



# **Flood Risk Sequential & Exception Tests**

**Darlington Borough Council**

**December 2020**

## Introduction

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 requires local authorities to ensure that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding is avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). The framework outlines that all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account the current and future impacts of climate change. Paragraph 158 states,

“The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The strategic flood risk assessment will provide the basis for applying this test. The sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding.”
2. National Planning Practice Guidance states that the flood zones as refined in a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provide the basis for applying the test. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of river or sea flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities can then consider sites in Flood Zone 2 and finally Flood Zone 3 if required, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the exception test if needed.
3. The sequential test has been applied to proposed allocations within the Proposed Submission Local Plan. It was not appropriate to apply the sequential test to those sites with extant planning permissions (housing commitments) as flooding issues were considered when determining the planning application.
4. If following application of the sequential test, it is not possible, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, the exception test can be applied if appropriate. The need for the exception test will depend on the potential vulnerability of the site and of the development proposed, in line with the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification set out in national planning guidance.
5. The exception test should be informed by a strategic or site specific flood risk assessment (depending on whether it is being applied during plan production or at the application stage). For the test to be passed it should be demonstrated that:
  - the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and
  - the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

## Sequential Test

6. The Darlington Borough Council Level 1 SFRA (2019) provides the basis for applying the sequential test. The sites proposed for allocation in the Proposed Submission Local Plan have been assessed as part of the SFRA. A number of alternative sites considered via the Local Plan process (via the Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal) have also been assessed.
7. The Proposed Submission Local Plan sets out what the Council considers to be the appropriate policies and site allocations to effectively address the needs of the Borough over the plan period, in terms of housing, employment and commercial development and a

range of other policy areas. It is the site allocations which will deliver the Council's spatial vision. If any sites do not comply with the sequential and exception test (if required) they would be removed from the process and alternative sites considered in their place.

8. The SFRA (2019) provides an assessment of the sites and gives a broad strategic recommendation on each based on the evidence relating to fluvial and surface water flood risk. The recommendations are intended to assist the local authority in carrying out the sequential test. Development viability is considered in the recommendations based on the level of risk and the vulnerability of the proposed use.
9. The SFRA highlights a number of minor issues on some existing employment allocations which are to be safeguarded in the plan. Sites 353 Haughton Road/Blacket Road and 366 Meynell Road East have parts of their site areas within Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b. There is no available land for development on these sites and the allocations safeguard existing uses. Less vulnerable employment uses are appropriate in Flood Zones 2 and 3a in accordance with the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification of the NPPG. Site 353 is within Flood Zones 2 and 3a only, subsequently the existing employment uses are appropriate in these zones. Site 366 is intersected by the River Skerne and is within Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b around the rivers channel. No development has taken place within zone 3b as the river cuts through the site. As these sites are safeguarding existing employment uses with no available land for development it is considered that further justification or assessment is not required.
10. The SFRA also assessed site 371 Town Centre Fringe and identified that it is within Flood Zones 2 and 3a. As it is proposed for mixed use the exception test would normally be required for the site. The Council is not however proposing the site as a formal allocation in the plan as there are many constraints to overcome including flood risk, contamination and connectivity. It is considered that the site cannot be relied upon to meet housing or employment needs over the plan period due to these constraints. The area is still however a priority for the Council and as such it has been identified as a regeneration area in the Proposed Submission Local Plan. Work is ongoing with Homes England, Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Environment Agency to address the constraints, funding gaps and ownership issues. In view of the above it is not considered necessary to justify the site in the Local Plan sequential and exception test. Issues of flood risk in the area would be dealt with at the planning application stage.
11. In total the SFRA identifies 6 housing allocations, 1 mixed use allocation and 2 employment allocations where further justification is required. Comment on how flood risk is mitigated at these sites via the policy framework is set out below.

#### Site 20 Great Burdon (Housing)

12. This is one of the strategic sites proposed for allocation and makes up a substantial proportion of housing land in the Local Plan. The western part of the site is adjacent to the River Skerne and is within flood zone 2, 3a and 3b (23.56%). Historic flooding events are located around the river corridor. There are areas at high risk of surface water flooding, however this is again adjacent to the river corridor and within the same areas as the Flood Zones (2 & 3).
13. Groundwater levels in the Skerne catchment are continuing to rise as a result of mine water rebound. It is suspected that groundwater flooding occurs regularly in the Skerne catchment, but since the events often result in surface water flooding, they are recorded as such in the records. The mapping for this site in the SFRA shows that western area of the site is at greater risk of groundwater emergence.

14. The Housing Allocation Statement for the site (Appendix B of the Local Plan) states that the Flood Zones (2 & 3) should be reflected in the site layout and development directed away from the area in line with the sequential approach. It also states that the river corridor along the western boundary should be protected and enhanced including significant new green infrastructure provision. This will also mean that the areas which are at risk from surface water flooding are largely retained as open space. Development will also be required to adhere to policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which advocates the sequential approach and prioritises the use of SuDS on sites.

Site 41 Coniscliffe Park, South (Housing)

15. This is one of the strategic sites proposed for allocation in the Local Plan. A small part of the site on the eastern edge adjacent to Baydale Beck is within flood zone 2, 3a and 3b (2.64%). The Housing Allocation Statement for the site (Appendix B of the Local Plan) states that this should be reflected in the site layout and development directed away from the area in line with the sequential approach. It also states that a development scheme should give adequate buffering and protection to Baydale Beck. There is also the opportunity to enhance the green infrastructure network along this existing corridor.
16. There are only small pockets on the site which are susceptible to surface water flooding. Site layout can address this and any development should comply with policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which prioritises the use of SuDS and their integration with green infrastructure.

Site 100 Hall Farm, Branksome (Housing)

17. A proportion of the site along the southern boundary adjacent to the beck is within flood zone 2 and 3b. The Housing Allocation Statement for the site (Appendix B of the Local Plan) states that this should be reflected in the site layout and development directed away from the area in line with the sequential approach. It also states that Beck Valleys (Cocker Beck and Baydale Beck) within and adjacent to the site should be protected and opportunities taken to extend green infrastructure. Significant green infrastructure should be provided along the southern boundary to mitigate potential flooding.
18. There are also areas along the southern boundary of the site which are susceptible to surface water flooding. As outlined above this area is to be retained as green infrastructure and the use of SuDS in green infrastructure is prioritised via policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management.

Site 185 Greater Faverdale (Mixed Use)

19. Greater Faverdale is a strategic mixed use allocation in the Local Plan. It makes up a considerable proportion of housing and employment land in the proposed development plan. Working with the Council, the site promoters and major landowners have drafted a Masterplan Framework for the area.
20. West Beck runs through the Faverdale site in a north – south direction and therefore a proportion of the site is within flood zones 2, 3a and 3b (3.94). The Faverdale Masterplan Framework (figure 6.3 of the Local Plan) accounts for the flood zone in the layout, directing development away from the area in line with the sequential approach. Any development will have to be in accordance with the principles of the masterplan. The policy for the strategic allocation (H 11) also states that the site will provide a network of connected blue and green infrastructure which includes the area adjacent to the beck valley and is illustrated in the Masterplan Framework.

21. There are small areas across the site and along the course of the beck valley which are susceptible to surface water flooding. The site policy (H 11) requires the integration of SuDS into green infrastructure. Site layout would also assist in addressing this and any development should comply with policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which again prioritises the use of SuDS and their integration with green infrastructure.

Site 249 Coniscliffe Park, North (Housing)

22. This is a strategic site and contributes significantly to meeting the Borough's quantitative housing need over the plan period A small part of the site on the eastern edge adjacent to Baydale Beck is within flood zone 2, 3a and 3b (1%). The Housing Allocation Statement for the site (Appendix B of the Local Plan) states that this should be reflected in the site layout and development directed away from the area in line with the sequential approach. It also states Baydale Beck and wildlife friendly open space runs along the eastern boundary of the site. This part of the green infrastructure network should be protected and enhanced.
23. There are small pockets on the site which are susceptible to surface water flooding, largely in central areas. Site layout should address this and any development should comply with policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which prioritises the use of SuDS and their integration with green infrastructure. This policy should mitigate the risk of surface water flooding.

Site 251 Skerningham (Housing)

24. Skerningham is a strategic allocation in the Local Plan. It makes up a considerable proportion of housing land in the proposed development plan; not just within the plan period but also beyond 2036. Working with the Council, the site promoters and major landowners have drafted a Masterplan Framework for the area.
25. The River Skerne runs along the northern boundary of the site and also intersects it at the eastern end. As such a proportion of the site is within flood zones 2, 3a and 3b (10.86%). The Skerningham Masterplan Framework (figure 6.1 of the Local Plan) accounts for the flood zone in the layout, directing development away from the area in line with the sequential approach. Any development will have to be in accordance with the principles of the masterplan. The policy for the strategic allocation (H 10) also states that the site will provide a network of connected blue and green infrastructure which includes the protection and enhancement of the River Skerne and its valley setting. The above policy framework ensures development will not take place within Flood Zones 2 or 3, therefore reducing the risk of flooding on the site.
26. Groundwater levels in the Skerne catchment are continuing to rise as a result of mine water rebound. It is suspected that groundwater flooding occurs regularly in the Skerne catchment, but since the events often result in surface water flooding, they are recorded as such in the records. The mapping for this site in the SFRA shows that the eastern area of the site is at greater risk of groundwater emergence.
27. Historic events of flooding are located around the Skerne corridor. As outlined above, the site layout required will ensure that development does not take place in these areas. There are areas and pockets of the site which are susceptible to surface water flooding. Some of these areas follow the Skerne corridor. Surface water risk can be accounted for in the site layout. Any development should also comply with policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which prioritises the use of SuDS and their integration with green infrastructure. This is also set out in the site policy (H 10).

