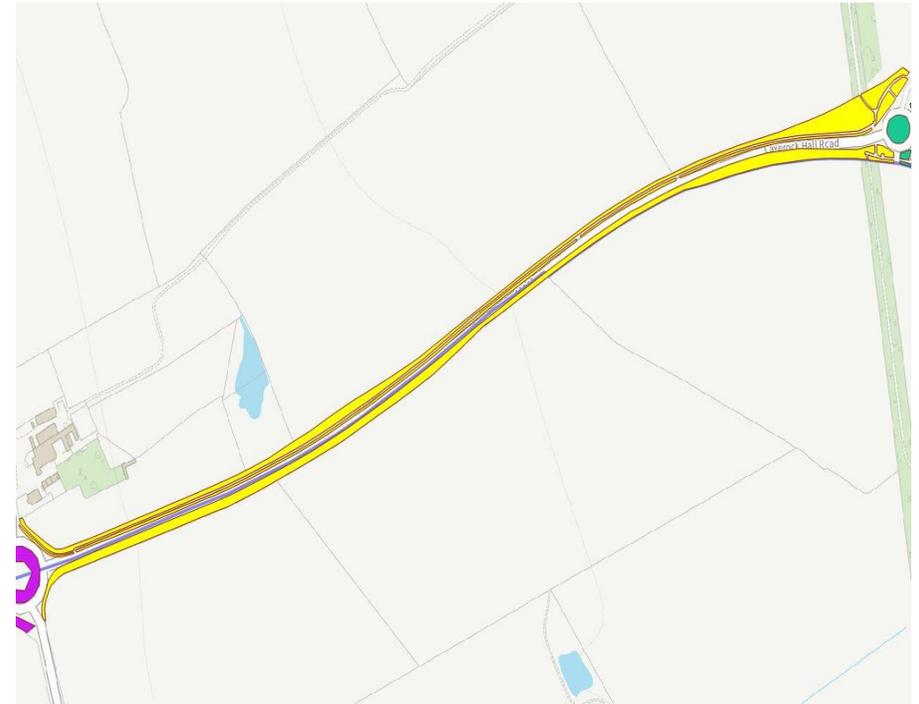


Gateways to Blyth

- South Newsham Road

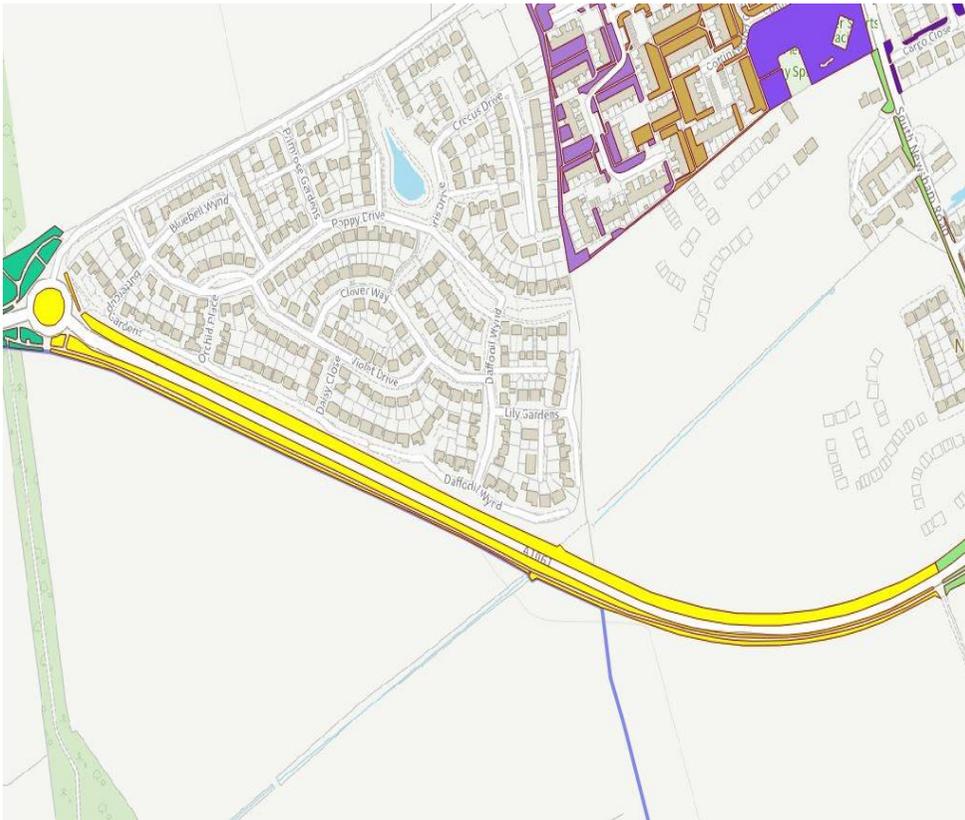


- Laverock Hall Road To Newsham 1



Gateways to Blyth

- Laverock Hall Road to Newsham Road



- Links Road



Street Cleansing

Fresh look at how we do things:

- Retain existing staff numbers
- Change deployment arrangements
- Two person operation teams remain
- One drives route, emptying bins etc
- Other is dropped off and litter picks pre-determined areas/routes [based on hotspot info]
- A shift to highly visible cleansing presence

Notes:

Option for NCC to purchase 2/3 barrows/litter carts stored within or close to areas which require enhanced cleansing (need to identify storage)

Operative dropped off at location, completes route, is picked up and assists with any heavier work (fly tipping, larger litter accumulations...)

Hotspots are known but could be changed, with input from BTC, should improvement be seen in these areas.

Bus Shelter cleansing

A reduction in attendance to clean bus shelters from 4 week frequency to 8 week frequency was put forward during earlier discussions. We have 86 bus shelters to clean in Blyth, cleansed by 3 staff.

A proposal to take this one step further has been put forward for consideration: Identify clean estates (IE: Soligen Estate and South Beach) and moving to BI-Monthly Frequency.

Our analysis suggests that the reduction in cleansing (4 to 8 week interval) frees up 28 hours per month to do other work.

We propose to use the available time to cleanse seating on the market place (until the new development is complete), also:

- Any other planned work on the market
- Additional sweeping
- Ridley Park work (core work)
- Weed rip in agreed areas during the growing season
- Other options – for further discussion.....