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# Welcome to Blyth, Northumberland



## *History* Blyth, Northumberland

### INTRODUCTION

Blyth is a coastal town in southeast Northumberland, England, with a population of 37,339 as of the 2011 Census. Its port date back to the 12th century, with modern development starting in the 18th century. Historically reliant on coal mining and shipbuilding, the town has undergone regeneration since the 1990s. The Keel Row Shopping Centre and redeveloped marketplace have revitalized the town center. The Quayside features a sculpture commemorating its industrial past, and offshore wind farms have been established since the 1990s. Blyth is also known for its football club, Blyth Spartans, famous for their 1978 FA Cup exploits.

The history of Blyth Town spans centuries, beginning with the establishment of its port in the 12th century. Originally known as 'Blida,' derived from the river's name meaning 'gentle' or 'merry,' it evolved into 'Blyth' over time. Significant milestones include the formal construction of the harbor in 1730 and the development of areas like Cowpen Quay and Waterloo Road in the early 19th century. The town's industrial landscape grew with the construction of railways, the founding of Blyth Spartans football club, and notable events such as the building of HMS Ark Royal during World War I. However, the mid-20th century brought closures of railways, collieries, and the shipyard, marking a shift in the town's economic landscape. Modern developments include the opening of the Keel Row Shopping Centre in 1991 and the unveiling of the Spirit of the Staithes sculpture in 2003. Between 2004 and 2009, Blyth experienced several notable changes. In 2004, the Wallaw Cinema, the town's last cinema, closed down, marking the end of a cultural era. Then, in 2005, a significant referendum took place regarding the restructuring of local government in Northumberland, reflecting residents' opinions on centralization. The following year, in March 2009, Blyth MarketPlace underwent a £3 million renovation, culminating in its reopening after a 10-month closure. This renovation included the installation of a new column featuring lighting effects, known as the Hyperscope, which celebrated the town's coal mining heritage and wartime contributions. Additionally, in April 2009, Blyth Valley Borough was abolished as part of broader structural changes to local government in England, transitioning to a one-tier system under Northumberland County Council. The new council retained the name of the previous county council following public polling. These years saw both cultural shifts and administrative changes in Blyth, reflecting its ongoing evolution. Despite changes in governance and economic challenges, Blyth continues to evolve, retaining connections to its rich industrial heritage.



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Blyth is a town located in Northumberland, England. While officially designated as a town, Blyth has the feel of a close-knit community. Its culture is influenced by its maritime heritage, industrial history, and the natural beauty of the Northumberland coast.

**Maritime Heritage:** Blyth has a rich maritime history, with its port being a significant center for coal shipping in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This maritime heritage is still evident today in the town's architecture, museums, and festivals. The port area remains active, albeit with a focus on different industries.

**Industry and Innovation:** Historically, Blyth was known for its coal mining, shipbuilding, and fishing industries. While these industries have declined, Blyth has transitioned towards renewable energy and advanced manufacturing sectors. This spirit of innovation and adaptability is ingrained in the town's culture.

**Community Events:** Blyth hosts various community events and festivals throughout the year, celebrating its heritage and bringing people together. These events often feature music, food, and activities for all ages, fostering a sense of belonging and community pride.

**Natural Beauty:** Situated on the Northumberland coast, Blyth is surrounded by stunning natural landscapes, including sandy beaches, dunes, and coastal trails. The town's residents often engage in outdoor activities such as walking, birdwatching, and water sports, appreciating and preserving the natural environment.

**Arts and Culture:** While Blyth may not be as renowned for its arts scene as larger cities, it still has a vibrant cultural community. Local artists, musicians, and performers contribute to the town's cultural tapestry through exhibitions, concerts, and theatrical productions.

**Sports and Recreation:** Sports play a significant role in Blyth's culture, with activities ranging from football (soccer) to rugby, cricket, and sailing. The town has various sports clubs and facilities, promoting physical health and community engagement.

Overall, Blyth's culture is characterized by a blend of tradition and modernity, with a strong sense of community, pride in its heritage, and an openness to embracing new opportunities.



# Investment Overview

Blyth is rapidly evolving into a strategic hub for data, energy, and logistics. Anchored by multi-billion-pound investments, the town is benefitting from significant infrastructure enhancements, port expansion, and targeted regeneration initiatives. These developments present substantial opportunities for investors across property, logistics, supply chains, and services.