Site 343 Faverdale Industrial Estate (Employment - Existing)

28. The site is an existing employment area with land available for development. A very small proportion of the site along the south western boundary is within flood zone 2 and 3a (0.04%). This part of the site is a landscape corridor with the A68 and is on a steep incline. Due to the nature of this area, development would not be appropriate or encouraged here. The suitable areas available for development are located further north within the site.
29. Development will also be required to adhere to policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which advocates the sequential approach, directing development to flood zone 1. This will ensure that inappropriate development will not take place within zones 2 and 3. The policy also prioritises the use of SuDS on sites.

Site 360 Heighington Lane North (Employment - Proposed)

30. The site makes up a larger employment allocation which has been identified in the County Durham Local Plan (adopted in 2020). This is within a wider existing employment area which also includes the Hitachi assembly plant to the south, also within County Durham.
31. A proportion of the site is within flood zones 2, 3a and 3b (1.16%) as Demon's Beck runs through the site. The Employment Allocation Statement for the site (Appendix B of the Local Plan) states that this should be reflected in the site layout and development directed away from the area in line with the sequential approach. Any development should also comply with policy DC 4 Flood Risk and Water Management which also advocates the sequential approach.
32. The SFRA does identify that the site is at risk from ground water emergence however as outlined above this is often recorded as surface water flooding. The assessment identifies that the site is at significant risk from surface water flooding around the beck corridor and recommends that the site is withdrawn as 10% or greater of the site is within the medium and high risk surface water outlines. The site is however proposed for a less vulnerable use (employment) and areas at high risk could be avoided with appropriate site layout as advocated within the Allocation Statement mentioned above. A substantial part of the site is within the medium and high risk area (15.76%) however as it forms part of a wider employment area this would much improve the likelihood of dealing with surface water risk on site. In terms of mitigating the risks of surface water flooding any development should also comply with policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which prioritises the use of SuDS and their integration with green infrastructure.

Site 411 Chesnut Street Car Park (Housing)

33. This is a small site within the main urban area which comprises of an area of open space and a surface level car park accessed off Chesnut Street. A small part of the site to the south west is within flood zones 2 and 3a (10% in total). This area could easily be avoided for development and reflected in site layout. The allocation statement in Appendix B sets out a requirement that suitable mitigation should be provided for areas at risk of flooding.
34. Development will also be required to adhere to policy DC 4 Flood Risk & Water Management which advocates the sequential approach, directing development to flood zone 1. This will ensure that inappropriate development will not take place within zones 2 and 3. The policy also prioritises the use of SuDS on sites.

35. In summary, it is considered that the policy framework of the Local Plan directs development to Flood Zone 1 and therefore removes the requirement for the Exception Test. However, it is considered appropriate to carry out the test as Flood Zones 2 and 3 still fall within the above proposed allocations in the plan. The policy approach was discussed with the Environment Agency (EA) following the Draft Local Plan consultation during the summer 2018. The EA were satisfied with the approach and confirmed that a level 2 SFRA was not required for the sites as development is directed to Flood Zone 1. In view of this, the above sites will be assessed against the criteria of the Sustainability Appraisal and the main aims of the Local Plan in order to establish their wider sustainability benefits, however part two of the test (a level 2 SFRA) will not be carried out as advised.

### **Alternative Sites**

36. Historically Darlington Borough has largely developed around the main urban area with some growth at the service villages and very limited growth in the rural villages. The main urban area is surrounded by open countryside but does have physical constraints such as the River Tees to the south, the A1(M) to the west and the A66 to the east.
37. The locational strategy of the Local Plan is to focus development on the main urban area and service villages as these areas provide (or will be able to provide) the level of services, facilities and transport links that are required to support communities and an increase in population. It is considered that these areas are the most sustainable locations for new development.
38. The Council has selected sites for allocation which it considers to address the housing and employment needs of the Borough over the plan period in the most sustainable locations. A range of sites have been considered and examined through the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The HELAA undertook the first sieve of sites; sites which were considered to be available, suitable and achievable were then subsequently assessed further and in more detail in the SA. Some sites were not appropriate to allocate due to various constraints; this included some sequentially preferable sites. For example, sites have conflicted with the locational strategy of the plan and wider sustainability objectives or they have not been available or viable.
39. An overview of the alternative sites considered are outlined below. Some of the sites did have potential to deliver the housing and employment spatial vision and some were also assessed as part of the SFRA. Where alternative sites have not been assessed through the SFRA, the Flood Zone base data has been utilised to evaluate potential flood risk. Alternative sites have only been considered below where they have progressed successfully through the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.
40. Some of the alternative sites are at a lower flood risk and sequentially more preferable, however, they are not suitable for development for various reasons and therefore have been removed from consideration. The reasons why these sites have been rejected are set out below. Site plans for the alternative sites can be viewed in the HELAA and SA. It should be noted that sites with planning permission have not been assessed through the SFRA as issues relating to flood risk have been dealt with at the planning application stage.

Table 1: Alternative Sites

Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
1	Alderman Leach	A sequentially more preferable site within Flood Zone 1 and not susceptible to significant surface water risk. The site was part of a wider residential development which had been developed and was proposed for flats, however there was no prospect of the flats being built in the near future. The site was proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan for housing. However in Dec 2018 the site was given planning permission for 7 bungalows (18/00592/FUL). Only sites of 10 dwellings or more are proposed for allocation or are to be shown as commitments in the Local Plan. As the site now falls below this threshold it has been removed from the Proposed Submission Local Plan.
9	Blackwell Grange East	The site is entirely within flood zone 1. It forms part of the grounds to the listed II* Blackwell Grange Hotel and was previously used as a golf course but not for some time. The site also forms part of a Local Wildlife Site and there are a number of TPO trees/groups across the area. The site was proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan, however due to the sensitivity of the site, it is proposed to be replaced with a revised area which is considered to be more suitable (ref 403 which is also within flood zone 1). As such although sequentially more preferable, site 9 has not been allocated.
17	St George Way, DTVA	Previously included in the Draft Local Plan as a housing commitment. The site is made up of a mixture of uses some of which are linked to the airport, including agricultural land, car park and commercial development. The site is within flood zone 1. The planning permission recently lapsed and the airport purchased by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). TVCA have made it clear that it is not the intention to pursue housing development at the airport, consequently the site is no longer available for development. It has been removed as a commitment from the plan and is also not proposed for housing allocation. The airport related activities on the site have been included within the existing employment designation for the area.
26	Former Corus Site, Whessoe Road	The site is within Flood Zone 1 and not susceptible to significant surface water risk. Site previously had planning permission for residential development (09/00731/OUT & 13/00244/FUL) which has expired. It is brownfield which will require remediation and is constrained by the proximity to the railway line. Achievability and developer interest is questionable given the details above. Consequently the site has not been included as a housing allocation. The existing industrial area to the south of the site has been included as an existing employment allocation (site ref 376 Whessoe Road).
30	Land at Glebe Road / Green Lane	Not assessed in the SFRA but within Flood Zone 1 and not significantly at risk from surface water flooding. Currently open space (informal recreation/playing pitches). SA



Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
		concluded that the site had poor access to existing services and would result in the loss of a recreation area. Consequently the site was rejected and not proposed for allocation.
49	Berrymead Farm Phase 2	From the SFRA base data the site is sequentially more preferable; within flood zone 1 and not susceptible to significant surface water flood risk. The site did not score particularly negatively in the Sustainability Appraisal, however it is considered that there are more suitable sites for allocation in closer proximity to the main urban area of Darlington, e.g. site ref 3 South of Burtree Lane and 8 Berrymead Farm.
56	North of Redhall	Part of the site has planning permission for residential development 17/00552/FUL. The remainder of the site to the north is within Flood Zones 2 and 3, therefore not sequentially more preferable.
76	Town End Farm, Brafferton.	Currently in agricultural use and sequentially more preferable. The site is located at a rural village which has poor access to services, facilities and public transport. Proposing this site for allocation would go against the locational strategy of the emerging Local Plan; to focus development in sustainable locations at and adjacent to the main urban area and service villages of Heighington, Hurworth and Middleton St George. Consequently the site was rejected.
81	Land North of the Birches, Hurworth	Site is currently in agricultural use. A proportion of the area to the north is within Flood Zones 2 & 3, consequently it is not sequentially preferable. Development layout could avoid the area at flood risk. Although the assessment for this site in the SA was not particularly negative it was considered that there were more suitable and logical sites for allocation at the other service villages.
83	North of Neasham Road, Hurworth	The site is in agricultural use and is within Flood Zone 1. It was considered that the site would significantly affect the Hurworth Conservation Area and Grade II listed Strawberry Cottage. Development of the site could also impact upon the river setting of this part of the village. As such the site was rejected and not proposed for allocation.
90	West of St Georges Gate, MSG.	Identified as sequentially more preferable in the SFRA. The site is in agricultural use with few physical constraints adjacent to one of the service villages. It is located to the north west of the village, however it was considered that there were more centrally located sites within the village, closer to services and facilities, which were more suitable for allocation.
93	South West Heighington	The site is in agricultural use and Twins Burn beck runs along the southern boundary. The site is sequentially more preferable as it is within Flood Zone 1. The baseline data does show some risk of surface water flooding which is assumed is linked to the proximity of the beck. Vehicle and pedestrian access to the village would be difficult due to

Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
		the layout of the adjacent residential area. It was for this reason that the site was not proposed for allocation.
109	East of Whessoe House	The SFRA does identify this site as sequentially more preferable; within Flood Zone 1. The site has however not been proposed for allocation as there are suitable sites located in closer proximity to the main urban area. The site would also have potential impacts on the local landscape.
117	Sadberge Old School Site	The baseline data within the SFRA identifies that the site is sequentially more preferable; within Flood Zone 1. There were however issues within the sites suitability; for example it is not well served by services, facilities and public transport. The site is adjacent to a rural village and proposing it for allocation would contradict the locational strategy of the emerging Local Plan. Development of the site would also result in the loss of informal open space which would be difficult to mitigate. The site is also adjacent to a Conservation Area and is within a setting of a Scheduled Monument (shrunk Medieval Village). For these reasons the site was rejected.
118	East Haven Site, Yarm Road	The site is within Flood Zone 1. The area is informal open space which is poorly maintained and of a poor quality. The site is bounded by buildings on all sides so it is not clear how it would be accessed. Due to this issue the site was not proposed for allocation.
140	Open Space Cardinal Gardens	The site is currently informal open space that would be lost if developed. There is also a number of trees along the sites western boundary which are protected by Tree Preservation Order. Development would compromise this woodland corridor. The site is within Flood Zone 1 however there is limited scope in the area for the replacement of the open space. As such the site was rejected.
149	Land between Chesnut Street and Oxford Street	The site was assessed in the SFRA as part of the Town Centre Fringe Regeneration Area. It appears from the baseline data that part of the site is within Flood Zone 2 and is therefore not sequentially preferable. The site is currently in employment / commercial use and development of the site would result in the loss of fairly modern employment premises. The site is also surrounded by commercial/employment uses and therefore raises issues with the suitability of the site if it was proposed for residential development. Consequently, the site was not proposed for allocation.
155	80 Merrybent	The site is greenfield land and is related to 80 Merrybent Drive which is a residential property. It is within Flood Zone 1 however there are limited access to services and facilities as it is adjacent to a rural village. There is good access to public transport as it is close to a bus route. Allocating the site would however contradict the locational strategy of the emerging Local Plan and as such the site has been rejected.

Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
172	Site East of Dumfries Street	The site was assessed as part of the Town Centre Fringe Regeneration Area in the SFRA. It is currently in commercial / industrial use however the owners are looking to vacate the site which has been marketed. The site is within Flood Zone 1. Development would result in the loss of business premises. Remediation would also be required on site due to contaminated land and mitigation for the adjacent railway line. This could raise issues with the viability of the site. In view of the above the site has not been allocated however it is part of the Regeneration Area and development would be supported in principle if the constraints can be overcome.
178	East of River Skerne, North of John Street	The site was assessed as part of the Town Centre Fringe Regeneration Area in the SFRA. It is currently in commercial use. It is not sequentially preferable as it is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (including 3b) as the River Skerne runs down the western boundary of the site. The business use would require relocation which raises the availability of the site and there are numerous constraints including a former landfill site, land contamination, proximity to the railway line, Scheduled Monument on the northern boundary, adjacent to Northgate conservation area and a gas holder to the south. The site was rejected for allocation due to the constraints outlined above and possible issues with availability, however it does form part of the Regeneration Area.
203	Land to the West and South of Holme Farm, Hurworth.	The site is in agricultural use. A watercourse runs along the northern boundary of the site and so this area is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The site is therefore not sequentially preferable.
237	Eastmount Road Coal Depot	The site was assessed as part of the Town Centre Fringe Regeneration Area in the SFRA. It is currently non-designated open space, previously a brownfield site. It is within Flood Zone 1. The site now forms part of a wildlife corridor and development could have a negative impact on ecology. Land remediation may be required and proximity to railway line would require mitigation. Due to these physical constraints the site has not been proposed for allocation but does form part of the Regeneration Area.
252	Land at High Beaumont Farm	This is a large greenfield site which is currently significantly detached from the main urban area. Access to services and local facilities is poor. It is sequentially more preferable within flood zone 1. Two sites are proposed for allocation to the south of this site which adjoin the main urban area. It is considered that these sites, and others, are more preferable as they form logical extensions to the main urban area. Site 252 has been rejected on this basis.
308	Firth Moor Open Space	This is a sequentially preferable site within flood zone 1, however it is a greenfield site which would result in the loss of existing open space. There is limited prospect of the replacement of this open space and it also forms part of a wider corridor with playing pitches to the north and

Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
		south. It is for this reason that the site was not proposed for allocation.
312	North of Stockton Road, Sadberge	The site is in agricultural use. It is within flood zone 1. Access to local services and facilities is poor as it adjacent to a rural village. Sustainable transport links are also limited as the local bus service is restricted. Allocating the site would contradict the locational strategy of the emerging Local Plan and as such the site has been rejected.
335	Land West of Roundhill Road, Hurworth	The site is on the edge of a service village and is in use for agriculture. It is within flood zone 1. The site would wrap modern development into the open countryside bringing development closer to the north side of the Conservation Area (blocking views of the woodland belts associated with the Conservation Area). Development would be likely to have an adverse impact on the open setting of the Conservation Area, including views to and from the Conservation Area. The site would also have some significant transport and accessibility impacts, including cumulative/widespread impacts that will require substantial new infrastructure to mitigate to acceptable levels. As such it was considered that there were more suitable sites available for allocation.
365	Heighington Lane South	The site is in a rural location of the borough but close to the employment/industrial area at Newton Aycliffe. It is however not well related to the existing employment area. It is sequentially more preferable in flood zone 1 and the proposed use would be for employment. A great crested newt receptor area related to the Hitachi factory is located to the north of the site. There is potential for adverse effects on a protected species, however this could be mitigated. Given the sites separation from nearby employment uses and the potential impacts on local wildlife, it was considered that there were more suitable sites for allocation.
374	Land South of Thorntree Farm, MSG.	The site forms a small strip of land on the villages built up western side. It is in agricultural use and is within flood zone 1. There is the potential for great crested newts on the site, however this could be mitigated. There are no significant physical constraints, however the site does have a particularly narrow shape which could prove to be more awkward to develop. It was also considered that there were more logical extensions to the service villages and main urban area which were suitable for housing development. Consequently, the site was not proposed for allocation.
375	Land South of High Stell, MSG	The site forms a logical rounding off to the village given the permission for housing development to the north (site ref 45 High Stell). It is in use as agricultural land and within flood zone 1. There are public rights of way crossing the site, it is adjacent to a local railway line to the south and there is the potential presence of great crested newts.

Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
		These issues could be mitigated against. An initial assessment by the Council's Highways Engineer has however raised issues with vehicle accessibility to the site. Consequently, the site has not been included as a proposed allocation.
377	Car Park East of McMullen Road	The site consists of a car park and open space along the western boundary which forms part of a landscape buffer to McMullen Road. The site is within flood zone 1. The tree belt on the western boundary is also covered by a TPO. The open space and tree belt would need to be retained as part of a development scheme, as such the developable area would be an awkward linear shape. Vehicle access would also potentially be an issue. More suitable sites are available for allocation and as such this site was rejected.
390	West Park Garden Village North	The site is in agricultural use and is within flood zone 1. It forms part of the West Park Garden Village masterplan area. The site is remote from local services that cannot currently be adequately accessed. Access would have to be achieved via West Park Garden Village which is unlikely to be provided for number of years. Development is located very close to the A1(M)/A68 Junction 58 which could generate noise and air pollution requiring mitigation for residential uses. Site is quite elevated relative to surroundings so would also have an impact on the surrounding landscape. Overall this site scores poorly in relation to social, environmental and economic impacts.
396	West of Roundhill Rd (North) Hurworth	The site is currently in use for agriculture with a number of farm buildings located in the south east corner. Located within flood zone one. Site would extend the built form of the village north along Roundhill Road (a historic route) in to the open countryside and potentially have an adverse impact on the open setting of the Conservation Area, although this harm could potentially be mitigated with careful layout, scale and massing. Site development will have some significant transport / accessibility impacts, including cumulative/widespread impacts that will require substantial new infrastructure to mitigate to acceptable levels. Due to these issues it was considered that there were more suitable sites available for allocation.
399	Land North of Holdforth Grange Hurworth Moor	The site is currently in agricultural use and is sequentially more preferable. It is however outside of the natural boundary to Darlington town formed by the A66 in open countryside. There is no direct walking / cycling route into Darlington that avoids crossing the A66. Due to its location it is not well served by services including public transport. Development would be prominent on the landscape and notably separate from the main conurbation. The site scores poorly on a number of areas and as such it has not been proposed for allocation.

Site Ref	Site Name	Comments
401	Land West of Creebeck Hurworth Moor	The site lies to the east of site 399 above and has almost identical constraints due to its location outside of the natural boundary to Darlington town formed by the A66. A very small area of the site on its southern boundary is within flood zones 2 and 3. This could be avoided via appropriate site layout. However, for the same reasons as outlined above, the site is not considered suitable for allocation.

## Exception Test

41. The Exception Test is a method to demonstrate and help ensure that flood risk to people and property will be managed satisfactorily, while allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available. The two parts to the test require proposed development to show that it will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, and that it will be safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduce flood risk overall.
42. If after completing the Sequential Test it is demonstrated that the sites identified are the most sequentially preferable it is necessary to undertake an Exception Test. It is not necessary to undertake the Exception Test for all development proposals, only those which are particularly vulnerable to flooding.
43. The sites proposed for allocation are largely for residential or employment development. Housing is classed as 'more vulnerable' development and employment uses as 'less vulnerable'. The table below from the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) identifies those circumstances where an Exception Test is required. For sites which are allocated for housing the Exception Test is only required where the site is located in Zone 3a. For sites which are allocated for employment uses, development is suitable within zone 1, 2 and 3a but should not be permitted in zone 3b.

