



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) 2022/2023

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1. Introduction

What is the Authority's Monitoring Report?

The Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) is part of the Darlington Local Plan. Its key purpose is to assess the progress made in preparing the Local Plan, the effectiveness of the policies contained within it and to make any recommendations on where policy changes should be made. These changes can then be factored into future reviews of the Local Plan. This AMR covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Why do we need to monitor?

Monitoring is a vital process of plan and policy making. It reports on what is happening now and what may happen in the future. These trends are assessed against existing policies and targets to determine if current policies are performing as expected, ensuring that the Local Plan continues to contribute to the attractiveness and functionality of Darlington Borough as a place to live, work, invest and visit.

In February 2022 the Council adopted our new Local Plan. This replaced policies within the Local Development Framework (LDF) which was made up of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) and Saved Policies of the 1997 Local Plan (as amended).

This AMR covers the 12-month period up to March 2023 and is therefore the first produced since the Local Plan was adopted.

The Council are required to prepare an annual report to monitor the Council's progress in preparing its Local Development Plan and to review the performance of adopted policies. Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must make their monitoring report available to the public.

Nutrient Neutrality

In March 2022 Natural England identified the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) as being in an unfavourable condition due to nutrient pollution, specifically nitrogen.

The whole of the Darlington Borough is located within the identified catchment area of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA, which is the whole River Tees.

To comply with Habitats Regulations Local Planning authorities falling with the catchment area of the SPA must:

- carefully consider the nutrient impacts of any projects (including new development proposals), on the SPA.
- consider whether those impacts may have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site that requires mitigation.
- consider if the mitigation proposed ensures the development is nutrient neutral.

With no warning of this announcement, it significantly impacted our ability to grant planning permissions for developments that resulted in the creation of additional overnight stays (including all new residential and tourist accommodation) during the monitoring period.

In March 2023 Natural England launched a scheme where developers could purchase nutrient credits to mitigate any additional nutrient pollution a development proposal will create. These credits are now being awarded and should help permissions be granted in future monitoring periods.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA)

The government has introduced some wide-ranging reforms to the planning system through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) which received royal assent on 26 October 2023. Many of these reforms will not come in to force immediately as they require changes to secondary legislation and national planning policy which is largely expected to be published over the next 12 months.

The overarching aim of the Act is to reduce geographic disparities across the UK through changes to existing local government, planning and compulsory purchase legislation. One of the key reforms introduced by this act is to the Local Plan process to require the production of new style Local Plans which are simpler to both produce and use. This includes restricting the production, examination and adoption process to 30 months and the introduction of National Development Management Policies to achieve greater consistency in Local Plan policies across the country.

This also includes the replacement of Supplementary Planning Documents with Supplementary Plans which have a slightly different scope and would have equal weight to the Local Plan. Further legislation is awaited on this. It also includes the ability for government to repeal the Duty to Cooperate and to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy with the Infrastructure Levy which Councils would be required to introduce. It includes a mechanism to capture land value that isn't currently possible with Community Infrastructure Levy.

2. The Settlement Hierarchy

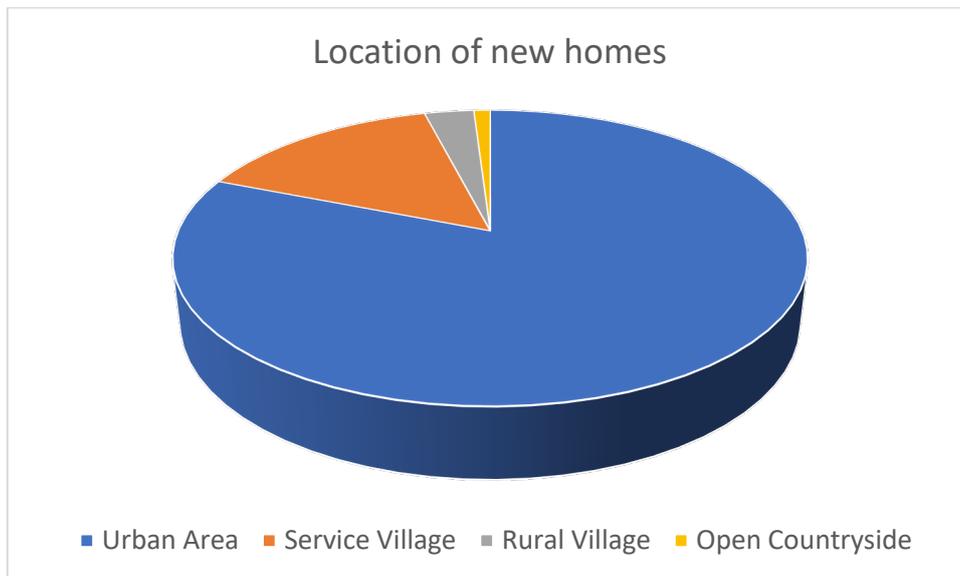
The distribution of development should be in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, which is Darlington urban area, service villages and rural villages. This approach will support the role and function of places, ensuring that inappropriate development does not occur in areas considered to be unsustainable. Development is also directed to sustainable locations via the development limits.

A breakdown of the location of the homes built during the monitoring period is provided in the table below. The figures show that development follows the settlement hierarchy as required by the development limits, with the majority of new homes focused within the main urban area and service villages.

Table 1: Location of homes built during monitoring period.

Location	No of homes built	Percentage
Darlington Urban Area	416	81%
Service Villages	79	15%
Rural Villages	13	3%
Open Countryside	8	1%
Total	516	100%

Graph 1: Location of new homes



Economic development in this monitoring period has been distributed across the settlement hierarchy with additional floorspace created as follows:

Darlington Urban Area

Use Class E(a) – Shop – 2,135 sqm.

Use Class B2 – General Industry - 2,059 sqm.

Use Class B2/B8 – General Industry/Storage & Distribution - 600 sqm.

Use Class E(g) – Office & Research & Development – 3,126 sqm.

Service Villages

Use Class E(a) Shop – 416 sqm.

Rural Villages

No development identified.

Open Countryside

Agricultural Building – 800 sqm.

This shows that economic development completed in this monitoring period has been distributed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy with much of it in the Darlington Urban Area. The completed development in the service villages and open countryside is of a scale and use class that one would expect.