Huge hyperscale data-centre project (Cambois / former Britishvolt / Blyth Power Station site)

- A Blackstone-backed hyperscale data-centre campus (to be operated by QTS) on the former Britishvolt / Blyth Power Station site at Cambois near Blyth has been approved/green-lit and is being promoted as a c.£10 billion AI / cloud computing development.
- Scale & jobs: plans describe multiple large buildings covering hundreds of thousands of square metres and forecast thousands of jobs during construction and hundreds (to low thousands) of ongoing roles plus thousands of indirect jobs. Blackstone/QTS and local reports give figures in the hundreds-to-thousands range (e.g., ~1,200 construction roles often quoted and wider local job multipliers).
- Local investment commitments: the developer has agreed significant community/skills funding as part of the package (reports reference a c. £110m payment / fund for local growth, skills and infrastructure).
- Note (risks / public debate): environmental and resilience questions have been raised in reporting — e.g., coverage about large backup-generation capacity and energy demand (some critics highlight diesel generator capacity in planning/analysis articles). These are active topics in local and specialist press.

Port of Blyth — stronger trading and targeted upgrades

- The Port of Blyth has reported record-level trading/performance in recent years and continues to position itself as a leading UK offshore-energy support base (renewables / wind / energy logistics). The port's 2024/25 reporting highlights continued growth in renewables-related business.
- Recent capital works and capacity improvements include new concrete hard-standing areas, terminal refurbishments, and refurbishment/planned upgrade of former head-office buildings into higher-spec offices — improvements that increase cargo handling flexibility and support larger renewables projects.
- Commercial implication: the Port is actively marketing quayside development opportunities and engineering/warehouse capacity to support offshore wind, energy-sector logistics and heavy cargo — so port activity and supporting supply-chain opportunities are rising





# Growth Sectors

In 2025, Blyth, Northumberland is experiencing strong growth across several key sectors, led by clean energy and offshore renewables, with the Port of Blyth hosting EDF's 41.5 MW wind farm and the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult expanding through a new £6 million Technology Development Centre to support innovation. Advanced manufacturing and green innovation are being driven by the North East Investment Zone, Energy Central Campus developments, and a new private 5G innovation lab at the port. Skills and workforce development are central, with the Energy Central Learning Hub now open and the Energy Central Institute approved to provide higher-level training in clean energy and electrification. Digital infrastructure is another major growth area, anchored by Blackstone/QTS's £10 billion hyperscale data centre campus at Cambois and the designation of an AI Growth Zone expected to bring billions more in investment and thousands of jobs. Complementing this are transport and infrastructure improvements, such as the reopening of the Northumberland Line and town regeneration projects worth around £90-95 million, aimed at boosting connectivity, culture, and liveability. Together, these initiatives are positioning Blyth as a hub for renewables, digital innovation, and skills, while also raising challenges around energy supply, environmental impact, planning, and workforce readiness.

## Key risks & constraints

- Energy supply & grid capacity: especially for large power users (data centres, renewables). Ensuring green power and grid stability will be essential.
- Planning consents & environmental issues: marine, wildlife, local community; protests or delays possible.
- Skills / workforce lag: even if training facilities are in place, attracting/retaining the necessary staff (engineers, specialists) may be competitive.
- Infrastructure: transport, fibre / connectivity: ensuring freight links, housing, connectivity scale with growth.
- Funding & inflation pressure: construction and capital costs are rising; budgets / funding allocations may be squeezed.