Table 2: Application of the Exception Test

Flood Zones	Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification				
	Essential infrastructure	Highly vulnerable	More vulnerable	Less vulnerable	Water compatible
Zone 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zone 2	✓	Exception Test required	✓	✓	✓
Zone 3a †	Exception Test required †	✗	Exception Test required	✓	✓
Zone 3b *	Exception Test required *	✗	✗	✗	✓ *

Key:

✓ Development is appropriate

✗ Development should not be permitted.



44. As outlined earlier in this report 6 housing allocations, 1 mixed use allocation and 2 employment allocations have been identified which require further justification. On the basis of the above, table 3 below identifies which of these sites need to be subject to the Exception Test.

Table 3: Sites vulnerable to flood risk

Site Ref No	Site Name	% of site falling in each flood zone			Significant surface water risk	Proposed Use	Exception Test Required
		3b	3a	2			
20	Great Burdon	16.7 1	1.23	5.62	No	Residential	Yes
41	South Coniscliffe Park	2.06	0.01	0.57	No	Residential	Yes
100	Hall Farm, Branksome	13.7 1	0	2.02	No	Residential	Yes
185	Greater Faverdale	2.13	0.25	1.56	No	Mixed Use	Yes
249	Coniscliffe Park, North	0.67	0.01	0.32	No	Residential	Yes
251	Skerningham	3.82	1.35	5.69	No	Residential	Yes
343	Faverdale Industrial Estate	0	0.01	0.03	No	Employment (Existing)	No
360	Heighington Lane North	0.34	0.81	0.01	Yes	Employment (Proposed)	No
411	Chesnut Street Car Park	0	5	5	No	Residential	Yes

45. On all of the sites above, appropriate site layout, to account for the areas within flood zone 2-3 and areas susceptible to surface water flooding, would reduce the risk of flooding and remove the need for the Exception Test. This approach has been sought via the policy framework (allocation statements, masterplan frameworks, site specific policies and DC 4). Based on table 2 development should not be permitted in flood zone 3b. With regards to site 360 Heighington Lane North the Exception Test would not be required providing development did not occur in flood zone 3b.
46. Despite the above and regardless of how much of the site is within the flood zone, the sites have been subject to part one of the Exception Test as a precaution. For the Exception Test to be passed it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk. To assist this, each site has been assessed against the sustainability criteria used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal and the specific aims of the Darlington Local Plan.
47. The details of the assessment can be found in Appendix A to this report. Additional details on each site can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal which accompanies the Proposed Submission Local Plan. A summary of the findings of part 1 of the Exception Test is given below.
48. The second part of the Exception Test is to demonstrate that the site will be safe for its lifetime. The NPPG sets out that a level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should inform the consideration of the second part of the Exception Test. As outlined earlier in this report discussions have been held with the Environment Agency and it was confirmed that a level

2 assessment would not be required for these sites given the policy framework which prevents development with flood zones 2 and 3. It should also be noted that a flood risk assessment would also be required at the planning application stage for these sites and the flood risk safety of a development would also be given full consideration at this point.

### **Summary of findings**

49. From the assessments it is clear that the proposed housing, employment and mixed use allocations will have a positive impact against social and economic sustainability objectives with some negative impacts against certain environmental criteria.
50. The intention of the proposed allocations is to meet the housing and employment needs of the borough over the plan period, supported by the appropriate infrastructure and community facilities. The nine sites, particularly the five strategic allocations, will be important in meeting both quantitative and qualitative needs of the population.
51. The employment and mixed use allocations will be important in attracting new companies and businesses to the borough, consequently creating new employment opportunities for local people. Over recent years, overall Darlington has performed well economically and it is important that this continues into the future, ensuring the right sites are available for new commercial development.
52. The population of the borough is growing and it is important that a range of sites are available for housing development. It is considered that the proposed allocations will provide a balanced housing offer across the borough and a mix of housing will be provided in terms of size, types and tenure. The development of housing will provide accommodation for existing residents and also attract new ones. If we do not deliver sufficient housing, of the right type and in the right areas, there is a risk that the working age population seek new homes in neighbouring authorities. Retaining those people who are economically active is important in supporting the employment base of the borough. The construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. In addition, a long term secondary impact could be the attraction of new business and jobs as a result of retaining and/or attracting more of the mentioned economic groups. More importantly it is important that the different housing needs of the population is met over the plan period, consequently providing social benefits.
53. The majority of the sites which have been assessed through part one of the Exception Test are greenfield sites. The development of these sites would reduce the overall level of greenfield land in the borough and there would be associated environmental impacts on the landscape, wildlife habitat and biodiversity. A large proportion of the sites are also in agricultural use. This type of land is not considered to hold significant recreational or biodiversity value.
54. Darlington has largely developed from the main urban area outwards and with some development of the service villages. There are limited sites within the main urban area for development which are considered deliverable. It is also important that open space is protected within the main urban area to provide access to recreational spaces for existing residents. It is considered that the sites proposed for allocation are natural urban extensions to the conurbation and are the most logical approach to delivering new development. These sites are adjacent to existing services and transport routes and provide opportunities to deliver new infrastructure and facilities. This approach does inevitably result in the loss of greenfield sites adjacent to the main urban area, however sites have been selected wherever possible that will minimise the environmental impacts. Criteria within the allocation statements and site specific policies also require the provision



of open space and green infrastructure, thus mitigating the impacts of the loss of greenfield land.

55. For the majority of the nine sites the allocation statements, site specific policies and masterplan frameworks ensure that development does not take place in the areas which lie within flood zones 2 and 3. This is achieved through appropriate site layout; the protection and enhancement of open space and green corridors. Development proposals will also need to be considered in the context of all relevant policies within the Local Plan, including DC 4 Flood Risk and Water Management that directs development to flood zone 1 in line with the sequential approach. The policy also prioritises the use of SuDS on development sites and natural drainage features which are integrated with green infrastructure. Sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the policy framework to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur in the flood plain. This allied with the social and economic benefits of development, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met for the eight sites.

## **Conclusions**

56. The sequential test has demonstrated that the proposed allocations identified as being at risk from flooding in the SFRA, cannot be located in areas of lower risk. This is due to various additional constraints on alternative sites which have been discussed.
57. Seven of the nine sites assessed through the Exception Test, do not actually propose any development within flood zones 2 or 3. Allocation statements, site specific policies and masterplan frameworks ensure that development is directed to areas within flood zone 1. With regards to the other two sites (Faverdale Industrial Estate and Chesnut Street Car Park) proposals will need to be considered in the context of all relevant Local Plan policies including DC 4 Flood Risk and Water Management. The policy framework ensures that any new development is located away from areas at risk from flooding.
58. The allocations will deliver wider sustainability benefits in terms of meeting the populations quantitative and qualitative housing need, providing land for new employment, commercial and industrial development, attracting new businesses and creating new job opportunities. It is considered that the allocations which have been subject to the sequential and exception test, meet the necessary requirements.

**Appendix A: Exception Test Assessment**

<b>Site Ref:</b>	20	<b>Site Name:</b>	Great Burdon (Residential)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	16.71%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	1.23%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	5.62%
<b>Description</b>					
Great Burdon is a strategic site that will form a natural extension to the existing built up area of East Darlington main urban area. It is currently in use as agricultural land. The river corridor of the Skerne runs along the western boundary of the site. This area is not proposed for development and protected via the policy framework.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			Potential to deliver a mix scheme of housing including a significant amount of affordable housing and lifetime homes. The site is not currently well served by existing services and facilities but is capable of providing services etc as part of development. Well connected to existing sustainable transport routes with the opportunity to create new routes/services.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Large site with potential to deliver a mixed housing scheme with supporting services and facilities to meet resident's needs.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Good access to PROW/cycle network. Site is large enough to accommodate new green infrastructure provision and health facilities. Site is distant from local GP provision.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Local primary education has spare capacity and ability for expansion. Access to a direct bus route to higher education facilities. Potential to support vocational training.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			Within 20% least deprived areas under IMD crime domain.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Site promoted for housing but large enough to provide a new local centre. New housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market. Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.			Site is close to a number of bus routes with frequent services allowing access to services and job opportunities. The site is large enough to potentially contribute to new and/or extended services. Traffic generation will be significant given the scale of the development, impact on local and strategic network.		
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.			All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Site large		

	enough to potentially incorporate charging points for electric vehicles.
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.	The majority of the site is Grade 3b agricultural land, with around 15% Grade 2 or 3a. Entire site is greenfield land.
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.	The site is adjacent to the road network but there is scope for mitigation. Electricity pylons are located towards the northern edge of the site.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	The majority of the site is within Flood zone 1. A portion of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires that the use of SUDS is maximised.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Site is likely to have some positive and negative effects on local air quality. Site is large enough to accommodate additional tree planting and open space. The River Skerne runs alongside the sites western boundary, opportunity for enhancement.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Adjacent to Red Hall Local Wildlife Site.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Site is adjacent to the green corridor running alongside the River Skerne and the Redhall Wetland. Opportunity for significant river landscape restoration scheme as part of site development.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Large site on the urban edge visible from the surrounding area that will be sensitive to change. Situated at corner of one of the main arterial routes into Darlington.
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	A Scheduled Monument is located within the site and must inform site layout. Archaeological cropmarks. S&DR route runs along the site southern boundary.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is a logical extension to the main urban area with the potential to deliver new local services and facilities. The development of a mixed scheme of dwellings will provide a better choice of housing for the population.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Development on the site will affect the existing open landscape character of the local area and will result in the loss of a greenfield site. However, it is a logical urban extension up to the A66 ring road and does bring opportunities to enhance green infrastructure around the Skerne corridor and provide open space on site. Potential impacts on a heritage asset (Scheduled Monument) could be mitigated.