3. Design, Climate Change and Construction

Policy DC1 - Sustainable Design Principles and Climate Change

The NPPF states that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”. One of the overarching aims of the Local Plan is to “create great places”. Policy DC 1 and ‘The Design of New Development SPD’ are the key tools for delivering this quality of design and all applications are assessed reflecting on its content. It is acknowledged that the Design SPD requires an update and work is currently underway to do this. Whilst some of the references are now out of date, the principles and local characterisation elements of the SPD remain valid good practice. We aim to adopt an updated version of the SPD by the end of 2024.

During this monitoring period a total of 16 planning applications were refused permission where design grounds and being in conflict with the requirements of Policy DC1 of the Local Plan was a reason for refusal. This included:

- 3 applications for advert displays
- 12 applications for householder developments such as extensions, porches, garages and garden fences
- 1 application for a new residential dwelling

Policy DC 2 - Flood Risk and Water Management

The NPPF outlines that the planning system plays a key role in mitigation and adaption to climate change, including the management of water and flood risk. It goes on to state that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at high risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

During the monitoring period no applications were granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk.

Policy DC 3 - Health and Wellbeing

Helping to reduce health inequalities is a key local policy objective and providing accessible local healthcare facilities can improve the quality of life and wellbeing of residents in the Borough. Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy has two key aims directly relating to health and wellbeing. Firstly, to encourage people to be more physically active to improve their health, and encouraging people to feel part of their community. Secondly, there is an aim to help older people to stay independent and in their own homes for as long as possible.

The key methods of delivering these objectives through the planning process are through good design and support for new facilities and infrastructure.

To aid these considerations the requirement for Health Impact Assessments (HIA's) has been introduced in the plan for all residential development of 150 homes or more and all other ‘major’ non-residential development. Early and meaningful engagement in the HIA process will help shape developments into more healthy and attractive places to live and work.

Table 2: Applications with Health Impact Assessments

Applications Received Meeting the criteria for an HIA in the monitoring period	Applications Validated With HIA	Applications Validated Without HIA
13	11	1

We are aiming for 100% compliance with this policy going forward and have prepared and published guidance and Development Management are preparing a new validation checklist which should help to achieve this during the next monitoring period.

Policy DC 4 - Safeguarding Amenity

A core function of planning is to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of all types of land and buildings, particularly residential properties. Without appropriate controls, new development could result in unacceptable living environments for its occupants, reduce the quality of life for the occupants of neighbouring buildings, and result in poor quality neighbourhoods overall. It is also an overarching aim of the Local Plan to improve the quality of life for those living in the Borough, and to ensure that employment sites remain attractive by not being unduly constrained by neighbouring uses.

During this monitoring period a total of 7 planning applications were refused permission when amenity grounds and being in conflict with the requirements of Policy DC4 of the Local Plan was a reason for refusal. This included:

- 2 applications for advert displays
- 3 applications for householder developments such as extensions, garages and garden fences
- 1 application for works to a commercial premises
- 1 application for a new residential dwelling

Policy DC 5 – Skills and Training encourages developers to participate in skills and employment training initiatives to increase access to employment for those who live with the borough.

4. Housing

Providing the right homes in the right places is one of the most important issues within the Local Plan. We need to provide a high-quality residential offer to meet a variety of needs and aspirations. This section of the AMR reports on the progress of housing delivery against the Council’s housing requirement. This includes housing completions, location of new housing, delivery of affordable housing, types of housing built, and development of gypsy and traveller pitches. Updates are also provided on the garden village sites of Skertingham and Greater Faverdale (Burtree).

H 1- Housing Requirement

Policy H1 of the Local Plan sets a minimum requirement of 492 net additional dwellings per annum over the plan period from 2016 to 2036. This results in a total net minimum requirement of 9,840 dwellings. The evidence to support this housing target is set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) update (2017). The assessment took into account national and local data on population growth and considered other related information on factors such as increases in employment levels. This enabled a more reliable and appropriate demographic projection to be derived.

For the financial year 2022/23 the Council recorded 516 gross dwelling completions. 5 housing losses were recorded resulting in a net figure of 511 dwellings. This is above the housing requirement figure of 492 and the same gross figure as the previous year. Since the beginning of the plan period, 3,336 net additional dwellings have been built which is an average rate of 477 dwellings per annum.

Table 3: Housing completions from 2016-2023

Year	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Gross Completions	176	495	598	538	546	516	516
Demolitions/losses	6	9	7	2	9	11	5
Net completions	170	486	591	536	537	505	511

Housing delivery performance is also assessed against the government’s annual Housing Delivery Test which covers the previous three years. The most recent measurement released in 2022 is against delivery in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. The score is assessed against the number of homes required which is the lower of either the latest adopted housing requirement or the annual local housing need figure. For Darlington the local housing need figure is generally much lower and is usually used in the calculation. The latest result for Darlington was 382% (2022) and therefore no action was required by the Council. When delivery does fall below the required level, certain policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework will apply.

The situation with nutrient neutrality (also discussed in section 1) does not appear to have affected completion figures so far. However, it is anticipated that due to a period of granting a limited number of housing applications over the last 18 months, this may start to reflect in net completions reported next year. However, as mitigation and credit schemes have now become available it is hoped that any dip in delivery will only occur for a short period as the Council will begin to grant more housing applications.

Policy H 2 - Housing Allocations (Supply)

There is a requirement through national policy to continually monitor the delivery and supply of housing sites to ensure a rolling five-year supply of housing land throughout the plan period. This is assessed by comparing the five-year housing requirement and the estimated five year supply in order to calculate the estimated supply expressed in years.

Delivery from the start of the plan period is also factored into the calculation. Over the first 7 years of the plan period, from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2023, there has been 3,336 net additional housing completions. The minimum Local Plan requirement for this period is 3,444 dwellings (7 x 492). This leaves a shortfall of 108 dwellings which will be added onto the current five-year requirement in the calculations below. The requirement for the following five-year period is 2,460 dwellings (492 x 5). The calculation of the five-year requirement is set out in the table below and results in a figure of 539 dwellings per annum which includes a 5% buffer required by national policy.