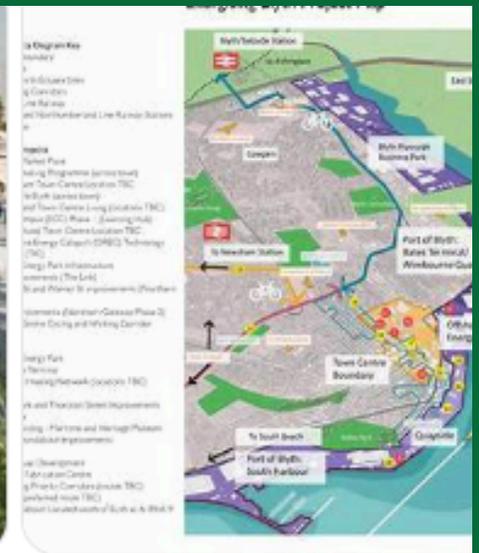
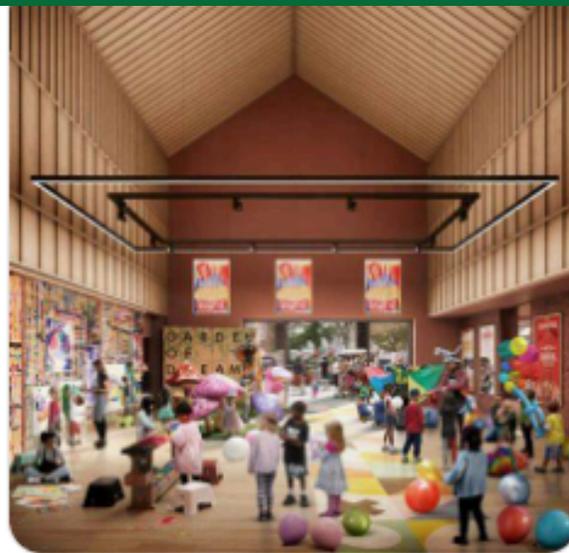
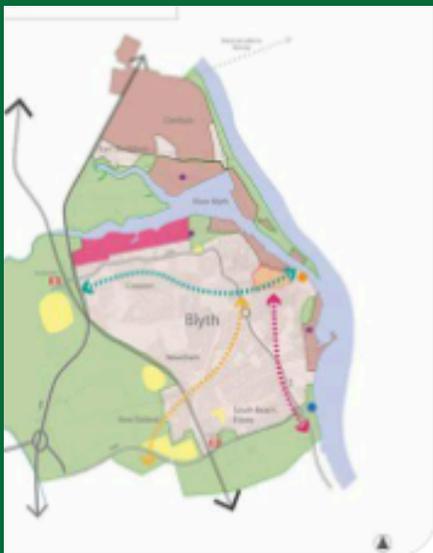




# Town Regeneration

## Key Recent Developments

1. Market Pavilion / Culture Hub Completed
  - The Market Pavilion officially opened in July–August 2025, as a flagship cultural venue in the Market Place.
  - It includes a luxury three-screen cinema (run by Jam Jar Cinema), café, bar, and “Studio 25” – a flexible event & performance space. Designed to host events, markets, live music, comedy and more.
  - The building was designed with sustainability in mind: electric power, solar panels, energy-efficient systems
2. Blyth Celebrates” Culture & Events Programmed
  - Running from August 2025 to March 2026, this year-long festival programme features
  - dozens of events: free festivals, arts & cultural exhibitions, pop-up cinema, public art commissions, and community workshops.
  - Supported via the Blyth Celebrates Fund, which solicited community-led creative project ideas.
3. Infrastructure & Connectivity Projects
  - The Blyth Relief Road project is advancing: an Outline Business Case has been submitted to the Department for Transport. It involves expanding/ creating routes to reduce congestion and provide better walking/cycling connections.
  - Public realm improvements are ongoing: enhancements to Market Place (greening, seating, lighting), Bridge Street, Bowes Street / Church / Wanley Streets, aimed at making the town centre more welcoming and usable.
4. Regeneration Programme & Funding
  - The Energising Blyth regeneration programme is now at £95 million.
  - Core goals include: creating 7,500 jobs, delivering 5,000 learning opportunities, attracting 100,000 additional visitors annually, repurposing under-used spaces (homes / offices), improving housing conditions, improving energy efficiency.