3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	Development of the site could provide local infrastructure such as new local facilities and extended / new bus services.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	The site could create a vibrant community where people want to live. Good access to PROW/cycle network. Site is large enough to accommodate new green infrastructure provision and health facilities.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. Although not a direct impact, new housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market.
6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impacts.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a cohesive community of a high quality which is well served by local facilities, green infrastructure and modes of sustainable transport. The site is also well located adjacent to the main urban area and strategic highway network.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Loss of an agricultural green field site but opportunity to enhance green corridors, provide accessible open space and enhance biodiversity. Landscape impacts.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site is not currently well served by local facilities but it is large enough to deliver new provision and reduce reliance on private vehicles. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.

**Conclusions**

It is predicted that development of housing on this site would have a positive impact against the social and economic objectives with some negative impacts on certain environmental objectives. The site would contribute to a better choice of housing for the population. Although it is not currently well served by community facilities it is large enough to provide a range of facilities on site. The site is well connected to existing footpaths, cycle routes and public transport. It forms a logical extension to the main urban area but would result in impacts on local landscape. There is also the opportunity to enhance green infrastructure provision and the Skerne river corridor. The areas within flood zone 2 and 3 are to be retained as open space via Local Plan policy and the allocation statement. Sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the policy framework to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur in the flood plain. This combined with the social and economic benefits of development, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.

<b>Site Ref:</b>	41	<b>Site Name:</b>	Coniscliffe Park, South (Residential)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	2.06%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	0.01%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	0.57%
<b>Description</b>					
Coniscliffe Park South is a strategic allocation located in the south western part of the borough and is important in achieving the spatial vision of the Local Plan. It forms part of a large urban extension and consists of agricultural land. The small part of the site which falls within flood zone 2 and 3 is located where Baydale Beck runs down the eastern edge of the site. This area is not proposed for development.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			Potential to deliver a mix scheme of housing including a significant amount of affordable housing and lifetime homes. The site is not currently well served by existing services and facilities but has good connections to existing footpaths, cycle routes and public transport.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Site is accessible to a limited range of community facilities. Able to provide an element of affordable housing and help support existing local community facilities.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Good access to PROW and green infrastructure network. Site is large enough to accommodate new green infrastructure provision. Site is distant from local GP provision.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Local primary school has capacity for new pupils and expansion. Access to a bus route with frequent service to higher education facilities and within reasonable distance of a higher education establishment. Potential to create/support vocational training.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			The site will have no detrimental impact on safety and security.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Site promoted for housing. New housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market. Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.			Site is reasonably close to a bus route with a frequent service allowing access to services and job opportunities. Site is large enough to potentially contribute towards a new/extended bus service and to provide facilities on site to serve local needs. There is also the potential for the scheme to ease congestion locally by providing a relief road between Coniscliffe Road and Staindrop Road, taking traffic out of Cockerton. The		

	route would be formed through this site and site 249.
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.	All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Site large enough to potentially incorporate charging points for electric vehicles.
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.	Majority of the site is identified as Grade 3 agricultural land, with 9% classified as Grade 2. Entire site is greenfield land.
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.	Site lies adjacent/close to the A67, A1(M) and Broken Scar water treatment works but there is scope for mitigation within the site.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	The majority of the site is within Flood zone 1. A small portion of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires that the use of SUDS is maximised.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Site is likely to have some positive and negative effects on local air quality. Site is large enough to accommodate additional tree planting and open space. The Baydale Beck runs along the sites eastern boundary. Close to nature conservation site. These factors provide opportunities for enhancement.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Adjacent to Broken Scar Local Wildlife Site. Eastern edge of site is within an area of interest with regards to Great Crested Newts. Site is large enough to accommodate additional tree planting and green infrastructure. Opportunities for enhancement of these areas.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Wildlife friendly open space is located to the east and west of the site. Community Woodland to west. Existing public access to site via PROW network. Development will deliver significant new green infrastructure as part of development.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Large site on urban edge. Certain degree of tree cover to east and west. Northern part of site visible from A1(M).
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Development is unlikely to affect any elements which contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is a logical extension to the main urban area. Not currently well served with local services and facilities. In combination with the adjacent proposed allocation to the north, there is the potential to provide new services and facilities to meet residents

	needs. The development of a mixed scheme of dwellings will provide a better choice of housing for the population.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Development on the site will affect the existing open landscape character of the local area and will result in the loss of a greenfield site. However, it is a logical urban extension and does bring opportunities to enhance green infrastructure around Baydale Beck and provide open space on site.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	The site could assist in facilitating new local infrastructure such as a relief road between Coniscliffe Road and Staindrop Road. Traffic congestion could be reduced on the surrounding local network.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	The site could create a vibrant community where people want to live. Good access to PROW and the green infrastructure network. Site is large enough to accommodate new green infrastructure provision. Distant from local GP provision.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. Although not a direct impact, new housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market.
6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impacts.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a cohesive community of a high quality which is well served by local facilities (in combination with the site to the north), green infrastructure and modes of sustainable transport. The site is also well located adjacent to the main urban area and strategic highway network.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and	Loss of an agricultural green field site but opportunity to enhance green corridors, provide open space and enhance biodiversity.



appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site is not currently well served by local facilities but in combination with the site to the north there is the potential to deliver new provision and reduce reliance on private vehicles. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
<p>It is predicted that development of housing on this site would have a positive impact against the social and economic objectives with some negative impacts on certain environmental objectives. The site would contribute to a better choice of housing for the population. Although it is not currently well served by community facilities, there is the potential to provide new services and facilities in combination with the proposed site to the north. The site is well connected to existing footpaths and reasonably connected to public transport and a frequent bus service. It forms a logical extension to the main urban area. The Local Plan directs development to flood zone 1. The allocation statement requires that any development scheme shall give adequate buffering and protection to Baydale Beck and encourages enhancement of this corridor. Sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the policy framework to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur in the flood plain. This combined with the social and economic benefits of development, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.</p>	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	100	<b>Site Name:</b>	Hall Farm, Branksome (Residential)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	13.71%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	0%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	2.02%
<b>Description</b>					
The site is an urban extension to the west of the main urban area. It is bound by the A1(M) to the west and Malvern Crescent to the east. The site is greenfield land in agricultural use. A proportion of the site along the southern boundary adjacent to Cocker and Baydale Beck is within flood zone 2 and 3b.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			The site can provide a mixed housing scheme with a significant amount of affordable housing and lifetime homes. It is not well served by services and facilities but has good connections to existing footpaths, cycle routes and public transport.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Site is accessible to a limited range of community facilities. Site will provide an element of affordable housing and help support existing local community facilities.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Good access to green infrastructure and the PROW/cycle network. Site is large enough to accommodate significant new green infrastructure provision. Site is somewhat distant from local GP provision. Greenfield site – some of which is best and most versatile land.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			There is currently no spare capacity at the local primary school, but the school building/site has capacity for expansion. Access to a bus route with frequent service to higher education facilities in Darlington. Within 5km of a higher education establishment. Could potentially create/support vocational training.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			The site will have no detrimental impact on safety and security.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Site promoted for housing and not located near to the town or a local centre. New housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market. Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.			Site is located close to a bus route with a frequent service allowing access to services/facilities and job opportunities. Site development will have some significant transport/accessibility impacts, including cumulative/widespread impacts that will require substantial new infrastructure to		

	mitigate to acceptable levels. Possible links through Branksome but would need to be considered carefully to assess capacity of existing roads and suitability for further intensification
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.	All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building).
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.	Majority of site is Grade 3b agricultural land, but a third is Grade 3a. Entire site is greenfield land.
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.	Site lies adjacent to the A1(M) and the Wyvern Academy but there is scope for mitigation within the site.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	The majority of the site is within Flood zone 1. A portion of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires that the use of SUDS is maximised.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Development of the site is likely to have some positive and negative effects on local air quality. A Beck Valley runs along the site's southern boundary. Opportunities for enhancement.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Site is large enough to accommodate additional tree planting and green infrastructure. Large arable field with opportunity to extend green corridors along Cocker Beck and Baydale Beck.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Next to the Barnard Castle trackbed green corridor and other areas of informal recreational open space. Provide significant green infrastructure along southern side of site (wider than the flood plain).
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Prominent site on the edge of the urban area visible from the A1(M). Provides a buffer between the urban edge and the A1(M).
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Development is unlikely to affect any elements which contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is a logical extension to the main urban area. The development of a mixed scheme of dwellings will provide a better choice of housing for the population. The site is not well served by services and facilities but has good connections to existing footpaths, cycle routes and public transport.