Table 4: Five year housing land supply calculations

Local Plan Housing Requirement	9,840 (492 dwellings per annum over 20 years)
Requirement 2023/24 – 2027/28	2,460 (492 x 5)
Net completions 2016/17 – 2022/23	3,336
Shortfall 2016/17 – 2022/23	108 (3,444 – 3,336)
Requirement 2023/24 – 2027/28 plus shortfall	2,568 (2,460 +108)
Requirement 2023/24 – 2027/28 plus shortfall plus 5% buffer	2,696 (2,568 x 1.05)
Annual requirement plus shortfall plus 5% buffer	539

The estimated deliverable five-year housing land supply for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028 is 3,042 dwellings which equates to a 5.6 year housing land supply (3,042 dwellings / 539 = 5.6 years). The sites included consist of a mix of extant planning permissions, sites currently under construction and Local Plan housing allocations. It is considered that these sites meet the definition of deliverable as set out in the NPPF and PPG. Full details of sites included within the supply and evidence to support their deliverability can be found in Appendix 1. The housing trajectory for the remainder of the full plan period can also be found in Appendix 2.

Policy H 3 - Development Limits

Sustainable development is a key principle of planning and underpins the policies and proposals in the Local Plan. Development limits are a planning policy tool which help to achieve the locational strategy for new development, directing development to locations which are considered to be more sustainable whilst also protecting the open countryside.

For Darlington the limits largely focus development to the main urban area and service villages which are well provided for in terms of services, facilities and modes of sustainable transport. The limits also ensure that sufficient land is available (within) to meet the borough's housing and employment needs in the future. It is therefore expected that there will only be low levels of appropriate development outside of these limits each year.

Delivery

During the monitoring period 2022/23. 98.4% of housing development was within development limits. 8 dwellings were constructed in the open countryside outside of development limits (listed below). 7 of these dwellings delivered were on housing commitments determined prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and 1 was a conversion within the built up area of a settlement classed as open countryside in line with policy SH1 (Church Hall, Glebe Road). Conversions in the open countryside can be acceptable in principle providing criteria within Policy H7 are met.

- Lakeside, The Old Brickworks, Neasham Road – 6 dwellings completed.
- Lea Close, Middleton Road, Sadberge – 1 completed.
- Church Hall, Glebe Road, Great Stainton – 1 dwelling completed

Permissions

Despite having recently adopted a new Local Plan, due to the issue of nutrient neutrality a limited number of housing applications have been permitted in the monitoring period, 51 dwellings in total. The majority of these permissions are within the urban area at 80% (41 dwellings) whilst 20% (10 dwellings) have been granted in the open countryside.

The 10 dwellings in open countryside were acceptable in principle as they met the requirements and criteria within policy H7 Residential Development in the Countryside. They involved an agricultural workers dwelling at May Tree Farm, Bishopton and the conversion of buildings at West Newbiggin Farm, Sadberge to create new homes and are therefore not considered 'inappropriate'.

The only major housing scheme which was permitted during the monitoring period was in the Central Park area. Details of which are set out below.

- 22/00582/FUL - Land Off John Williams Boulevard - Residential development consisting of 27 no. dwellings with associated access, landscaping and infrastructure.

The above figures on the location of housing delivery (including those set out under SH1) and new permissions indicates that the majority of housing development is being focused in the main urban area and service villages. The development limits policy is therefore achieving its main objective of directing development to the most sustainable locations and protecting the countryside.

Policy H 4 - Housing Mix

Government policy is focused on supporting older people and those with a disability to live independently at home. Providing more accessible and easily adaptable homes will help people to maintain independence for longer. The building regulations standards set out in policy H4 Housing Mix aim to help to achieve this (M4, 2 & 3). They are part of the optional technical requirements which exceed the minimum standards in respect of access.

It is expected that all new housing schemes built in the borough will meet the accessibility and adaptability requirements of Policy H4 Housing Mix. However, the sites that are currently being developed were granted planning permission prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and therefore

were not subject to the new requirements. Consequently, no new homes are currently being developed which meet the standards but over time this will change as the Council grant more planning permissions.

In terms of the permissions granted for new homes over the monitoring period, as previously mentioned this has been low in number due to nutrient neutrality. None of the homes are proposed to meet the requirements for M4(2) or M4(3) but for justified reasons.

The applicant for the major housing development at Central Park provided information to demonstrate that meeting the requirements would make the scheme unviable. This is acceptable under policy H4 Housing Mix as it states the requirements are subject to site suitability and site viability. A number of the permissions were also prior approval permissions. For these applications the local planning authority can only consider certain material planning considerations and cannot seek planning obligations or local policy requirements. Two other permissions were also in the open countryside and involved an agricultural workers dwelling and conversions, meaning site suitability would have influenced the application of the requirements.

It is expected that the above figures will improve over the next monitoring period when more applications are considered under the new Local Plan.

Policy H 5 – Affordable Housing

House prices in Darlington are lower than other parts of the UK. According to the Land Registry House Price Index the average price of a home in the UK was £287,546 in June 2023, whereas for Darlington the average was substantially lower at £158,502. When looking at local lower quartile earnings and house prices, affordability in the borough is also ‘better’ in Darlington than across England as a whole. Despite the above, evidence within the SHMA (2020) indicates that there is still a substantial need for affordable homes in the borough. Affordable housing provides opportunities for people who are unable to access the housing market. They can meet the housing needs of those on lower incomes and first time buyers.

During 2022/23, 61 affordable homes were delivered in the borough which is approximately 12% of gross completions. This is an increase from 26 in the previous year. A large proportion of the affordable dwellings delivered (55) were on a Council scheme to the East of McMullen Road. This development consisted of 24 apartments and 32 semi-detached dwellings for affordable rent. The other affordable dwellings delivered were at market led schemes which included a proportion of affordable provision. Details are set out in table 5.

Table 5: Affordable housing delivered

Local Plan site ref no	Site Name	Tenure	Application Details	No Affordable Delivered
318	East of McMullen Rd	Affordable Rent	19/00587/DC	55
333	Roundhill Road, Hurworth	Discount Market Sale	17/01194/OUT	2
45	High Stell MSG	Discount Market Sale	15/00976/OUT	2
340	East of Gate Lane, Low Coniscliffe	Affordable Rent & Shared Ownership	16/01231/FUL	2
Total				61

Policy H 6 Exception Sites

There are currently no rural or entry level exception schemes delivering housing in the borough. Since the adoption of the Local Plan, national planning policy has introduced a First Homes exception sites policy which has replaced entry level sites. There are also no First Homes exception sites building out in Darlington at this time.

Policy H 7 Residential Development in the Countryside

There are circumstances where new homes in the countryside are acceptable in planning terms. For example where they are required for rural workers or where they meet one of the criteria set out in para 80 of the NPPF. Replacement and conversion can also be acceptable under policy H7 Residential Development in the Countryside providing certain criteria is met.