# Education Sector

## Key Developments in Education & Skills

- The Energy Central Learning Hub (ECLH) opened in September 2024. It is a £15+ million facility offering vocational and STEM education targeted at clean energy, including electrical and mechanical workshops, a visitor centre, classrooms and digital-skills labs.
- Partners delivering from the Hub include Northumberland Skills (for post-16 advanced manufacturing & renewable energy qualifications) and Bede Academy, which is delivering new Engineering and Digital T Levels.
- The Hub is part of the Energy Central Campus, under the broader Energising Blyth programme, intended to address the local and regional skills gap in the clean-energy sector.
- Phase 2 is planned: the Energy Central Institute (ECI) will offer higher level skills, research & innovation (degree/PhD level), focused on clean energy. Planning was expected in winter 2024/25, with construction due to start summer 2025 and completion early 2027. Site: former Keel Row Shopping Centre & car park.
- There is also the Ashington Campus project (though slightly outside Blyth itself) by Northumberland College. It's a £52m+ facility with advanced technical & academic/technical facilities (including for students with special educational needs) aligned to regional skills demand and sustainability/net-zero standards. Construction began in early 2025

## Alignment & Implications

- The 800+ learners/year from the Learning Hub will help fill entry to mid-level roles in clean energy, renewables operations, basic engineering, digital support and similar sectors. These are exactly the kinds of roles the expanding port, renewables projects, and the data centre campus will need in the coming years.
- The Energy Central Institute, once completed, will aim to produce the higher-skilled workforce (R&D, AI / data infrastructure, design, advanced engineering) needed to support the AI Growth Zone's ambition of 5,000+ jobs and the Blackstone data centre investment of ~£10 billion. These include roles in data engineering, AI research, infrastructure management, and related technology services.
- There is a lag: Phase 2 won't open until ~2027, so growth in high-skill roles will ramp up then. Meanwhile, the Learning Hub is already helping reduce skills gaps for lower-/mid-level roles starting in 2024–2025.





# Visitor Economy

- The “Blyth Celebrates” festival programme (Aug 2025–Mar 2026) has become a focal point in boosting footfall and visitor spending. Its launch weekend drew over 8,000 visitors to Blyth town centre, with events such as Vintage Blyth and Salt & Smoke filling Market Place, streets, performance spots and heritage sites.
- At the regional scale, Northumberland as a whole saw a record year for tourism in 2024: nearly 10.5 million visitors, generating ~£1.443 billion for the county economy.
- Transport improvements are enhancing accessibility: Newsham railway station reopened in March 2025 on the Northumberland Line, now connecting Blyth more directly with Newcastle and Ashington.
- Blyth’s coastal assets and heritage remain key drawcards: attractions such as the beach (with colourful beach huts), the Quayside, Blyth Battery (historic coastal defence), Ridley Park, and the Tall Ship “Williams II” continue to be promoted in tourism literature.
- Visit Northumberland (the county’s visitor economy body) is actively coordinating marketing, destination management and business support to grow visitor numbers sustainably.
- One risk: while demand is strong, Blyth lacks yet the full spectrum of high-end hotel / hospitality capacity to capture longer stays. Also, visitor flows need to be balanced with infrastructure, local services, and maintaining the town’s character



Year	Visitors (millions)	Economic Impact (£m)	Overnight Stays (000s)
2025	1.2	160	120
2026	1.35	180	140
2027	1.5	200	160
2028	1.65	225	185
2029	1.8	250	210
2030	2.0	280	240

# Local Transport

## 1. Northumberland Line Railway Re-opening & Station Openings

- Launched December 2024: Passenger services resumed on the Northumberland Line, restoring rail between Ashington, Seaton Delaval, Newsham and Newcastle after being closed since the 1960s.
- Newsham Station officially opened 17 March 2025.
- Blyth Bebside Station is due to open on 19 October 2025.
- Two further stations (Bedlington & Northumberland Park) are slated to open in early 2026.
- Service pattern: generally two trains per hour Monday–Saturday daytime; hourly evenings and Sundays.

## 2. Ridership & Usage

- In its first eight months (stations Ashington, Seaton Delaval, Newsham), the line saw over 500,000 passenger journeys.
- Newsham's opening helped remove barriers for Blyth residents to Newcastle: Newsham→Newcastle journey time is ~24 minutes.