2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Development on the site will affect the existing open landscape character of the local area and will result in the loss of a greenfield site. However, it is a logical urban extension up to the A1(M) and does bring opportunities to enhance green infrastructure around the Beck Valleys.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	The site could provide a local road network connection through the site.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	The site could create a vibrant community where people want to live. Good access to PROW/cycle network. There are opportunities on the site to enhance green infrastructure provision and provide new green spaces.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. Although not a direct impact, new housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market.
6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impacts.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a cohesive community of a high quality which is integrated with green infrastructure and located in close proximity to modes of sustainable transport. The site is also well located adjacent to the main urban area and strategic highway network.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Loss of an agricultural green field site but opportunity to enhance green corridors, provide open space and enhance biodiversity.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site is not well served by local facilities however

development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	it is in close proximity to sustainable modes of transport. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
<p>It is predicted that development of housing on this site would have a positive impact against the social and economic objectives with some negative impacts on certain environmental objectives. The site would contribute to a better choice of housing for the population. Although it is not well served by community facilities it has good access to PROW, cycle network and public transport. It forms a logical extension to the main urban area but is in a prominent position in the landscape. There is also the opportunity to enhance green infrastructure provision and the Beck Valleys. The allocation statement outlines that the valleys should be protected and opportunities taken to extend green corridors / green infrastructure. Sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the policy framework to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur in the flood plain. This combined with the social and economic benefits of development, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.</p>	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	185	<b>Site Name:</b>	Greater Faverdale (Mixed Use)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	2.13%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	0.25%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	1.56%
<b>Description</b>					
Greater Faverdale is a strategic mixed use allocation and is an important element in the achievement of the spatial vision of the Local Plan. It forms a strategic urban extension to the north west of Darlington and is currently in agricultural use. The site makes up a considerable proportion of housing and employment land in the Local Plan. West Beck runs through the Faverdale site in a north – south direction and therefore a proportion of the site is within flood zones 2, 3a and 3b.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			Large mixed use site capable of providing a mix of house types, improved connectivity and appropriate services. Capable of providing a significant amount of affordable housing and lifetime homes. PROW across site which could be utilised and expanded upon. Nearby cycle routes could also be enhanced.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Large mixed use site located adjacent to existing employment area with facilities to create a new community.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Site is adequately served with access to Faverdale Whin Fox Covert LNR, PROW/Cycle Network and is large enough to offer further improvement. Site will result in the loss of Grade 3 (Provisional Land Classification) agricultural land.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Access to higher education limited although a development of this size would likely result in a re-routing of bus services. The nearest Primary School, West Park Academy, currently has limited capacity and limited options for expansion. New provision in the north west area will likely be required.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			Site is located within one of the least deprived areas and at no significant risk of major hazard zones.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Large mixed use site would replace some former employment land with residential however this is compensated by a larger overall site than previously allocated. Nearest district centre at West Park is too far to be easily accessible on foot but public transport links to other centres and the Town Centre good and could likely be improved with a development of this size. Housing development also brings economic benefits; construction jobs and retaining and attracting the economically active population.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on			Site is large enough to potentially contribute towards a new/extended bus service, and to		

private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.	provide new facilities on site to serve the needs of the development. Limited development can be enabled from the existing highway network however the site is currently undergoing modelling work to ascertain levels of achievable development and potential mitigation which may include new highway linkages from Rotary Way to Burtree Lane and further afield.
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.	All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Large enough site to support provision of vehicle charging points.
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.	Approximately 22% of the site is grade 3a and 1.3% Grade 2 Agricultural Land.
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.	There are a number of potential sources of pollution within close proximity and adjacent to the site but there is scope for mitigation.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	Small percentage of site within flood zones 2 and 3 but mitigation should be achievable. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires that the use of SUDS is maximised.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Minor watercourse running across the site North to South that will require mitigation to avoid contamination.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Potential for a significant impact on biodiversity, including GCN, low land farming birds and bats. Substantial mitigation required, but possible if included as an integral part of a comprehensive master planning approach to the sites development. The Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy includes a proposed local GI corridor crossing the site.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Site development would deliver significant new accessible green infrastructure to cater for the needs of the development and enhance existing spaces.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Landscape setting eroded by route of A1(M) and employment development to south. However it is a large rural area with elevated areas. Medium – high landscape and visual sensitivity.
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	East boundary of site adjacent to the SDR – Layout should provide a buffer with cycle/pedestrian route, landscaping and interpretation. Section of route will be in the Heritage Action Zone boundary. Grade II Listed Manor House ruins and wall within site. Layout should be informed by a Setting

	Assessment/Heritage Impact Assessment to ensure that harm to the setting of the listed structures are appropriately mitigated.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is an extension to the main urban area and will deliver a substantial amount of housing and employment land. A development of this size would also be expected to provide its own new services and new sustainable transport routes including public transport.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	The local landscape in this area has already been eroded by the A1(M) and employment uses to the south. Consequently, the area is less sensitive to development.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	The strategic development would be capable of delivering new local services and facilities, new sustainable transport routes and local highway linkages.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	Site is adequately served with access to a Local Nature Reserve, PROW/Cycle Network and is large enough to offer further improvement and open space provision.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Large mixed use site would replace some former employment land with residential however this is compensated by a larger overall site than previously allocated. Employment land could attract new businesses and jobs. Housing development also brings economic benefits; construction jobs and retaining and attracting the economically active population.
6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impacts.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a cohesive mixed community of a high quality which is well served by local facilities, green infrastructure and modes of sustainable transport. The site is also well located adjacent to the main urban area and strategic highway network.



<p>9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>Potential for a significant impact on biodiversity, substantial mitigation required, but possible if integrated into the scheme. Site development would deliver significant new accessible green infrastructure to cater for the needs of the development and enhance existing. Potential landscape impacts.</p>
<p>10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.</p>	<p>All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site will be capable of providing new local facilities and sustainable transport connections, therefore reducing the need to travel by private vehicle. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.</p>
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	
<p>It is predicted that development of this mixed use strategic site would have a positive impact against the social and economic objectives with some negative impacts on certain environmental objectives. Currently offers poor access to existing services however a strategic development of this size would be expected to provide its own new services and provide new sustainable transport routes including public transport. The site should be capable of providing a significant amount and mix of housing to help meet local needs along with new employment opportunities as part of a mixed use development. Will have significant environmental and landscape impacts owing to its size. However, it is a logical extension to the urban area and the development site is large enough to deliver strategic GI. Sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the policy framework (site specific policy and masterplan framework) to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur in the flood plain. This combined with the social and economic benefits of development, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.</p>	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	249	<b>Site Name:</b>	Coniscliffe Park North (Residential)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	0.67%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	0.01%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	0.32
<b>Description</b>					
Coniscliffe Park North is a strategic allocation located in the south western part of the borough and is important in achieving the spatial vision of the Local Plan. It forms part of a wider large urban extension and consists of agricultural land. The very small part of the site which falls within flood zone 2 and 3 is located where Baydale Beck runs down the eastern edge of the site. This area is not proposed for development.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			Potential to deliver a mix scheme of housing including a significant amount of affordable housing and lifetime homes. The site is not currently well served by existing services and facilities but has good connections to existing footpaths, cycle routes and public transport.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Large site with potential for mixed use development, incorporating community facilities, along with significant levels of affordable housing. Site is accessible to a limited range of community facilities.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Good access to green infrastructure and the PROW/cycle network. Site is large enough to accommodate significant new green infrastructure provision. Site is somewhat distant from local GP provision but this is a large site with the potential to deliver new health facilities as part of the development. Greenfield site located on best and most versatile land.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Local primary school currently has spare capacity and the school site has capacity for expansion. The Local Plan also requires that space is reserved on the site for a primary school if need arises. Reasonable access to a bus route with frequent service to higher education facilities in Darlington. Within 5km of a higher education establishment. Large site that has the potential to create/support vocational training.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			The site will have no detrimental impact on safety and security.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Site promoted for residential use with a small element of commercial space. Site is not close to a town or local centre. New housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market. Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities.		

7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.	Site is reasonably close to a bus route with a frequent service allowing access to services/facilities and job opportunities. Site is large enough to potentially contribute towards a new/extended bus service, and to provide new facilities on site. Site development will have some significant transport impacts, including cumulative impacts that will require substantial new infrastructure to mitigate to acceptable levels. Development has potential to ease congestion locally by providing a relief road between Coniscliffe Road and Staindrop Road taking traffic out of Cockerton. Route could be formed through this site and site 41 to south.
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.	All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Site large enough to potentially incorporate charging points for electric vehicles.
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.	Majority of the site is identified as Grade 2 agricultural land. Entire site is greenfield land.
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.	Site lies close to the A1(M) but there is scope for mitigation within the site.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	The majority of the site is within Flood zone 1. A very small portion of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires that the use of SUDS is maximised.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Site is likely to have some positive and negative effects on local air quality. Site is large enough to accommodate additional tree planting and green infrastructure. The Baydale Beck runs along the site's eastern boundary.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Site is large enough to accommodate additional tree planting and green infrastructure. Recent Great Crested Newt record on site.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Wildlife friendly open space is located alongside the sites eastern boundary along the course of the Baydale Beck. Opportunity for extension and enhancement.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Prominent site on the urban edge visible from the A1(M).
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Development is unlikely to affect any elements which contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.

<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is a logical extension to the main urban area. Not currently well served with local services and facilities. The site is a size which would be capable of providing new services and facilities to meet resident's day to day needs. The development of a mixed scheme of dwellings will provide a better choice of housing for the population.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Development on the site will affect the existing open landscape character of the local area and will result in the loss of a greenfield site. However, it is a logical urban extension and does bring opportunities to enhance green infrastructure around Baydale Beck and provide open space on site.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	The site could assist in facilitating new local infrastructure such as a relief road between Coniscliffe Road and Staindrop Road. Traffic congestion could be reduced on the surrounding local network.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	The site could create a vibrant community where people want to live. Good access to PROW and the green infrastructure network. Site is large enough to accommodate new green infrastructure provision. Distant from local GP provision but site is capable of delivering new facilities.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. Although not a direct impact, new housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market.
6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impacts.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to	There is the potential for the site to deliver a cohesive community of a high quality which is well served by local facilities, green

achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	infrastructure and modes of sustainable transport. The site is also well located adjacent to the main urban area and strategic highway network.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Loss of an agricultural green field site but opportunity to enhance green corridors, provide open space and enhance biodiversity.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site is not currently well served by local facilities but there is the potential to deliver new provision and reduce reliance on private vehicles. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
<p>It is predicted that development of housing on this site would have a positive impact against the social and economic objectives with some negative impacts on certain environmental objectives. The site is not well served by services and facilities but has good connections to existing footpaths, cycle routes and public transport. The site would contribute to a better choice of housing for the population alongside appropriate community facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents. Site development will have some significant transport impacts, including cumulative impacts that will require mitigation. It forms a logical extension to the main urban area but will result in impacts on landscape character. Although parts of the site are within flood zone 2 and 3, the Local Plan directs development to flood zone 1. The allocation statement requires that any development scheme shall give adequate buffering and protection to Baydale Beck and encourages enhancement of this corridor. Sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the policy framework to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur in the flood plain. This combined with the social and economic benefits of development, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.</p>	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	251	<b>Site Name:</b>	Skerningham		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	3.82%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	1.35%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	5.69%
<b>Description</b>					
<p>Skerningham is a strategic allocation located in the north western part of the borough and is important in achieving the spatial vision of the Local Plan. This site is one of the most logical for the expansion of the main urban area. It makes up a considerable proportion of housing land in the proposed development plan; not just within the plan period but also beyond 2036. Its current use consists of agricultural land, leisure use (golf course) and farm buildings. The river Skerne runs along the northern boundary of the site and intersects the eastern area of the site, consequently parts are within flood zones 2 and 3.</p>					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.		Potential to deliver a mix scheme of housing including a significant amount of affordable housing and lifetime homes. The site is not currently well served by existing services and facilities but has good connections to existing footpaths and cycle routes but poor connectivity to public transport. A strategic development of this size would be expected to provide new routes of public transport.			
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.		Large site with potential for a mix of housing products and tenures. New community facilities required including education, local centre, health and significant GI/recreation.			
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.		Existing PROW and Cycle network good but enhancements would be required. New recreation and health facilities would be expected within a development of this size.			
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.		This is a large site with the potential to provide a new primary school, if required, as part of its development. Within 5km of a higher education establishment. Large site that has the potential to create/support vocational training.			
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.		Site is located within an area of average rates of deprivation and partly within an area of low deprivation. There are no major hazard zones within the vicinity. A high pressure gas mains crosses the site.			
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities		The development site is proposed for residential only but would be expected to deliver a mix of uses to support a community of this size (e.g. local services and facilities). New housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market. Construction of			

	housing will directly create job opportunities.
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.	A development of this size would be expected to sustain its own bus route. Significant strategic highway infrastructure will be required to mitigate this quantum of development including an inner ring road and potential links to Highways England northern bypass.
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.	All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Site large enough to potentially incorporate charging points for electric vehicles.
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.	Would result in a significant loss of greenfield/agricultural land. Former Barmpton Quarry Landfill Site will also require remediation.
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.	Owing to the size of the site there will be a number of potential sources of pollution which will require mitigation including the East Coast Mainline, roads, agricultural activities and wind turbines. The on-going master planning work undertaken by the developer is identifying these sources and appropriate mitigation will be required.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	The land near to the Skerne (to the North and East of the site) has areas of flood zone 2 and 3 which would not be suitable for development. The Skerne Valley is also a key Green Infrastructure Corridor that will be required to form an integral part of any development in this area.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Site development will have a significant effect on local air quality compared to existing agricultural and leisure uses (golf course). The River Skerne could also be susceptible to contamination from development of this scale however mitigation could be incorporated. Skerningham Community Woodland and the proposed Local Wildlife Site could be susceptible to contamination and would require appropriate mitigation.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Site intersects with a Local Wildlife Site (Oxbow Lake) and a biodiverse wetland area (a potential LWS). Significant presence of protected species on site.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Community woodland present with possible extension. Extensive countryside access. Site contains a number of PROW that could be extended to create a more comprehensive network. Large scale

	development with opportunity to provide significant area of green infrastructure.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Development of this large site will inevitably have a significant impact on the landscape.
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Number of listed buildings on site. Affecting the historic rural settings to these structures. Listed assets prominent in the landscape with no screening. Setting of Ketton Bridge Scheduled Monument. Potential to impact on the historic assets in and around Great Burdon.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is a logical extension to the main urban area. Not currently well served with local services and facilities. The site is a size which would be capable of providing new services and facilities to meet resident's day to day needs. The development of a mixed scheme of dwellings will provide a better choice of housing for the population.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Development of such a large site will have a significant impact on local landscape character and will result in the loss of a greenfield site. However, it is a logical urban extension and does bring opportunities to enhance and deliver substantial new green infrastructure on the site. Potential impacts on historic assets. Mitigation required.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	The site would provide a local distributor road between the A167 and A1150 close to the Little Burdon roundabout, to include a crossing of the East Coast Mainline, and a corridor sufficient to enable the provision of a connection across the River Skerne to the Northern Relief Road route.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	The site could create a vibrant community where people want to live. Good access to PROW and cycle routes but enhancements would be required. Potential for substantial new provision of accessible green infrastructure. Large strategic site capable of delivering new health care facilities.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Delivery of new local services and facilities will create some but limited new employment. Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. Although not a direct impact, new housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market.



6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will significantly contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough. Such a large site can provide a range of house types in terms of size, design and tenure.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	The site could assist in improving regional connectivity by providing a local link between the A1150 and A167.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a cohesive community of a high quality which is well served by local facilities, green infrastructure and modes of sustainable transport. The site is also well located adjacent to the main urban area and strategic highway network.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Encroachment into the countryside and landscape impacts. Potential impacts on biodiversity. However opportunities to provide substantial new green infrastructure and mitigation.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site is not currently well served by local facilities but a site of this size is expected to deliver new provision and reduce reliance on private vehicles. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
Overall this large strategic site would have a positive impact against the social and economic objectives and negative impacts on environmental objectives. The site assists in meeting the quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the population during and beyond the plan period. Appropriate community facilities will be delivered to meet the day to day needs of residents. Site has good existing access to cycle and PROW network but poor connectivity to public transport. A development of this size would be expected to provide new routes including public transport routes. Site contains areas of open space that should be retained as part of development. Site development would be able to make significant provision of new green infrastructure. Development here will have significant environmental and landscape impacts owing to its size. Although parts of the site are within flood zones 2 and 3, the site specific policy and masterplan framework directs development to flood zone 1 and requires the protection and enhancement of the Skerne Valley. In view of this policy protection and the social and economic benefits which development of the site would bring, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	343	<b>Site Name:</b>	Faverdale Industrial Estate (Employment – Existing)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	0%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	0.01%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	0.03%
<b>Description</b>					
The site is a large existing employment allocation within the north wester part of the main urban area. There is a large part of the site still available for development. Along the south western edge, within a landscape corridor, a very small part of the site is within flood zones 2 and 3a (0.04%).					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			No direct effect.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Further development of the site would provide employment uses that would increase employment opportunities for the local community. Adjacent to existing residential areas but remote from services.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Existing employment area well served with open space, public transport and cycle paths. Location in relation to health services limited.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Employment site that has potential to create/support vocational training. Good access to higher education facilities by sustainable mode of transport.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			Site is located within one of the least deprived areas and at no significant risk of major hazard zones.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Site offers a substantial amount of existing and available employment land well served by public and sustainable transport. Opportunity to attract new businesses and new jobs.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.			Well located for employment uses with good public and sustainable transport links. Opportunity to provide multiple points of access.		
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.			All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Large enough site to support provision of vehicle charging points.		
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.			Site is largely brownfield. A large proportion of the site is Grade 3 agricultural land.		
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.			Existing employment area.		

11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	Very small area of the site in the south western part is within flood zone 3a and 2.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Will depend on type of use on site. Industrial uses will have more impact than office. Brinkburn Nature Reserve located to the South West of the site.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Significant number of TPO trees on northern half of site. Development would result in the loss of grassland areas that would be difficult to mitigate for. Great Crested Newt interest.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Wooded boundary along sites western border and in northern part of site (most of which are covered by TPOs). Mature trees on the site should be retained and protected. High quality brownfield biodiversity on parts of site, that form part of a wider ecological network. These areas should be retained and enhanced as part of any future development on the site.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	The site is located within a settlements built up area.
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Needs to respect the setting of Faverdale Hall, a non-designated heritage asset located in northwest corner of the site. TPOs are part of the historic landscape of former Faverdale Hall, a non-designated historic asset to north of site. Development should avoid northern portion of site and landscape setting of TPO and mature trees enhanced.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	Site development would provide employment uses that would increase job opportunities in the borough. Adjacent to existing employment area. Good connection to cycle paths and sustainable transport.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Loss of some greenfield land, however the site is within the main built up area and adjacent to existing employment uses. Number of TPO trees on the site and areas of biodiversity which should be retained.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	No direct impact.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	Good access to cycle routes and public footpaths.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Land available for development could attract new business to the borough and create employment opportunities for local people.

6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	No direct impact.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impact.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a high quality employment development which expands an existing employment/industrial area.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Loss of some greenfield land and potential impact on biodiversity, although potential for retention of valuable areas. The site is located within the main urban area and adjacent to existing employment uses.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site has good access to sustainable modes of transport. Non-residential buildings over 500 sqm will need to meet BREEAM 'very good' standards.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
Development of the site would have a positive impact against social and economic objectives and some slight negative impacts on environmental objectives. Existing employment site that is well located for links to public transport and readily accessible by highway links. Would have minimal wider environmental impacts provided appropriate mitigation is included as part of development. There are a number of TPO's within the site that would require protection. Very small part of the site within the south western area is within flood zone 2 and 3. Policy DC 4 will ensure that development is directed to flood zone 1. It should also be noted that this area is not suitable for development as it forms part of a landscape corridor with the highway network and is also on an incline. Given the protection via the policy framework and the benefits the site would bring, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	360	<b>Site Name:</b>	Heighington Lane North (Employment)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	0.34%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	0.81%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	0.01%
<b>Description</b>					
The site is a proposed employment allocation and makes up a wider employment area (protection area and proposed allocation) which has been identified in County Durham's Plan Pre - Submission Draft 2019. This includes the Hitachi assembly plant to the south, also within County Durham. A proportion of the site is within flood zones 2, 3a and 3b (1.16%) as Demon's Beck runs through the site.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			No direct effect.		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Site development would provide employment uses that would increase employment opportunities for the local community.		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Site enables access to the PROW network and local open space but is some distance from health facilities. Greenfield site - a large proportion of the site is Grade 3a agricultural land.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Employment site that has potential to create/support vocational training. Poor access to higher education facilities by sustainable mode of transport.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			The site will have no detrimental impact on safety and security.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Site promoted for employment use located adjacent to existing employment uses and within reasonable distance of Heighington train station. Opportunity to attract new businesses and new jobs.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.			Large site with the potential to contribute towards a new or extended bus service. Site is within reasonable distance of Heighington train station and adjacent to an existing employment area.		
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.			All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building). Non-residential buildings over 500 sqm will need to meet BREEAM 'very good' standards. Site large enough to potentially incorporate charging points for electric vehicles.		
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.			Entire site is greenfield land. A large proportion of the site is Grade 3a agricultural land.		
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.			Site proposed for employment use and located adjacent to existing heavy industry.		

11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	Small parts of the site are within flood zones 2 and 3. Areas are also susceptible to surface water flood risk.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Site development could potentially have a limited negative effect on local air and water quality that could not be fully mitigated. A small beck valley runs through the site. A watercourse and balancing pond also lie close to the site.
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	Significant tree boundary along north and west side of site, and along internal field boundaries. Highway mitigation to create safe access may necessitate significant tree/hedgerow removal.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Site development would deliver new green infrastructure to cater for the needs of the development.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	Countryside location with some capacity to accept change with appropriate mitigation. Tree boundaries along north and west boundaries should be retained.
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Development is unlikely to affects elements that contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	Site development would provide employment uses that would increase job opportunities in the borough. Adjacent to existing employment area. Reasonable connection to sustainable transport modes which could be improved.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Loss of a greenfield site in agricultural use, however located adjacent to existing industry and employment uses. Significant tree boundary along north and west side of site, and along internal field boundaries.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	No direct impact.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	Reasonable access to cycle routes, public footpaths and local open space.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Proposed allocation could attract new business to the borough and create employment opportunities for local people.
6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	No direct impact.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements	No direct impact.

to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to deliver a high quality employment development which expands an existing employment/industrial area.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Loss of a greenfield site, however adjacent to existing employment uses therefore landscape is less sensitive. Possible impacts on biodiversity with regards to tree belts, potential for retention and mitigation.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site has reasonable access to sustainable modes of transport. Non-residential buildings over 500 sqm will need to meet BREEAM 'very good' standards.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
In summary, development of this site would have a positive impact against social and economic objectives and some negative impacts on environmental objects. The site is on the edge of Newton Aycliffe adjacent to an existing employment area but would result in the loss of a greenfield site. It does provide the opportunity for economic development well related to existing employment uses. Development would result in the loss of best and most versatile land. Depending on employment activity, development could affect local air and/or water quality without appropriate mitigation. A small part of the site is within flood zones 2 and 3, however the allocation statement and policy DC 4 will ensure that development is directed to flood zone 1. Given the protection via the policy framework and the benefits the site would bring, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.	

<b>Site Ref:</b>	411	<b>Site Name:</b>	Chesnut Street Car Park (Residential)		
<b>Flood Zone 3b</b>	0%	<b>Flood Zone 3a</b>	5%	<b>Flood Zone 2</b>	5%
<b>Description</b>					
The site is located close to the town centre along Haughton Road. It currently comprises of open space and a surface level car park accessed off Chesnut Street. A small part of the site to the south west is within flood zones 2 and 3a.					
<b>SA Objectives</b>					
1. Provide a mixture of affordable, well designed and sustainably located new housing, and improve the standard of existing housing, especially to provide for young people, families and older people.			Potential to deliver a mix scheme of housing including a small number of affordable homes. The site's location close to the town centre means it is well served by existing services and facilities. It is also well connected to sustainable transport routes and services (bus and rail).		
2. Develop vibrant and cohesive communities.			Small scheme with the potential to deliver high quality housing with an element of affordable close to the town centre. Would help to support existing services and enhance surrounding communities. Development would result in the loss of a community facility (open space).		
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of all, reduce health inequalities and promote healthier lifestyles.			Good access to green infrastructure and walking/cycle network. Development would result in the loss of open space. Site has good access to existing health facilities.		
4. Provide education and training opportunities to improve the skills and employment prospects of the resident population.			Access to a direct bus route with frequent service to higher education facilities in Darlington. Within 2km of a higher education establishment. Local schools have significant available capacity.		
5. Improve the safety and security of people and property.			Within 20% least deprived areas under IMD crime domain.		
6. Achieve sustainable levels of economic growth and increase employment levels and access to sustainable and high quality employment opportunities			Development would result in the loss of employment uses (Chesnut Street car park and lorry/coach park). However, it would introduce new residential development within 400m of the town centre.		
7. Encourage sustainable travel. Provide development which reduces reliance on private vehicles, maximising access to public transport and active travel modes.			Site is close to a bus route with a frequent service allowing access to services/facilities and job opportunities. Also relatively close to town centre train station.		
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the borough's resilience to climate change.			All new development will have an impact but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards (construction, materials, energy efficiency of building).		
9. Make the most efficient use of land and property.			Site classified as urban. Over half of the site is open space with the remainder previously developed 'brownfield' land.		
10. Minimise levels of noise, vibration, odour and light pollution.			Site is adjacent to an employment area and the B6279 Haughton Road, a major arterial route. However, there is likely to be scope		



	for sufficient mitigation on the site subject to appropriate design and layout.
11. Avoid and reduce flood risk from all sources including fluvial, surface water and sewer flooding.	The majority of the site is within Flood zone 1 but with a small part of the site within Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the sites south west corner.
12. Protect and enhance air and water quality and make efficient use of water.	Site is likely to have some positive and negative effects on local air quality
13. Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	No designated sites, wider ecological network and/or priority species will be affected by this site. However, there are a number of mature trees present on the eastern half of the site that should be retained where possible.
14. Protect and enhance green infrastructure of all types.	Site development would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure with limited scope for replacement.
15. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Darlington's landscape.	The site is located within a built up area.
16. Conserve and enhance Darlington's distinctive and valuable - historic environment.	Within an area of high archaeological potential. Boundary encompasses the site of the former East Mount Lodge. Archaeological investigation may be required prior to development. However, development is unlikely to affect any elements which contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
<b>Local Plan Aims</b>	
1. Deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs through a cohesive plan which makes the best use of land and resources.	The site is located close to the town centre and is well served by existing services/facilities and sustainable transport routes. Development would help to meet the borough's housing needs but would result in the loss of some open space.
2. Protect and enhance the quality of Darlington's built, natural and historic environment, and to use it positively to create great places.	Development could enhance a built up area close to the town centre. However there would also be a loss of open space.
3. Deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local or strategic infrastructure.	No direct impact.
4. Contribute to the satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing of the population of the Borough.	New high quality housing on the site could enhance an existing community. Good access to PROW/cycle network and existing health facilities. Some loss of open space.
5. Facilitating economic growth – facilitate sustainable economic growth of 7,000 new jobs within the borough.	Construction of housing will directly create job opportunities. Although not a direct impact, new housing can assist in retaining and attracting the economically active population. Subsequently benefiting the economy and supporting the employment market.

6. Meeting housing needs – enable the development of at least 10,000 new homes in order to meet the housing needs and aspirations of those living and working in the borough.	The site will contribute to meeting quantitative and qualitative housing needs of the borough.
7. A well connected borough - to capitalise on Darlington's excellent existing connections to the national strategic transport network and seek improvements to regional connectivity across the borough. New development that supports delivery of key infrastructure and a sustainable pattern for growth will be supported.	No direct impacts.
8. Create cohesive, proud & healthy communities – create and support cohesive communities through good place-making to achieve lively, well located and distinctive places with an increased sense of civic pride.	There is the potential for the site to enhance an existing community which is well located adjacent to the town centre, local facilities and sustainable transport.
9. Protect and enhance the countryside and natural environment – maintain and enhance the biodiversity, character and appearance of the countryside and wildlife habitats.	Site is within the main urban area however development would result in the loss of some open space. No designated sites, wider ecological network and/or priority species will be affected by this site.
10. Responding to climate change and reducing energy consumption – support the continued move towards a low carbon community by encouraging efficient use of resources, good design and well located development, whilst increasing resilience to impacts from climate change.	All new development will have an impact (private vehicle journeys, carbon/greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption) but will be required to adhere to relevant national standards. Site location is good in close proximity to the town centre. Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3. The policy framework directs development away from areas at risk to flooding and requires the use of SUDS is maximised.
<b>Conclusions</b>	
Development of the site would have a positive impact against social and economic objectives and some negative impacts on environmental objectives and aspects of the economic objectives. Around half of the site is currently open space, the loss of which will require appropriate replacement/compensation. Development would result in the loss of a long stay car and lorry park facility which could have negative economic impacts if no alternative provision is made. It is however well located in relation to access to services and facilities in the town centre. Provides an opportunity to enhance an existing community and provide new housing in a sustainable location. The site should be capable of providing an element of affordable housing to help meet local needs. A small part of the site is within flood zones 2 and 3, however the allocation statement and policy DC 4 will ensure that development is directed to flood zone 1. Given the protection via the policy framework and the benefits the site would bring, it is considered that the requirements of part one of the Exception Test have been met.	