As mentioned earlier in this section, 8 dwellings were delivered outside of development limits during the monitoring period. A number of the homes constructed were not for rural workers and did not fall under the other criteria referenced, but they were permitted on different planning grounds prior to the adoption of the Local Plan. One of the homes was a conversion which can be permitted by policy H7.

Policy H 8 Housing Intensification

HMOs can form an important part of the housing mix in terms of providing affordable, low cost housing. However, they can also cause amenity issues when concentrations of these properties are created (e.g. parking, noise, bin storage). As such it is important to monitor the granting of planning permissions for this type of use.

The table below sets out permissions granted for some small (C4) and large (sui generis) homes in multiple occupation during the monitoring period. The data will not capture all small HMOs as there are permitted development rights for the conversion of a dwelling house to a HMO of three to six unrelated individuals who share basic amenities. Overall, 5 applications have been granted which would generate 26 bedroom spaces. One planning permission did result in the loss of a HMO which

provided ten bedrooms (22/00971/FUL, 16 Station Rd, Conversion of building from large HMO to 3 flats).

Table 6: Permissions granted for HMO's during the monitoring period

DM Reference	Site Name	Application description
22/01012/LU	48 Clifton Road	Change of use of 2 flats to 6 bed HMO
22/00764/PLU	440 North Road	Conversion of 1 house to 6 bed HMO
22/01313/FUL	10 Corporation Road	Change of use of dentist to 5 bed HMO
22/00481/PLU	18 Clifton Road	Conversion dwelling into 4 bed HMO
23/00067/PLU	14 Vaughan Street	Certificate of lawfulness conversion of dwelling into 5 bed HMO
Total bedrooms created		26

Policy H 9 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

There is a long history of gypsies and travellers living within Darlington. There are numerous gypsy and traveller families residing in the borough and it is important that their accommodation needs are met. The Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) outlines that local planning authorities should identify the need for travelling sites, pitches and plots, then allocate sites to meet this identified need.

The Council undertook a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in 2017. This study identified a need of 5 residential pitches between 2017 – 2022 (1 per annum). Evidence showed a further need arising in the period 2022-37 which was calculated at 46 pitches (3 per annum).

The above needs are reflected in the adopted Local Plan (2022) Policy H9 and supporting text. To meet these needs two allocations are set out in the policy which are extensions to existing sites; Honeypot Lane (8 pitches) and Rowan West/East complex (25 pitches). The Local Plan also sets out that evidence over the last 18 years supports making an allowance for 4 pitches per year coming forward as windfalls.

Over the monitoring period there have been no traveller pitches permitted.

The Council is however currently considering the two applications below which would assist in meeting needs. The application at Honeypot Lane is proposing 7 permanent pitches on a transit element of the site. The application for Rowan East is also a Local Plan allocation.

Table 7: Gypsy and traveller accommodation applications under consideration

23/00535/FUL	Caravan Site Honeypot Lane Darlington	Erection of boundary wall, gates and fence to facilitate the provision of 7 No. permanent residential pitches to north of site, erection of gym to east of site and stable block and store to north of site (part retrospective) (7 pitches)
21/00625/DC	Rowan East Neasham Rd	Outline application with all matters reserved except access for 25 No gypsy and traveller pitches with amenity blocks and associated works. (25 pitches)

Some accommodation need has been addressed by granting planning permissions for new pitches since the 2017 GTAA Update was undertaken. We currently understand there to be extant permissions for 3 pitches in the Borough (1 has been implemented through an enforcement appeal). Two of these were granted or allowed at appeal in the previous monitoring period (2021/22). These permissions can address 3 pitches of the 5 required in the first 5 years of the plan period.

Table 8: Extant permissions

20/00686/FUL	Existing Caravan Site Snipe Lane Hurworth Moor DARLINGTON	Formation of hardstanding for the siting of 1 no. mobile home, creation of 2 no. touring plots, erection of 1 no. utility building with paved area and 1 no. toilet block (1 pitch)
21/01253/FUL	Land To The East Of A66 South Burden DARLINGTON	Change of use of land for the siting of 1 no. residential mobile home with associated parking for 2 no. vehicles (1 pitch)
21/00003/APPENF	Burma Road Hurworth Moor DARLINGTON	Appeal against Enforcement Notice relating to breach of Planning Permission (10/00059/FUL) change to the Private Gypsy Site, additional touring caravans, are not in accordance with approved plans, approved site details (1 Pitch)

Policy H 10 Skerningham Site Allocation

The Skerningham Garden Village Design Code SPD was adopted by the Council on 28 September 2023. The Design Code SPD sets out the design approach and principles for the Skerningham Site Allocation. Producing, consultation, and adopting the Design Code SPD required considerably longer time than the timeframe envisaged in the Local Plan, which aimed for the Design Code SPD to be developed within around six months of the adoption of the Local Plan.

The Council commissioned an independent organisation called Designe Ltd who carried out extensive public engagement to produce the Design Code. The Design Code SPD was also developed as part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Design Code Pathfinder Programme. Skerningham was one of twenty-five areas in England selected, with the ambition of producing exemplar design codes from which others can learn best practice. The Design Code was therefore produced with expert input from DLUHC, the Office for Place, and the Design Council.

Following the adoption of the SPD, the site developers have begun consultation on masterplan for Skerningham Garden Village, which is out for consultation until 30 November 2023. Currently, the site developer's masterplan is based on Figure 6.2 of the Darlington Local Plan, which envisages Darlington Golf Club remaining in-situ.

Once the consultation has concluded, and the comments have been appropriately considered, the Council expects to begin to receive the first planning applications for the site. The site developer's masterplan will also be assessed at this point to ensure it is based upon the design approach and principles set out in the SPD. To ensure a cohesive development is delivered at Skerningham, the Council will only approve planning applications at the site which adhere with the Design Code SPD and the other requirements of Policy H10.

[Policy H 11 Greater Faverdale \(Burtree\) Site Allocation](#)

The Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code SPD was adopted by the Council on 14 July 2022, within six months of the adoption of the Local Plan. The Design Code SPD sets out the design approach and principles for the Greater Faverdale Site Allocation. The approach aims to create a distinctive, attractive and successful Garden Community in which to live and work, which is sustainable for the future.

The first planning application for the site (22/01342/FULE) was submitted on 21 December 2022, and is currently going through the planning process, with an intention (subject to approval) to start on site in 2024. A hybrid application, it seeks outline permission for up to 750 dwellings and full permission for Burtree Garden Village Strategic Access Road, from Rotary Way to Burtree Lane, and for various landscaping elements of the scheme.