## 3. Blyth Relief Road / Road Infrastructure

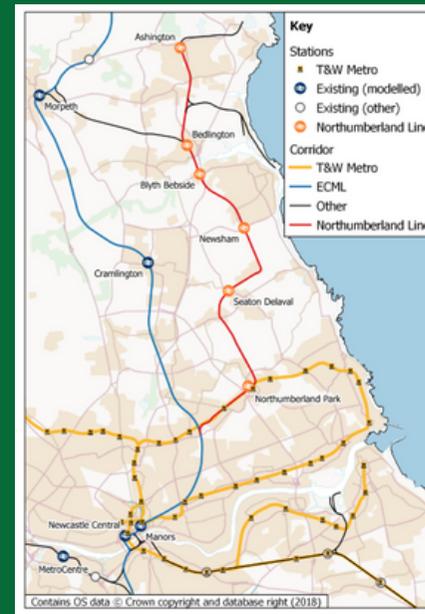
- The Blyth Relief Road scheme is moving forward: an Outline Business Case (OBC) submitted to Department for Transport after Council approvals.
- The plan includes widening sections of the A1061 to dual carriageway, and building a new link between Chase Farm Drive and Ogle Drive. This is aimed at easing congestion, reducing travel times, improving connections for buses and cars, and supporting active travel (walking, cycling).

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- New & upgraded walking/cycling routes are planned or underway. These routes aim to tie together key points: new / upcoming rail stations, town centre, employment/education hubs, Quayside etc.
- Specific improvements in town centre streets (Bridge Street, Quay Road) are planned to make those areas more accessible, safe and pedestrian/cycle friendly.

## Impacts & Challenges

- Travel time improvements: With Blyth Bebside opening, travel to Newcastle in approx. 29 minutes; Newsham already offers ~24 minute journeys.
- Reduced congestion expected once Relief Road and improved routes are in place, particularly in high-traffic corridors such as the A193 and Cowpen Road.
- Accessibility: Better public transport offers alternatives to car travel for commuting, education, and leisure. Some of the new rail stations make services possible for people who previously were dependent on buses.
- Sequencing & delays: While several projects are in place, some are pending (stations opening, road widening etc.). The timetable for full station roll-out extends into early 2026. Active travel improvements are gradually being implemented.





# Housing and Property Market

## Housing & Property Market – Blyth 2025

Blyth's housing market continues to show strong momentum, with average sold prices around £164,000 and asking prices rising steadily. Over the past five years, values have grown by almost 22%, reflecting increased demand, regeneration, and new transport links such as the reopened Northumberland Line. Northumberland overall has seen house prices climb to an average of £205,000 (up 7% year-on-year), with detached homes performing best. Properties in Blyth typically sell within 10 weeks, suggesting a healthy, active market. On the supply side, Northumberland Council is delivering a major programme of 3,300 affordable homes, though waiting lists remain high and some council housing stock sits vacant. For investors and buyers, Blyth offers both affordability and growth potential, making it an attractive market as regeneration and connectivity continue to improve.

## Average Property Prices & Trends (Rightmove / Local area)

- Rightmove reports that the average house price in Blyth over the past year is £165,232.
- In the NE24 postcode (Blyth area) more broadly, the average price in the past year is £164,304.
- In specific neighbourhoods:
  - Dalston Place, NE24: ~ £170,000 average.
  - Priory Grange, NE24: ~ £187,500 average.
  - Stanley Street, NE24: ~ £160,000 average.

Highfield, NE24: one listing shows ~ £259,333 average (which may reflect a small sample / premium housing)

## Broader Market Trend (Zoopla / UK-wide context)

- Zoopla's House Price Index for mid-2025 shows modest growth: ~ 1.4% annual increase nationally.
- In July 2025, the Zoopla HPI noted that more homes are on the market and demand is strong, but price growth is modest (~1.3%) due to increased supply.
- Zoopla forecasts suggest that sales volumes may rise ~5% over 2025 (to ~1.15 million UK-wide) and modest price growth (~2.5%) in many parts of Northern England.

## Interpretation & Outlook for Blyth

- Blyth's average prices (~£160k-£170k) are consistent with its status as a relatively affordable town in the North East, with room for appreciation.
- The neighbourhood averages show variation: some premium pockets (e.g. Priory Grange) command higher values, but many streets/houses stay closer to the town average.
- Given national trends of modest price growth and rising supply, Blyth's market is likely to see steady but moderate growth, rather than sharp jumps or declines, especially in more affordable segments.
- For buyers and investors, these averages suggest opportunities in mid-market homes, especially those that align with the regeneration and infrastructure improvements underway (i.e. proximity to new transport nodes, energy/data hubs, town centre upgrades).