5. Employment for Economic Growth

The Local Plan suggests where and how a continuous and diverse supply of employment land will be provided within the Borough to meet existing and future needs. This section will consider the amount of land available, the applications that have been submitted and employment land options for the future.

Policy E 1 Safeguarding Existing Employment Opportunities

Policy E 1 of the Local Plan (2016-2036) identifies the existing employment areas in the Borough which it promotes and safeguards for existing and ongoing economic investment. This includes suggested uses within each of the areas, although other employment uses are not precluded subject to satisfying certain criteria.

The following table sets out the development that the Councils monitoring procedures have identified as having been completed in the existing employment areas in this monitoring period. A range of planning applications have been granted or are under consideration in a number of these existing employment areas which will be reported on in future years monitoring reports as they are completed.

The main activity in this monitoring year has been at Site 343 - Faverdale Industrial Estate, which has seen industrial units being completed at Ward Court and the completion of the Lidl supermarket. Whilst the Lidl Supermarket falls outside the suggested uses and traditional employment uses it does still generate employment opportunities.

14 units for general industrial uses (B2) have also been constructed at Evolution Business Park on Site 358 - Yarm Road Industrial Estate, bringing around 0.55 hectares of previously developed land back in to use.

Table 9: Completed employment development in existing employment areas

Site Ref	Name	Total Site	Gross Available	Net Available	Suggested Use	Comments
342	Faverdale East Business Park	65.87 ha	6.08 ha	4.26 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
343	Faverdale Industrial Estate	60.32 ha	11.19 ha	7.83 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	Lidl Supermarket Use Class E(a) completed 2,135 sqm floorspace part of development of 1.89 hectares. 6 B2/B8 units at Ward Court part of development of 0.82 hectares floorspace to date of circa 600 sqm.
346	Meynell Road West	8.5 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, E(g)	No change
347	Cleveland Industrial Estate	14.6 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change

348	Red Barnes Way	3.03 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
351	SW Town Centre Fringe	0.62 ha	0.16 ha	0.11 ha	E(g)	No change
352	Barton Street/Haughton Road	1.24 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, E(g), Sui Generis	No change
353	Haughton Road/Blackett Road	11.58 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
354	McMullen Road East	2.72 ha	0 ha	0 ha	Sui Generis	No change
355	Lingfield Point	33.6 ha	2.74 ha	1.92 ha	Mixed Use	No change
357	Morton Park	18.28 ha	5.79 ha	4.05 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
358	Yarm Road Industrial Estate	63.86 ha	1.87 ha	1.31 ha	B2, B8, E(g), Sui Generis	14 x B2 use units at Evolution Business Park on site area of 0.55 hectares generating 2059sqm additional floorspace
359	Morton Palms Business Park	11.90 ha	6.08 ha	4.26 ha	B2, E(g)	No change
363	Aycliffe	15.33 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2	No change
364	Yarm Road South	34.69 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, E(g)	No change
366	Meynell Road East	10.28 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
367	Link 66 / Symmetry Park	36.03 ha	13.10 ha	9.17 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
376	Whesoe Road	4.88 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, E(g)	No change
378	Longfield Road	2.41 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2	No change
379	Banks Road	9.70 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, E(g), Sui Generis	No change
380	Albert Hill Industrial Estate	16.02 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, B8, E(g)	No change
404	Teesside International Airport North	53.96 ha	6.73 ha	4.71 ha	B2, E(g) and Airport related uses	No change
409	Drinkfield Industrial Estate	13.51 ha	0 ha	0 ha	B2, E(g)	No change
	TOTAL	507.16 ha	53.74 ha	37.62 ha		

Policy E 2 Employment Allocations

Policy E 2 of the Local Plan (2016-2036) identifies the sites which are allocated for new employment development and the suggested uses which permissions will be granted in line with, although it does not preclude other employment uses subject to satisfying certain criteria.

The following table sets out the development that the Councils monitoring procedures have identified as having been completed in the employment allocation sites this monitoring year. Planning applications have been granted or are under consideration in a number of these allocated sites which will be reported on in future years monitoring reports as they are completed.

The main activity on allocated sites in this monitoring year has been at Site 368 – Central Park South, where the Innovation Central Office and Laboratory Space Building has been completed along with the CPI RNA Centre of Excellence Laboratory Library Building. These buildings cover a total site area of 0.77 hectares and have generated an additional 3,126 square metres of E(g) floorspace.

Table 10: Completed employment development in the allocated areas

Site Ref	Site Name	Total Site	Gross Available	Net Available	Suggested Use	Comments
80	East of Lingfield Point	10.30 ha	10.30 ha	7.21 ha	B2, B8, E (g)	No change
185	Greater Faverdale	70.0 ha of gross 177.8ha site	70.00 ha for employment	49.00 ha for employment	B2, B8, E (g)	No change
356	Ingenium Parc	40.80 ha	40.80 ha	28.56 ha	B2, E (g)	No change
360	Heighington Lane North	5.70 ha	5.70 ha	3.99 ha	B2, B8, E (g)	No change
362	Teesside International Airport South	39.3 ha	39.3 ha	27.51 ha	B2, B8, E (g) & Airport related uses	No change
368	Central Park South	9.8 ha	6.01 ha	4.21 ha	B2, E(g)	Lab Library (E(g) - 0.2ha - 756sqm floorspace, Innovation Central E(g) - 0.57ha - 2370sqm floorspace
	TOTAL	175.9 ha	172.11 ha	120.48 ha		

Policy E 3 Darlington Farmers Auction Mart Relocation

The Darlington Farmers Auction Mart relocated to the identified site on the Policies Map - Humbleton Farm, adjacent to the A68 on the North-western edge of Darlington, in 2020 with the first auction held in September 2020. No planning permissions for extension of the mart or other associated uses were granted in this monitoring period.

Policy E 4 Economic Development in the Open Countryside

In this monitoring period a range of appropriate economic development proposals in the countryside were approved, this included:

- Proposed equestrian centre – Fowler House, Royal Oak (22/00465/FUL)
- Change of use of agricultural land and buildings to light industry/office for steel fabrication business – Westholme Farm, Heighington (22/00234/FUL)
- 16 pitch touring caravan and camping site – Westholme Farm, Heighington (22/00294/FUL)
- Community Garden for post 16 year school leavers with learning difficulties and associated buildings and structures – Five Acres, Lime Lane, Brafferton (21/00753/FUL)

6. Town Centres and Retail

Policy TC 1 Darlington Town Centre

Darlington Borough Council received 12 applications during the period of 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 for Town Centre Uses located outside the Town Centre Boundary identified on the Policies Map. One of these applications was located in Cockerton District Centre, while the remainder were edge of centre or out of centre location. Of these applications, only one was required to apply a sequential test.

Table 11: Sequential assessment table

Reference	Address	Description	Decision
23/00051/CU	Block C, Unit B, Land Adjoining Faverdale West, Darlington	Change of use of an industrial unit (Use Class B2/B8) to a specialist strength sports gymnasium (Use Class E(d)).	Granted with Conditions

Policy TC 2 Primary Shopping Area

The Primary Shopping Area (PSA) is defined as the area within the Town Centre where retail development, the main contributor to vitality and viability, is concentrated and should be densely focused. Use Classes are the categorisation of all buildings based on their use. For monitoring purposes, using the use classes order can present a breakdown of the quantity and diversity of the PSA.

The following Use Class Data was sourced from Experian Goad, who surveyed Darlington Town Centre in October 2022. Experian did not use the PSA or Town Centre Boundary when conducting their survey. Therefore, though the Council has reviewed the data to ensure it is as accurate as possible, it is possible some units/areas may not have been surveyed or may have been misclassified. Nevertheless, this represents the best quality available data. This data is presented below, along with an abridged version of the Use Classes Order to aid interpretation.

Graph 2: Use classes in the primary shopping centre

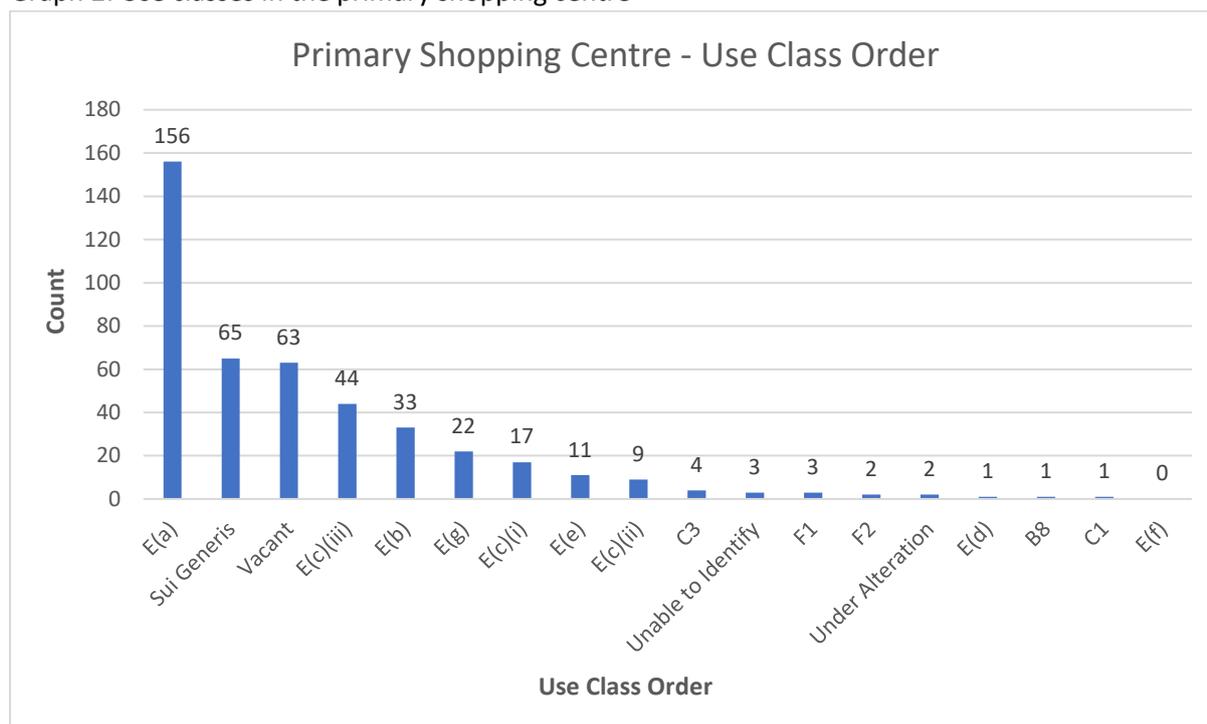


Table 12: Use Classes Order

Use Class	Sub-category	Description
B8	-	Use for storage or as a distribution centre.
C1	-	Use as a hotel or as a boarding or guest house where, in each case, no significant element of care is provided.
C3	-	Use as a dwellinghouse.
E	a)	For the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public.
	b)	for the sale of food and drink principally to visiting members of the public where consumption of that food and drink is mostly undertaken on the premises.
	c)(i)	Provision of Financial Services principally to visiting members of the public.
	c)(ii)	Provision of Professional Services (other than health or medical services) principally to visiting members of the public.
	c)(iii)	Any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business, or service locality, principally to visiting members of the public.
	d)	Indoor sport, recreation or fitness, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms, principally to visiting members of the public.
	e)	For the provision of medical or health services, principally to visiting members of the public, except

		the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner
	f)	For a crèche, day nursery or day centre, not including a residential use, principally to visiting members of the public,
	g)	An office to carry out any operational or administrative functions
F1	-	Learning and non-residential institutions
F2	-	Local community uses.
Sui Generis	-	No class specified, but includes such uses as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatres • Amusement Arcades • Laundrettes • Night-club • Casino • Betting Office • Public House • Hot Food Takeaway

The current data indicates the PSA contains 445 units, with a vacancy rate of 14.2%. E(a) uses are the most common, making up 35.1% of Town Centre Uses, with Sui Generis Uses the second most common, comprising 16% of Town Centre Uses. At present, there is no historical data with which to make comparisons to enable an assessment of how the health of the PSA has changed through time. The Council intends to begin in-house monitoring of the PSA for the next monitoring period, for which the Experian Goad data will be used as a baseline for comparison.

Policy TC 3 Additional Site for Town Centre Uses

No applications have been granted for the regeneration of the Commercial/Kendrew Street Site during the monitoring period. The Council will continue to support the regeneration of the Commercial/Kendrew Street site provided the criteria set out in Policy TC3 are addressed.

Policy TC 4 District and Local Centres

Policy TC4 aims to ensure the vitality and viability of District and Local Centres. The District and Local Centres are important in meeting local needs, providing food shopping and a range of other local shops, services, and leisure uses. The Local Plan designates two centres:

- Cockerton (District Centre)
- Mowden (Local Centre)

Policy TC4 states the types of uses that will be acceptable within these centres include shops, financial services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways and a range of community and leisure facilities (included within class E(a-f) and Sui Generis of the Use Classes Order).

At present, Darlington Borough Council does not have any Goad Plan data for Cockerton District Centre or Mowden Local Centre that can be used to present a breakdown of the quantity and diversity

of these centres. It is the intention of the Council to commence monitoring of these centres during the next AMR period.

During the monitoring period, one application was received within Cockerton District Centre:

Reference	Address	Description	Decision
22/00113/FUL	309 Woodland Road	Change of Use from retail shop (Use Class E) to hot food takeaway (Sui Generis).	Granted with Conditions

The application was deemed acceptable under Policy TC4 as Sui Generis is identified as an acceptable use in this location.

Policy TC 5 Retail Impact Assessment Threshold

During the monitoring period, no applications have been granted for retail (convenience and comparison) and/or leisure development generating over 500sqm additional floorspace outside of the Town Centre Boundary. Therefore, no Retail Impact Assessments have been received.

Policy TC 6: Darlington – Town Centre Fringe

The Town Centre Fringe is a priority location for brownfield development within the Borough. Three applications were received, and granted, within the Town Centre Fringe within the monitoring period.

Table 13: Applications granted within the Town Centre Fringe

Reference	Address	Description	Decision
22/00224/FUL	Claytons Yard DARLINGTON DL1 1SH	Erection of 3 no. storage units (Use Class B8) to east of site including removal of brick electricity housing store	Granted with Conditions
22/01177/CU	Unit 5 80 East Mount Road DARLINGTON DL1 1LA	Change of Use from storage (B2/B8) to dog training centre (Sui Generis) (Retrospective) including external dog training area and ancillary retail sales area (Amended description) (amended plan received 5 December 2022)	Granted with Conditions
22/01332/FUL	4 High Northgate, DARLINGTON.	Conversion from Shisha Coffee House (Sui Generis) to restaurant	Granted with Conditions

7. Environment

This section addresses how Local Plan policies strive to provide a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

Policy ENV 1 Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment

Historic England Advice

In this monitoring year it is understood that no planning permissions have been granted contrary to Historic England advice.

Heritage at Risk

In total there are 8 entries on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register (2022) which are located in Darlington Borough. These comprise:

- Grade II* Listed Building – Goods Shed, North Road Station, Darlington
- Grade II* Listed Building – Dovecote 45 metres east of Manor House, Houghton Bank, Houghton Le Side
- Grade I Listed Building and Scheduled Monument – Church of All Saints, Sockburn Lane, Neasham
- Grade I Listed Place of Worship – Church of St Cuthbert, Market Place, Darlington
- Grade II Listed Place of Worship – Church of St Hilda, Parkgate, Darlington
- Conservation Areas x 3 – Northgate, Victoria Embankment and West End

These are the same 8 entries that were on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register in 2021. There has been no reduction in the number of entries in this monitoring year. Works have now commenced to help secure the future of the Goods Shed at North Road Station and its wider setting as part of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zone in preparation for the bicentenary of the railway in 2025.

As discussed later in this report, reviews of the three Conservation Areas at Risk have been prioritised and are scheduled to take place over the coming years.

Local List

No progress has been made during this monitoring year on the preparation of a Local List with work prioritised to responding to and advising on planning applications and listed building consents.

Conservation Areas

No Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans were completed or reviewed in the monitoring period. The Conservation Officer, who was newly appointed at the end of this monitoring year, is currently undertaking a review of the Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal which will include amendment and likely significant extension of the Conservation Area. This is anticipated to be completed in the 2023/24 monitoring year. Work is then expected to focus on a proposed new designation of the Middleton St George Stockton and Darlington Railway Conservation Area, followed by a review of the Victoria Embankment and West End Conservation Areas over the coming years.

Policy ENV 2 Stockton & Darlington Railway

In this monitoring period 1 application was granted which is deemed to have an impact on the Stockton and Darlington Railway, specifically the Bishop Auckland branchline. The scheme was a Solar Farm to the North of Burtree Lane, Darlington (22/00213/FUL).

The potential effects upon both the setting and significance of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) relate to the overall length of the railway link adjacent to or east of the planning application boundary, and upon the two associated structures, namely the Coatham Grange accommodation bridge at the northern end and the listed overbridge at the southern end. The scheme was amended since the application was submitted to omit arrays entirely from area 8 between footpath no. 6 and the listed overbridge, and to reduce the extent of arrays from area 2 towards the northern end of the site. The application site would run adjacent to the S&DR for a length of approximately 420m in the north eastern corner.

Overall, the officer report concluded that while there will be some residual conflict with Local Plan Policy ENV 2, this conflict is also outweighed by the range of public benefits identified and overall, the proposal is considered to accord with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Sections 66 and 72) and the National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.

Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character

Policy ENV3 identifies areas locally designated for their landscape importance including rural gaps, green wedges, existing green corridors, historic routes and urban and rural parklands. In this monitoring year there were no permissions granted which have resulted in the loss of any or parts of any of these areas of local landscape importance.

Policies ENV 4 and ENV 5 Green Infrastructure

An open space assessment is currently being undertaken which will enable more detailed monitoring to be provided on this topic in future monitoring reports.

No significant loss of green spaces has been granted through planning permissions determined in this monitoring year.

Planning Permissions granted in this monitoring year that will provide new green infrastructure include permission at the Central Park development for public realm works incorporating a hard and soft landscaping scheme with construction of footpaths, installation of artwork features, seating, lighting and outdoor gym equipment. Permission was also granted for the provision for a new burial ground at West Cemetery.

Permissions granted incorporating additional green infrastructure provision have been more limited in this monitoring period than would be ordinarily expected due to the lack of new housing development permissions because of the introduction of nutrient neutrality.

Policy ENV 6 Local Green Spaces

No net losses to the Local Green designations, as set out in Policy ENV 6, have been identified in this monitoring period.

Policies ENV 7 and ENV 8 Biodiversity

During this monitoring period all relevant applications granted were required to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity. This was achieved and where this was not possible on-site this was secured off-site within the Borough.

All applications granted were determined in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy established in Policies ENV 7 and ENV 8.

The Council has recently recruited an Ecologist and a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain target is set to become mandatory on development through the Environment Act in January 2024 for major developments, and April 2024 for small scale developments. Further information on the biodiversity that has been secured will be provided in future years monitoring reports.

Policy ENV9 Outdoor Sports Facilities

There was no net loss of sports facilities as a result of planning permissions granted in this monitoring period.

Planning permission was granted in this monitoring year for proposals to significantly improve and enhance provision at Eastbourne Sports Complex which includes the provision of a new 3G pitch with associated floodlighting, fencing, changing rooms, spectator stands, parking, storage containers, installation of CCTV and refurbishment of existing athletics track facilities.

8. Transport and Infrastructure

This section seeks to reflect on the Council's delivery of the transport policies within the Local Plan, together with the delivery of new infrastructure in the borough. The chapter will focus on new developments which have taken place, any within the pipeline and outline any new projects.

Policy IN 1 Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network

Nationally, transport statistics show that whilst roads usage by goods vehicles now exceed pre-pandemic levels, the total road usage for all motor vehicles was still below baseline as of 18th October 2021 at 96%, with car usage still at 91%. This is likely to reflect the significant proportion of employees continuing to work from home (the commute accounts for 20% of distance travelled on UK roads). Public transport usage was even lower relative to pre-pandemic, at 62% for National Rail passenger journeys and 76% for non-London bus travel. Again, this likely reflects the continuance of homeworkers; however, hesitancy in using public transport due to concerns around infection may also be a factor. We will continue to monitor these trends in future.

Table 14: Progress and delivery of sustainable transport links detailed in Policy IN 1 and Figure 10.2 (shown from West to East)

Scheme	Status in 2022/23
Coniscliffe Park (NW7) – link road connecting A67 to Staindrop Road	Applications awaiting determination.
Stag House Farm (NW6) - link road connecting Newton Lane to Staindrop Road	No application submitted.
West Park Garden Village (NW2) -link road connecting Edward Pease Way to Newton Lane	Complete
Faverdale link road (NW5/NW8) – connecting Burtree Lane to Rotary Way	Application for road and landscaping awaiting determination
Skerningham access roads (N3) –including local distributor road between the A167 and A1150 close to the Little Burdon roundabout in the broad location identified in the Skerningham Masterplan Framework	Design Code SPD Adopted. Detailed design yet to be determined and planning applications required.
Berrymede Farm (N1) –connecting Burtree Lane to the A167 and improvements to A167/Burtree Lane junction	Under construction.
Burdon Hill (E20) -link road connecting A1150 to B6279 Tornado Way and new link road to Red Hall and Skerningham access roads	No application submitted.
Link66/Symmetry Park (E3)-link road connecting the B6279 Tornado Way to B6280 Yarm Road	Complete

Policy IN3 Travel Plans

Policy IN 3 of the Local Plan has introduced a requirement for Travel Plans to be submitted with all major developments. The Travel Plan process should help to embed sustainable transport within all new developments and inform the scheme throughout its development. During 2022/23 we received 12 major applications likely to have a significant traffic impact, from these applications 11 were accompanied by a travel plan or contained consideration of travel planning within their Transport

Assessment. The one application not with a travel plan is awaiting determination and is likely to be refused on highway safety grounds.

‘Travel Plan Guidance’ has recently been issued on the council’s website to assist developers with their preparation and hopefully this, combined with an updated validation checklist, should help further improve this for the next monitoring period.

Policy IN 4 Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy IN 4 requires all new build development to make provision for electric vehicle charging on all residential properties. This is a requirement of validation so it should be assumed that this requirement is fully met. This requirement may be superseded with updates to the Building Regulations.

Policy IN5 Airport Safety

As part of the application validation process the Civil Aviation Authority are consulted on development, over certain heights, within the defined safeguarding area around airport.

Policy IN6 Utilities Infrastructure

This policy requires developments to demonstrate that they would have no net negative impact on utility provision. As discussed earlier in this report limited new housing permissions have been granted during the monitoring period due to nutrient neutrality but utility providers remain consultees on all major applications including non-residential proposal. No objections were received during the monitoring period to any proposals granted permission.

In addition the council is taking an active role as a supporting authority to the Tees Valley Combined Authority on the preparation of a region wide Local Area Energy Pathway (LAEP) which is an energy strategy document to cover the progress of a local government area to a Net Zero target.

Policy IN7 Telecommunication Masts

3 applications for new or upgraded telecommunication masts have been received and granted within the monitoring period. These are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Applications submitted for new and upgraded telecommunications within the monitoring period

Reference	Address	Description	Decision
22/01339/PA	Telecommunications Mast (65921) T A Centre Neasham Road DARLINGTON	Prior Approval for the installation of upgraded telecommunications equipment including replacement monopole, additional antennas and associated ancillary development	Granted
22/00632/PA	Land At Dodsworth Street Telecommunications Mast (Cell 95917)	Prior Approval for the installation of upgraded telecommunications equipment including replacement	Granted

	Albert Hill Industrial Estate Dodsworth Street, Darlington	25m high lattice tower, cabinets and associated ancillary works	
22/00189/FUL	Whinbush Way, Darlington	Upgrade of telecommunications equipment including removal of existing 15m high street pole and cabinets and installation of replacement 20m high street pole with GPS module, 6 no. antennas, ERS module, cabinets and associated works	Granted with conditions

Policy IN 8 Broadband Infrastructure

The Building etc. (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2022 came into force on 26 December 2022. These regulations introduce gigabit broadband infrastructure and connectivity requirements for the construction of new homes in England. This building regulation requirement now exceeds the requirement set in this policy so it will not be monitored going forward.

Policy IN 9 Renewable Energy Infrastructure

In total, 3 solar farms were granted planning permission in this monitoring period with a total potential generating capacity of around 131 MW. These were:

- Burtree Lane (22/00213/FUL) - 49.9 MW
- Gateley Moor, Bishopton (22/00727/FUL) – 49.9 MW; and
- Whinfield, Brafferton (21/00958/FUL) 31.2 MW.

Both Gateley Moor and Whinfield are cross-boundary sites with Stockton Borough and Durham County respectively and the majority of both solar farms are located in the neighbouring authorities.

Policy IN10 Supporting the Delivery of Community and Social Infrastructure

No financial contributions were received within the monitoring period.

Policy IN10 safeguards an area of land to extend West Cemetery and an application has now been approved for this land.

Darlington Borough Council – Planning Policy
Chief Executive’s Office and Economic Growth Group
Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT

T: 01325 406724

E: planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk

W: www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy