



DARLINGTON LOCAL PLAN 2016-2036

Submission Consultation Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Consultation Statement sets out how Darlington Borough Council has undertaken community participation and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the emerging Local Plan (2016-2036). When finalised and adopted the emerging Local Plan will replace the existing adopted Local Development Framework Core Strategy (May 2011) and the saved policies of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan (1997, including adopted alterations 2001).
- 1.2. A Consultation Statement is required to accompany the Regulation 22 Submission Local Plan by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012:

This statement is required to set out:

- (i) which bodies and persons the local planning authority invited to make representations under regulation 18,
- (ii) how those bodies and persons were invited to make representations under regulation 18,
- (iii) a summary of the main issues raised by the representations made pursuant to regulation 18,
- (iv) how any representations made pursuant to regulation 18 have been taken into account;
- (v) if representations were made pursuant to regulation 20, the number of representations made, and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations; and
- (vi) If no representations were made in regulation 20, that no such representations were made.

1.3. Stages of Consultation

- 1.3.1. The Local Planning Regulations state that there must be a minimum of two consultation periods for Local Development Documents (including Local Plans). The first consultation relates to the issues and options that the Local Development Document should address, and the second consultation should take place prior to the submission of the Local Development Document to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public.
- 1.3.2. The proposed local plan has been through three main stages of consultation, as detailed in Table 1. Each of the stages were subject to public consultation in accordance with the SCI and statutory requirements. Over these three periods, and through regular engagement with stakeholders throughout the process of creating the new Local Plan, the Council has given the community significant opportunities to provide input and comment on the emerging Local Plan. Just within the three consultation periods detailed in Table 1 the Council has received c.2,120 comments from individuals/companies/organisations.

Table 1: Consultation Stages

| Consultation Stage | Regulation | Date |
|---|---------------|--|
| Strategic Issues and Scoping Consultation | Regulation 18 | 15 th June – 15 th August 2016 |
| Draft Local Plan Consultation | Regulation 18 | 21 st June – 2 nd August 2018 |
| Proposed Submission Local Plan Representation Period | Regulation 19 | 6 th August – 17 th September 2020 |

1.4. Consultees

- 1.4.1. During the consultation process for the new Local Plan the Council conformed to rules and regulations, set by Government, by consulting with the specific consultation bodies listed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 list. For Darlington Borough these were:
- a) The Coal Authority;
 - b) The Environment Agency;
 - c) The Homes and Communities Agency;
 - d) Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
 - e) The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England);
 - f) Natural England;
 - g) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited;

- h) Highways England;
- i) Parish Councils (including Parish Councils adjoining the borough);
- j) Adjoining authorities;
- k) Relevant telecommunications companies;
- l) The Primary Care Trust or relevant successor body;
- m) Relevant electricity and gas companies;
- n) Sewerage and water undertakers.

1.4.2. The Council also consulted with any 'general consultation bodies' which may be affected by the contents of the new Local Plan. These included:

- a) Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the Council's area;
- b) Bodies which in the Council's area represent the interest of different needs groups.

1.4.3. The Council also consulted with 'other consultation bodies' considered to be appropriate and who had not fallen into the above categories, these included:

- a) Residents Associations;
- b) Developers and agents;
- c) Special interest groups;
- d) Environmental groups;
- e) Businesses or business networks;
- f) Educational establishments;
- g) The general public.

1.4.4. Throughout the process the Council maintained a consultation database of names and addresses of residents and stakeholders who had asked to be kept informed of any consultations that might come forward. These residents and stakeholders were contacted with information prior to the beginning of any consultation. Any individual or an organisation was able to ask to be added or removed from this database at any time. In the interests of efficiency, the Council assumed that all those who had provided an email address were happy to be contacted via this means.

1.4.5. A list of all the organisations consulted during the creation of the new Local Plan is available in Appendix A.

2. Conformity with the Statement of Community Involvement

- 2.1. Part 1 of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Darlington Borough Council will involve local communities, businesses and important stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Plan and any future Development Plan Documents' (DPD's) or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). The SCI aims to provide a precise, clear and transparent approach to how the Council will consult the people of Darlington, and how it will address the comments received as a result of consultation.
- 2.1.2. Darlington's SCI can be viewed at:
<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-and-environmental-policy/other-statutory-documents/statement-of-community-involvement/>
- 2.1.3. Due to changes in national planning guidance, and to shape the consultation of the emerging Local Plan, the decision was taken to review the Part 1 of the SCI prior to beginning the Issues and Scoping Consultation.
- 2.1.4. A Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was approved by Cabinet in April 2016 as the basis for a 6-week consultation exercise, which ran until the 6th June 2016. The consultation generated only three responses – two from CPRE and one from the Whinfield Residents Association. These comments were mainly focused on how the Council should respond to individual requests for information. The SCI was also discussed in detail at the Place Scrutiny Committee on the 31st March 2016. As a result, the draft SCI was amended, and the revised document adopted on 28th July 2016.
- 2.1.5. The Part 1 of the SCI approved in 2016 guided the first two stages of consultation on the emerging Local Plan. However, the SCI was temporally updated in August 2020 to take into account the restrictions caused by the COVID19 pandemic.

2.2. General Principles

- 2.1.1. Involvement in consultations was open to all regardless of age, gender, race, faith, disability or knowledge and experience. The consultations undertaken as part of development of the emerging Local Plan were carefully considered to ensure they met the principles set out in the Statement of Community Involvement:
- a) We will communicate clearly;
 - As well as providing draft documents of, and supporting, the emerging Local plan, regular articles were published in One Darlington detailing progress on

and changes to the emerging Local Plan. Regular articles were also circulated in the Northern Echo.

b) We will make it easy for you to be involved;

- The Council used an online consultation portal which allowed residents and stakeholders to comments on any part of the emerging Local Plan during consultations. By signing up to the consultation portal users received emails updating them as to progress on the emerging Local Plan, when consultation periods would occur, and what consultation events would take place. Wherever possible, consultations were carried out in tandem with other community engagement initiatives. For example, when consulting on the Draft Local Plan, Planning Officers attended the Darlington's Festival of Ingenuity and Darlington Carnival. This allowed engagement with residents who might not have attended a purely Local Plan focused event.

c) We will make sure your involvement is effective;

- Consultation was crucial in shaping the emerging Local Plan. Following the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Consultation just over 30% of comments resulted in a change to the emerging Local Plan.

d) We will share information and provide feedback;

- The Local Plan Microsite was regularly updated with news and progress reports, and links to reports presented to Cabinet/the Council on the outcomes of the consultations and what changes were being made to the emerging Local Plan in light of these consultations. Additionally, regular articles appeared in One Darlington Magazine and in local papers, and information was also shared through the corporate social media accounts.

e) We will keep the process simple;

- Use of an online consultation portal ensured providing comments on any part of the emerging Local Plan was as simple as possible. However, the Council did also accept comments by email or in writing – these were then inputted into the consultation portal by Planning Officers.

2.2. How did we Consult?

2.2.1. Before consultations, Engagement Plans were produced (where officers consider one to be necessary). These set out when and how the Council would consult/engage throughout the process. This ensured that consideration was given to the most effective methods of communicating issues, and that the methods engaged were proportionate.

2.2.2. The Council used different levels of community involvement as set out in the SCl:

- a) Information – Providing information through a variety of methods to inform;
- b) Consultation – Requesting the community provide their views about particular planning proposals at the appropriate stages;
- c) Participation – Enabling communities and stakeholders to get involved (i.e. workshops to identify specific issues).

2.2.3. The methods employed to notify and involve stakeholders in the consultation process include those listed below:

- a) Contacting appropriate organisations and individuals directly;
- b) Publicising consultations along with relevant documents by methods such as website updates, social media, press releases, displays, etc.
- c) Formal notices in the local media;
- d) Placing consultation documents on display at the Town Hall (provided there were are no further restrictions that prevented access). This conformed with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020;
- e) Working with existing community groups or other interest groups, and attending community events and joint consultations;
- f) Organising events such as stakeholder meetings or workshops, including place-shaping workshops.

2.3. Availability of Documents

2.3.1. Local Development Documents and related information, including reports prepared to underpin policy preparation, were made available on the Council's website, specifically on the Local Plan Microsite. Available at: <https://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan/>

2.3.2. Documents were also made available at the Council's contact centre in the Town Hall and within the library during specific consultation periods. At other times, these documents were made available to view at these locations on request. These arrangements were disrupted slightly during the Regulation 19 Representation Period – details of the changes can be viewed in Section 7 of this report.

- 2.3.3. Paper copies - including large print and electronic versions, any formats required as reasonable adjustments - such as braille or audio, and languages other than English were made available on request wherever practicable and reasonable.

3. Issues and Scoping Consultation

- 3.1. The 'Stage 1 Issues and Scoping Report' was the first stage in producing the new Local Plan. The consultation was carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012, Part 6. Consultation letters and emails were sent out on the 15th June 2016, although publicity for the consultation began informally before this date. The Consultation ran for just over 8 weeks, ending on the 15th August 2016.
- 3.2. As part of this consultation the Council issued a 'Call for Sites'. Landowners, agents, and developers were asked to submit details of their suggested sustainable and developable sites using an online form including a plan and basic site details. A map of the sites submitted can be viewed in Appendix C.
- 3.3. Three main methods were used to consult on the Darlington Local Plan Issues and Scoping document – direct consultation, key stakeholder events, and multimedia.

3.4. Direct Consultation

- 3.4.1. Prior to the commencement of the consultation on the Issues and Scoping Document, it was deemed necessary to review the consultees within the existing public consultation database. The original database contained statutory consultees in line with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 (known as 'specific' consultees), alongside a significant number of residents, businesses, land owners, interest groups and other parties who had asked to be on the list previously. It had been noted, during a previous consultation, that some of the consultation emails or letters which had been sent from the Council were no longer being delivered to their destination, as the address and/or contact details had changed over time. Because of this, and in the interests of cost and time efficiencies to the Council, all contacts on the database were asked, in the case of non-specific contacts only, to opt back into the database, using the online form or by informing the Planning Policy Section. Specific bodies were automatically retained and checked to ensure all details were correct. This allowed the Council to consult the people who wished to continue being part of the local plan process in this way, and it also provided an easy way for new contacts to become part of the consultation database, through using the simple online form.
- 3.4.2. At the start of the consultation on the Issues and Scoping stage, the Council sent an email or letter to each of the contacts on the new public consultation database. It outlined that all the information required in relation to the consultation could be seen at the Council's new Local Plan microsite (www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan) and that comments could be provided online, by email or by post until the 15th August 2016. A total of 64 direct responses

were received from a variety of correspondents, including local residents, landowners, parish councils, community groups and statutory bodies.


- 3.4.3. Additionally, as part of the consultation, the Council included a 'Call for Sites', to identify sites within the Borough that may have potential for development to meet identified needs over the next 20 years. Again, an online form was provided on the microsite, to allow ease of access to the process, asking a series of simple questions about the site which needed to be submitted alongside a site plan. Sites could also be provided by post.

3.5. Key Stakeholder Events

Officers of the Council attended existing group meetings and organised additional events in order to gain the views and opinions of a wide variety of individuals and groups. Details of the meetings/events attended are set out below in

- 3.5.1. Table 2: Key Stakeholder Events. In addition to these regular meeting were held with Highways England to finalise a detailed (VISSUM) model for the Eastern Growth Zone.

Table 2: Key Stakeholder Events.

| Meeting Name | Date | Details |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Housebuilder Development Day | 16 th January 2016 | <p>Invitation to development industry to introduce the concept of needing to develop a new local plan and start the 'call for sites' process.</p>  |

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| ATLAS/HCA Workshop : Darlington Growth Potential: Building Blocks | 12 th April 2016 | Presentation by ATLAS covering why the existing Core Strategy needed updating with a whole new Local Plan. Discussed what the broad aims of a new Local Plan would/could be and what work had been done so far. Discussion then moved on to looking at strategic issues and options – particularly focusing on where new housing could be delivered. |
| Association of Parish Councils | 8 th June 2016 | Representatives from Parish Councils across the Borough met to discuss matters of mutual interest and share information and best practice. A member of the Planning Policy Team presented the Issues and Scoping Report and answered questions. The meeting was signposted to the website and consultation documents and was encouraged to send their comments to the Council. |
| Town Centre Board | 8 th June 2016 | The Town Centre Board meets every 2 months and consists of local retailers and businesses based in Darlington Town Centre. A Council officer provided an update to the board on the new Local Plan process and proposed approach. A key discussion was how housing targets had been arrived at |
| Tees Valley Nature Partnership Attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees Rivers Trust; • RSPB; • Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council; • CPRE; • Environment Agency; • Stockton Borough Council; • Hartlepool Borough Council; • HLF; • Middlesbrough Borough Council. | 30 th June 2016 | <p>A Planning Policy Officer attended the meeting and provided a presentation on the role of the local plan with a discussion on the scope of the consultation.</p> <p>The group discussed how the consultation process had evolved and is now mostly on-line and more of a continuous process not a ‘call & response’ process as before.</p> <p>In response the Nature Partnership described how it was looking to develop a Tees Valley wide Charter/Statement of Cooperation aiming to be a proactive document setting out TVNP priorities and landscape scale opportunity maps that LPA’s can check against & prove they are compliant with principals.</p> |

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| <p>Business Summit</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handelsbanken; • Teesside University; • North East England Chamber of Commerce; • Active Business Coach; • Bignal Group; • Darlington College; • North East England Chamber of Commerce; • Sky; • Theatre Hullabaloo; • Catteral & Co; • Mecure Kings Head Hotel; • Niven Architects; • Uprise; • Dickinson Media; • Brammer; • Serco; • Cool Blue marketing; • Beanies the flavour company; • North Star Ventures; • Four seasons health care; • First Stop Darlington; • Redana Studio; • Clark Willis LLP; • Walworth Castle Birds of prey; • Tees Valley Airport; • Acorn Money; | <p>4th July 2016</p> | <p>The summit particularly discussed infrastructure and 'place'.</p> <p>In relation to Infrastructure: expertise The group felt the key enablers for this are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of in town grade A office accommodation 2. Broadband cold spots in commercial areas 3. Quality of place, creating an attractive environment <p>Summary of the discussion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery / incubator facilities are needed to create a supportive business environment • Growth opportunities need to be better articulated to open up development • It was felt there is an Aero cluster opportunity that could be created with better infrastructure to the airport <p>In relation to Place:</p> <p>The group felt the key enablers for this are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Celebrating potential, telling people what is good about Darlington; quality of life and pride in place (focusing on Darlington's culture) 2. Continue communicating and building momentum on brands such as Ingenious Darlington and Invest in Darlington 3. Need strong focus on re-using empty, unused premises <p>Summary of the discussion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More needs to be made of the Quaker and market heritage. • Culture is key to place making, the theatre improvements, 2025 capital of culture bid and railway heritage are all crucial to Darlington's identity and need to be a strong focus in the Tees Valley combined authorities new 'Culture' strand. • The group questioned whether including culture is going in the right direction with reducing capital • On the Tees Valley revised strategic economic plans focus new priority regarding retail, place needs to be utilised to make sure Darlington town centre becomes a destination with need for improved accessibility and parking as well as support for starter businesses. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social media company; • Festival of Thrift; • Para-sols; • Fairstone (financial advisers); • North East BIC; • Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council; • HR2day; • Real Results Marketing; Infusion; • Bibby Financial Services; • Henry Williams; • Natwest Bank; • Luxi; • Rockcliffe Hall; • Close Brothers; • Working links; • Darlington College; • Marks & Spencers; • Hewitts Solicitors; • Blackwell Grange Hotel; • Clive Owen; • Camerons Brewery; • BIB Insurance; • Student loans company; • Tempest Jones; • KMS Partners; • Darlington college; • Natwest; • Carver Group; • The Unicorn Tree; • Connect properties; | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focus is need on the marketing of town centres to support the businesses they include which are important to economic growth. • Felt Darlington's bike culture could be better promoted; Darlington is very cycle friendly town with sustainable transport. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lingfield Point; • Cummins; • The Cornmill centre; • Federation for small business; • UKTI; • Tees Valley Combined Authority | | |
| Healthy New Towns Stakeholder Network Event | 7 th July 2016 | Participants in the second Healthy New Towns Stakeholder Network event took part in various interactive sessions including topics such as housing regeneration; economic development and planning; and sustainable transport. The role of the Local Plan (including the ongoing consultation process) was explained and participants informed of the opportunities to get involved. |
| Darlington Partnership | 11 th July 2016 | Darlington Partnership includes representation from the public, private and voluntary sector to agree what the major issues and opportunities are for Darlington and to ensure that action is being taken to address them. Steve Petch, Planning Services Manager, outlined the Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 and advised on the consultation process including making members aware of the forthcoming Visioning Event. |
| Business Summit | 18 th July 2016 | The Business Summit involved a group of over 60 business and academic institutions who met to discuss the issues surrounding infrastructure and place in relation to Darlington. A Planning Officer gave a presentation on the role of the Local Plan in relation to providing the conditions for economic growth and investment and explained the consultation process. |
| Housing Delivery Event | 20 th July 2016 | <p>This event, organised by the Council, was held at Teesside University in Darlington and included invitees who had submitted sites as part of the 'Call for Sites' as well as relevant local landowners, developers, agents and other allied professions. Around 40 representatives attended.</p> <p>The purpose of the event was to engage these groups of people in discussions about the housing need in</p> |

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| | | | Darlington over the next 20 years, to ensure that there is sufficient land available across the Borough to meet its needs. Attendees heard presentations on the progress of the Local Plan and the Council's strategy for delivering housing sites, place making in Darlington, ATLAS' master planning approach and current HCA funding schemes, as well as attending workshops to give their feedback. |
| Darlington Partnership | Youth | 20 th July 2016 | <p>The Youth Partnership consists of Jess Halliday, Darlington's Member of the Youth Parliament, and other young people aged between 11-19, with the purpose of taking forward issues that children and young people from the Borough have identified and to campaign for change.</p> <p>A planning officer attended the meeting and explained the role of the Local Plan, alongside the themes it will cover and the scope of the current consultation. A discussion was held about the issues important to the Partnership and attendees were also invited to the Visioning workshop 4 August 2016.</p> <p>The meeting discussed public transport which was considered to be good (but expensive) in the urban area but more difficult in the villages and more rural areas with infrequent services. The new Feethams development was viewed positively. The group also considered the need to ensure there were sufficient jobs and houses for the population, but that this would have consequences for infrastructure, particularly the road network.</p> <p>On the topic of engaging young people in the planning process, suggestions included using social media to promote 'themes' and to distribute short explanatory videos, approaching schools and making contact through the Youth Partnership. Attendees were invited to the Visioning workshop on 4 August 2016.</p> |

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| Property Forum Meeting | 22 nd July 2016 | The Forum consists of a group of local property businesses including Recognition PR, Darlington Building Society, Northern Echo, Carvers Estate Agents, and Latimer Hinks. A planning officer provided a presentation to the Forum about the Darlington Local Plan Stage 1 Consultation, which was followed by a detailed conversation about the issues raised. |
| Visioning Event | 4 th August 2016 | This event, entitled 'Planning a Better Place for All', was held at the Dolphin Centre, Darlington. Organised by the Council, it included presentations by members of the Planning Policy Team and representatives from ATLAS and its main aim was to inform predominantly residents and community groups about the Local Plan consultation. Around 50 people were in attendance and workshops were held to gauge the thoughts of these interested parties. The slides of the PowerPoint presentations given at the event can be seen in Appendix D. |

3.6. Multimedia

- 3.6.1. The corporate Darlington Borough Council website has always included pages about the Local Plan and other related policy documents, which get updated regularly, for example showing when a new consultation had begun, with details of where people could view the relevant information and make comments if required. Links to the Planning Policy webpages currently feature on the Council home page and within its featured items section.
- 3.6.2. It was decided that it would be beneficial to further enhance this online facility by creating a microsite which would focus purely on the new Local Plan. Links were made from the corporate site (www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy) to the Local Plan microsite (www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan) which provides specific information and documents relating solely to the new Local Plan and access to both the online public consultation form and the online site submission form. Regular blogs are posted informing viewers of new legislation, news topics, forthcoming events and deadlines for consultation comments. A video was also posted of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder discussing the new Local Plan and what it means for Darlington. The provision of this video caused a peak in the traffic flow of visitors to the site, showing the effectiveness of multi-media as part of the consultation. A peak in traffic flow was also seen at the beginning of the consultation in April 2016 when consultation letters and emails were sent out. Up to the end of August, the microsite had 1,750 unique users to the site, 898 had accessed the site through manual input, 759 had used an external link from Facebook and 93 had used an external link from Twitter.

- 3.6.3. The Council used the existing Corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts to send messages out in relation to key stages of the consultation, such as it being launched and the microsite being available. A total number of 31 posts were put on Facebook and Twitter over the course of the consultation, providing information about the consultation period, links to webpages and online comments facilities, links to the video prepared by Councillor McEwan and information about the various meetings and events that were held. Each post on Facebook had thousands of views, the highest (6250 views) being in relation to the event about the future of Darlington and asking people to come along. Twitter was viewed less, although there were still 1383 views for Councillor McEwan's video through this form of social media.
- 3.6.4. The Cabinet Member responsible for Local Plans held a Facebook and Twitter Question Time on 20th July 2016. A designated timeslot of one hour was allocated to answer questions posted live on Facebook and Twitter in relation to the new Local Plan. The session was advertised on the Local Plan microsite but interest in this particular social media option was limited.
- 3.6.5. The 'One Darlington Magazine', produced jointly by the Northern Echo newspaper and Darlington Borough Council is delivered monthly to every home in the Borough. The Local Plan featured four times between January and September 2016. Articles highlighted the background to the need for new homes, and set out the reasons for, contents of, and how to make comments on, the consultation documents. Following the Issues and Scoping Consultation an article was published discussing the issues raised through the consultation and what would happen next in the process. Examples of articles published in One Darlington throughout the consultation process can be viewed in Appendix B.
- 3.6.6. Press releases and articles were published in the local media during the consultation. The Northern Echo published articles from March 2016 to August 2016 in relation to the new Local Plan, the consultation including details of meetings, and reports highlighting the opinion of some local residents.
- 3.6.7. Brief details of the Local Plan consultation process and opportunities to get involved were included in Ward Member Newsletters. The Council only receive copies of the Ward Members newsletters when required to assist with the administration and printing of the newsletters, and it is possible that the Darlington Local Plan featured in more of the newsletters than the Council were officially aware of.

3.7. Summary of Key Responses

3.7.1. Table 3 provides a summary of the key issues raised during the Issues and Scoping Consultation.

Table 3: Summary of Responses to Issues and Scoping Consultation

| Section | Summary |
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| General Comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some concerns were raised about the consultation material provided. suggesting the process was designed to be 'opaque and confusing'; and arguing that the 'Issues and Scoping Report' is was vague in relation to housing sites. As such it did not provide enough detail and information to effectively consult. However, consultation on Stage 1 of the Plan was aimed at understanding high level strategic locations and issues and therefore did not include the level of detailed information generated in the next phase of the plan making process. Notwithstanding the above, in general the approach taken to engagement was welcomed by participants, most of whom responded positively to the process. Officers are satisfied that the process was robust and captured the pertinent points for consideration. Contrasting views were submitted on the proposed 20-year timespan for the Local Plan. Some comment felt that 15-years was a more appropriate timespan as it would provide more certainty on delivery and, after all the Plan will be reviewed in 5 years. Others supported the 20-year timescale. Officers have taken the view, based on the OAN evidence base to 2036, the added certainty for housing supply and supply chain activities, and the alignment with potential long-term strategic infrastructure projects, that a twenty-year plan is appropriate. Furthermore, the nature of the Borough and its sites are such that a longer term and bolder plan is required if the accompanying infrastructure is to keep pace with development. There was general support for the need to prepare a Local Plan. A couple of respondents did suggest that the time and effort involved would be a waste of Council resources. The Stage 1 consultation focused on identifying strategic locations and issues. Some respondents submitted detailed comments/objections on specific sites. Where appropriate these detailed comments informed officer's future considerations, otherwise they were carried forward to Stage 2 of the plan |

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| | preparation process - where site specific assessments will be carried out. |
| Vision, Aims and Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, the consultation responses supported the existing Vision as a valuable starting point for the new Local Plan. However, some key messages came forward, from a range of respondents, which looked to either add to, or change the emphasis of, some parts of the Vision as stated in the Issues and Scoping Report. Suggestions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) reaffirming the need to develop around existing resources where there is most need; b) putting more emphasis on preservation of the countryside and villages; c) putting more emphasis on developing resilient economies and communities able to respond to climatic, economic and social changes; d) adding a reference to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment and landscapes; e) need to reflect changing lifestyles as well as proposed physical changes proposed; f) adding greater emphasis on housing delivery to meet the needs of all sectors of the current and future population, to deliver sustainable communities; g) Quality housing in places people want to live; h) The need to be more ambitious in terms of economic growth drawing on the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan and Darlington's Economic Strategy; i) adding more emphasis on building on recent economic success, and Darlington's reputation for innovation and technology; and j) support for the significance of the Borough's sporting/leisure facilities and further investment to create healthy lifestyles. • Comments received also noted that the Plan's objectives would need to be amended to reflect changes to the Vision where appropriate. An example being the suggestion to include a reference to the need to maintain a continuous 5-year supply of housing. |
| Facilitating Economic Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general agreement amongst respondents that economic growth needs to be high on the Council's agenda, including creating the right employment opportunities, and ensuring employment and housing provision is aligned fully with the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan and the Council's Economic Strategy. However, some |

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| | <p>responses suggest that the economic growth aspirations need to be revisited post 'Brexit'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was some support for the current IPPS approach towards employment sites, including safeguarding employment land from other uses. However, one respondent reminded the Council of the NPPF position on avoiding long term protection of sites where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose. • Respondents generally supported the 'town centre first' approach to ensuring the town continues to attract business and maintain the vibrancy of the centre. |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several consultation comments questioned whether the number of dwellings identified in the Issues and Scoping Report was accurate. They expressed concern that the number of new homes was too high - with reference to the availability of jobs and the impacts of the country leaving the European Union. It was noted that the relationship to economic growth targets would need to be monitored closely, and that any updates to the sub national population projections would need to be considered as the plan went forward. • A number of stakeholders with an interest in developing land within the Borough commented that the SHMA and related studies, including evidencing a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and the types of housing required (such as affordable homes, starter homes, self-build homes and homes suitable for older people), would require further work and updating as the local plan progresses. It was noted that a wide range of sites (in terms of size, market and location) would be required to maintain delivery rates over the plan period. • Alongside concern regarding the accuracy of the objectively assessed housing need evidenced in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), some respondents also commented on how this would be translated into a housing requirement. There was concern that the Council should not over plan for housing, because this would flood the market with planning permissions resulting in less certainty regarding deliverability. Conversely, several development industry stakeholders considered that flexibility should be built into the housing requirement to ensure the need for dwellings is met over the plan period, with the requirement being viewed as a minimum rather than a ceiling and any backlog being dealt with as soon as possible. • Numerous local respondents commented on the design and layout of new housing, with reference to ensuring that Darlington retains its distinctive character, rather than encouraging estates of houses which could be located anywhere. It was also considered important |

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| | that there was scope to include affordable dwellings, homes for first time buyers and homes for older people within housing schemes. |
| Selecting Strategic Development Locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to meeting the housing requirement through strategic sites received varying levels of support during the consultation. Several respondents emphasised the importance of protecting open and green spaces, the countryside and villages from further development. There was support for building on brownfield sites and resisting 'urban sprawl', as well as the potential to make better use of sites already identified through the plan process as needing regeneration, as well as vacant sites and properties within the town centre. • Maintaining the focus on existing regeneration sites and the sites adjacent to the existing urban area identified in the Interim Planning Position Statement received support, both in terms of site allocations and phasing policies which would support their delivery before new greenfield sites are taken up. There was also a suggestion of using Council owned land to support housing delivery. • Respondents generally considered it important that areas of new housing should include infrastructure which would make them attractive, well-functioning places to live in their own right and, not impact negatively on existing settlements. Traffic congestion was noted as an issue in numerous locations, as well as concern about the impacts of increasing the capacity of the road network. In the north, reference was made to a potential need for a new link road between the A1 and Teesside. There was also support for locating new homes close to existing facilities and services and spreading them across the area to spread the impact on infrastructure. • There was some support for a new settlement in a rural part of the Borough, including an extensive site submitted to the west of the A1. The landowners commented that this kind of strategic site would be attractive to the market, would reduce the impact of new housing on existing villages, could provide a mix of dwellings and fund new infrastructure. However, contrasting comments asserted that a new settlement would have a negative impact on the countryside and would require many new facilities, reducing its sustainability – particularly in the early years of the development. • Extensions to existing villages were not generally supported by local people, although those with land interests considered that they could support local infrastructure and facilities, increasing sustainability. Comments were received from representatives of Neasham, Middleton St George and Hurworth Parish Councils, expressing concern the villages would lose their character and form and that there would be a detrimental effect on the infrastructure in the villages. It was suggested by Middleton St George Parish Council that growth in the village is taking place in a piecemeal |

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| | <p>fashion and that a planned approach should be taken to any further development to ensure sufficient infrastructure was in place. At Neasham, the Parish Council considered that whilst there were some potential development sites within and around the village, they would need to be developed sensitively and with appropriate infrastructure. It was felt to be unlikely that they would make a significant contribution to the Borough's housing needs. Concerns about the impact on wildlife, landscape and the rural area's character were also expressed in relation to village development generally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal to create an urban extension to the north of Darlington received support from the landowners in the area including a number of site submissions through the 'call for sites'. It was considered that this could utilise and build on existing infrastructure and services to provide an area of strategic growth. In contrast, others raised concerns regarding the large scale of the area being considered, building on floodplains, the potential impact development would have on wildlife, transport, and the potential loss of public rights of way and agricultural land. Residents in the vicinity of the Muscar House Farm site commented on its potential development with concerns including transport issues, impact on habitats, loss of the open space and agricultural land and the impact on the historic environment. |
| A Well-Connected Borough | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation responses from residents indicated concern about levels of road congestion and identified that some of this traffic is caused by 'through traffic' coming to and from other areas. There was particular concern about the northern part of town - although traffic congestion was raised as a common issue for all of the identified growth zones. Also raised was the importance of supporting and properly integrating sustainable transport into new developments in order to move away from a reliance on private motor vehicles. Responses suggest that parking arrangements and the Parking Strategy should be revisited considering the additional development proposed. • Neighbouring authorities advised further work would be required to understand the impact on the strategic road network. There was also some criticism that the consultation material at this stage offered no indication of likely highway mitigation measures. |
| Protect and Enhance the Countryside and the Natural Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a strong emphasis in the consultation comments received on the protection of the natural environment of Darlington and its surroundings, particularly in relation to green infrastructure and enhancing the network already in existence. Protecting landscape character and the context of the existing villages within this |

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| | <p>landscape was a key concern and a fuller understanding of landscape character was encouraged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its response, Northumbrian Water urged greater consideration of the core principles of flood risk and sustainable water management in preparing the plan in order to support the resilient future of healthy communities. |
| Create Cohesive, Proud and Healthy Communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation responses showed strong support for the protection of Darlington's distinctive local heritage. There were a number of comments supporting the existing approach identified in the Interim Panning Position Statement. Of particular importance was the protection of the character of the town centre and surrounding villages. The importance of the Stockton and Darlington Railway route and associated railway heritage assets was also referenced by several respondents and they considered more should be done to acknowledge their importance. • Access to local primary health and hospital facilities were significant local concerns, reflecting a national issue. The Council is not the provider of these services, but through the local plan, will work with the NHS and the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group to help make sure that for any new facilities planned, land in appropriate locations, e.g. as part of wider new housing development, is kept free for that purpose. • Comments received highlighted the importance of safeguarding and protecting cultural and community facilities, and encouraging new provision, as part of sustainable development. Specific support for protection of pubs and other community facilities as valuable meeting places were balanced by comments that such an approach could result in buildings sat empty, subject to vandalism, etc. • Some respondents wanted to see a stronger emphasis placed on the Borough's sporting and leisure facilities and the benefits a successful sports team could bring to Darlington and the wider region. As such they suggested reference should be made to expanding the range of sports provision and giving support to diversification to support the longevity of sporting clubs and facilities. • Respondents emphasised the need for integration of infrastructure within new developments including schools and health care. It was also suggested that superfast broadband provision should be a key requirement alongside more traditional utilities. |
| Protect our Climate and Reducing Energy Consumption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments were received relating to energy efficiency, and carbon reduction (including air quality and improved building standards). Some respondents sought significant improvement others requested that such matters be left to Building Regulations. |

3.7.2. Developer Feedback Session

- On Thursday 28th October 2016, various developers, landowners and agents were invited to a local plan update session. Over 40 interested parties attended. Officers explained the position reached in the Local Plan process, including the outcome of the Issues and Scoping Consultation process, the draft Vision, Aims and Objectives, the proposed strategic location selection process, and the recommended strategy going forward. During the discussion that followed there was support for the 'sensible' and 'logical' approach taken by the Council to considering strategic locations and recognition of the 'ambitious' infrastructure requirements.
- The second part of the event focussed on the next 12 months, highlighting the role the development industry will need to play in co-ordinating evidence collection whether that be through master planning (for strategic locations), neighbourhood planning (in the villages) or individual site assessments (through the HELAA process). Officers explained the proposed approach to the governance of the whole Local Plan, highlighting a key role for stakeholders. Again, there was support for the governance structure and route map approach and an implicit acceptance that landowners and developers will need to provide resources to support the process.

3.8. Sustainability Appraisal Consultation

- 3.8.1. In accordance with Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council must carry out and consult on a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the new Local Plan, alongside its preparation. The Sustainability Appraisal is how the Council makes sure that the policies and proposals of the Local Plan, taken individually and together, can deliver the most sustainable patterns and forms of development possible, taking account of social, economic and environmental considerations. The first stage of this process involved producing the 'Draft Darlington Local Plan 2016- 2036 – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (SA) setting out what the Council intended to include in the SA and how the Council intend to go about it.
- 3.8.2. The consultation on the Draft began on the 19th August and lasted for 5 weeks until the 23rd September 2016. Emails and letters were sent to all specific bodies and contacts on the consultation database on the first day of the consultation. Details were posted on both the Local Plan Microsite and the main corporate website, with a copy of the draft document and details on how people could submit comments. 24 responses were received from organisations, Parish Councils, residents and agents.

4. Heighington and Middleton St George - Draft Spatial Plan Consultation

- 4.1. The Council considered that the proposed large urban extensions, and the previously identified sites would not meet all of Darlington's housing need – particularly in the short – medium term. The larger villages were identified as the next most favourable location for housing development. Furthermore, the larger villages could offer something different to the housing market and possibly act as a 'shop window' for good development and creating vibrant communities.
- 4.2. Initial meetings held with key stakeholders indicated that there was an appetite to explore collaborative working in order to develop comprehensive plans for the villages. Key parties included the Parish Council's, ward members, developers, land agents, local schools and Council technical colleagues. The Council therefore decided to consult closely with the villages of Middleton St. George and Heighington to enable the local community, and other stakeholders, to shape the future development for these villages proposed in the emerging Local Plan. Collaborative working commenced for both villages in the form of a series of workshops with the key stakeholders mentioned above.

4.3. Middleton St. George Workshops

- 4.3.1. The 1st workshop in Middleton St. George occurred on 30th March 2017. The workshop explored key opportunities and constraints around the village and identified several issues which residents have with the village as it is now, past development and future growth. The workshop was focused around three themes; community and social, transport and infrastructure, and environment and place making. 20-minute sessions were held on each theme before rotating on to the next one. Each delegate was invited to think up five opportunities and five existing issues they would like to see resolved. A summary of the issues and opportunities raised is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Middleton St George - Issues and Opportunities

| Community and Social Theme | |
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| Issues | Opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School is at capacity / under pressure and land locked. Transporting school (young) children is not favoured. Recreation / open space provision is disaggregated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New school provision is supported by the school if development is justified. Link to St Georges school for any new education provision. Indoor sports facility. Improved community hall / facilities. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for doctor's surgery is confused. • Poor retail offer. • Lack of a village centre. • Lack of parking for shops. • Some space needed for community use / recreation facilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased parking. • Modernise existing facilities around the cricket ground, park and water park or potentially relocate? • A central recreation / school / retail / community facility is achievable. |
| Transport and Infrastructure Theme | |
| Issues | Opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking in central locations is restricted for retail and the station. • Congestion within the village and on Morton Palms roundabout, A67 and Sadberg Road. • Maintenance is required on hedges at the junction of Sadberge Road / A67 – DBC highways to action. • Road surfaces are generally poor. • Speeding through village. • Dispersed development results in a significant walk to facilities. • Safe walking routes to schools are important and should be given further consideration. This links with school placement criteria. • Sewage capacity (particularly around Middleton Lane), broadband and mobile phone coverage poor. • Bus service requires improvement, expensive and inefficient due to route. • Bridal way needs improving to be used all year round. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve parking provision. • Create safe walking routes and improve signage. • Opportunities to improve and create links with the existing bridal way. • Promotion of historic rail route. • Improved bus service (with potential for developers to fund). Improve bus links to Yarm. • Build in appropriate utility capacity. |
| Environment and Place Making Theme | |
| Issues | Opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of village feel due to previous and current development. • Do not want an "Ingelby Barwick" form of development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an improved retail and open space / recreation centre. Retail focus around the existing centre and station and recreation around the reservoirs. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't lose gaps with Middleton One Row and other settlements. Difference of opinion on this (did not matter particularly to some residents) • Centre is poor in terms of retail offer. • Poor quality of open space / recreation facilities. Reservoirs are in a poor state. • Nothing for young people to do. • No signage for footpath network. • Existing housing is self-contained – no permeability. However, commented that people do prefer cul-de-sacs. • No input into the spending of planning obligations. • Engagement with residents in planning process is poor. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various options for the reservoirs – retain all / lose in part to create country park. • Opportunity to create new retail / recreation hubs. • Existing play area and cricket ground could be improved or relocated. This area could provide space for parking and new facilities in a central location. There is a difference opinion between residents on this option. • Allotments – potential for relocation / expansion; explore further. • Denser forms of development within central locations, becoming less dense moving out of the village. • Residents would like more of a say in the spending of planning contributions. Potential to allocate some funds to the Parish Council to spend on projects important to them? • Opportunity for a better design of development which is focused on the village's heritage and original character. Development of design brief. |
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4.3.2. Middleton St. George's second workshop was held on 15th June 2017. The Council had used the general consensus from the comments and views given at the first workshop to draft a vision for the village and a set of high-level development objectives. These were split into three theme groups: social and community, transport and infrastructure, environment and place making. These were extensively discussed by the attending groups although no serious concerns or objections were raised. It was decided that the Parish Council would prepare what they considered to be their priorities for the village for the future i.e. what development and planning contributions could potentially assist with / improve in the village area. It was also decided that the Council would use the comments from the group to prepare some spatial options for the village.

4.3.3. Middleton St. George's third workshop was held on 20th July 2017. Prior to the Parish Council presenting their priorities a talk was given by a Planning Officer which highlighted that it was important to be mindful of the restrictions on planning obligations. The Planning Officer also explained that the priorities document had been circulated to the group in advance, and that, while their work was appreciated, there were some general priorities such as good design, density standards, etc., which would be covered by more generic planning policies. There were some priorities which, unfortunately, planning had little or no control over (e.g. mobile phone coverage, traffic wardens, parking permits etc). Due to this Planning Officer pulled out the main priorities which the Local Plan and developer contributions could potentially influence. Although the other points were not to be fully dismissed but noted. The 5 priorities were:

- An improved retail offer and potential reposition of the local centre (via an allocation).
- Additional education provision to meet future need.
- Enhanced or new community facilities.
- Enhanced bus service in terms of frequency and route.
- Enhanced green infrastructure network (including footpath network and water park).

These priorities were then presented by the Chairman of the Parish Council. The priorities document can be viewed in Appendix E. Following this the Council presented six potential options for a spatial plan. It was emphasised that these options were drafts and had technical work had yet to be undertaken. For each option the clear positive and negative points were outlined and then opened up for group discussion. Overall the most positive comments came for Options 1 and 6.

4.4. Heighington Workshops

4.4.1. Heighington's first workshop was held on Wednesday 15th June from 14:00 – 16:30. The workshop was focused around three themes: community and social, transport and infrastructure, and environment and place making. 20-minute sessions were held on each theme before rotating on to the next one. Each delegate was invited to think up five opportunities and five existing issues they would like to see resolved. A summary of the issues and opportunities raised is available in Table 5.

Table 5: Heighington Issues and Opportunities

| Community and Social Theme | |
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| Issues | Opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School is at capacity in terms of pupil numbers (290 place school). £900k 2 storey extension proposed by Local Education Authority to developers for current applications being considered in the village. Extension would accommodate children from the developments. Current applications potentially cannot fund the above. Main doctors' surgery is in Newton Aycliffe and there is not a regular bus service. Doctors surgery at West Green does not have a permanently placed GP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current applications may not be able to fund the school extension. Opportunity to address future school provision. School expansion site could potentially be allocated (field to the north of Heighington Primary) Better facilities for GP provision. Improvements for recreation and the village hall. Village hall is vibrant. Excellent playing field. New school swimming pool which could be utilised as a dual use. Some parties proposed developing an area / new village off Aycliffe Lane to the north of the village and link up to community uses. |
| Transport and Infrastructure Theme | |
| Issues | Opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient parking in the village centre. Parking at the school is insufficient. Currently operate an unofficial one-way system at the school for pick up / drop off. HGV movements to Chipping Plant can be problematic. Access to retail and health facilities in Aycliffe poor. School at maximum electricity capacity (only 2 phase – needs to be 3). Redworth area has poor internet provision. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve parking provision (underground car park suggested by one attendee) Creation of new parking at the end of the village tied to new / improved community facilities. Improved bus service to Aycliffe Build in appropriate utility capacity to new development. Good network of footpaths already in place, opportunity to enhance further. Opportunity to promote Heighington train station. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sewage system an issue in some areas, particularly Church View. | |
| Environment and Place Making Theme | |
| Issues | Opportunities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character of the conservation area not particularly threatened due to the location of sites being considered for development. Some tension between the village character and the road network. Danger of a patchwork form of development which is not connected in terms of design and place. Provision of a new school in the Chestnuts area could threaten the future of Heighington primary as a number of children attend the school from this area (School Aycliffe). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village has a centre / heart which can be enhanced. Potential for a new settlement to the north of the village. Enhance recreational offer at playing field / play area. Create a recreation hub. Any new development should be of a high quality. Sites should be connected in terms of design and place making. Development to be of appropriate density. New developments should have good connectivity with the existing village. Ensure space for blue infrastructure (water). |

4.4.2. Heighington's second workshop was held on 1st August 2017. Following the feedback of the first workshop the Council had created several spatial development options for the village. The second workshop discussed these options. It was made clear, however, that these options were only a draft and that technical work had yet to be undertaken on the sites or options. Four proposed options were presented and then opened up for group discussion. The representative from the Parish Council favoured option 3 whilst developers and agents seemed more in favour of options 1 and 2. Ward members didn't give an indication of a preferred option.

4.5. Preferred Options and Consultation

4.5.1. Following the workshops for Middleton St. George and Heighington the Council developed a preferred option spatial plan for each village. The spatial plans can be viewed in Appendix F. The Council then consulted Middleton St George and Heighington on these draft spatial plans in order to receive feedback from the community and stakeholders. The consultations ran from 4th December 2017 until 8th January 2018 for both villages.

- 4.5.2. The preferred option spatial plans for both villages were displayed on the Local Plan microsite. Supporting information, representation forms, and details of where to send comments were also uploaded. The draft plans and supporting information were also displayed at the Town Hall from the 4th December 2017. It should be noted that, unlike with the larger consultations, the consultation portal was not used for these consultations. Instead comments could be sent to Room 401, Level 4, Planning Policy, Darlington Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT, or by email to planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk.
- 4.5.3. To publicise the consultations a letter/email was sent out to everyone registered on the Council's consultation database. Additionally, an article was published in the Northern Echo on 9th December 2017. Drop-in sessions explaining the consultation, with Planning Officers in attendance, were held on the 4th December 2017 at Heighington Village Hall from 3pm – 7pm and on the 6th December 2017 at Middleton St George Woman's Institute Hall from 3pm – 7pm. Posters were placed in both villages advertising the drop-in sessions and providing contact details to a Planning Officer for anyone who might have issues accessing the events – including people with disabilities.
- 4.5.4. For Middleton St. George the total number of representations received was 25. For Heighington the total number of representations received was 28. A breakdown of these representations can be viewed in Appendices G&H.

5. Local Greenspace Designation Consultation

- 5.1. Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The Council held a consultation between February and March 2018 for six weeks to allow sites to be submitted for consideration.
- 5.2. Notification emails were sent to all parish councils and information on the consultation was posted on both the Darlington corporate website and Local Plan microsite. In total sixteen sites were submitted for consideration (one site with minor variations to its boundary was submitted by two separate groups). These were:
- LGS01 - Beech Road/Whinbush Park
 - LGS02 - Springfield Park LGS03 - Green Lane Bridleway
 - LGS04 & LGS13 - Skerningham Countryside Park
 - LGS05 - Fryers Field Recreation Ground
 - LGS06 - Gouldsmith Gardens
 - LGS07 - Muscar House Farm
 - LGS08 - Sparrowhall Drive
 - LGS09 - Bishopton Conservation Area
 - LGS10 - Bishopton Playing Field
 - LGS11 - Bishopton Lake and Windsurfing Centre LGS12 – North Park
 - LGS14 - Merrybent Community Woodland
 - LGS15 - Almora Hall Field, Middleton St George
 - LGS16 - Middleton St George Playing Field
 - LGS17 - Water Park, Middleton St George
- 5.3. As part of the draft local plan consultation, running between 21st June and 2nd August 2018, there was a further opportunity to submit sites for consideration prior to the submission of the plan. More details can be found in the Local Green Space Designation Report.

6. Draft Local Plan Development and Consultation

- 6.1. After the Issues and Scoping stage ongoing work took place to start developing a draft plan. In order to achieve this several 'theme' specific working groups were established with key internal and external stakeholders. Information from these groups was fed back to the Local Plan Steering Group made up of the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Planning, Chief Planning Officer and representatives from Local Highways Authority, ATLAS, Highways England, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Homes Builders Federation and the Homes and Communities Agency. A cross party member steering group was also established. This process is illustrated in Appendix I.
- 6.2. The draft local plan consultation ran from 21st June – 2nd August 2018. The consultation involved writing to all parties on the Local Plan consultation database, Parish Councils and Statutory Consultees. Events were held at varying times, including weekends, at public events as well as at locations such as the Dolphin Centre and Darlington College. There was also a series of drop-in sessions where officers were available to discuss the Plan. It is estimated around 600 people attended these sessions. In total, 1,344 individual comments were received from 292 residents/organisations.
- 6.3. The results of the consultation, including the key issues raised, and a series of recommended changes to the Draft Local Plan, were presented to the Council on 20th February 2020.

6.4. Direct Consultation

- 6.4.1. Notification emails and letters were sent out to all consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database on the 20th June 2018. The letter publicised the dates of the Draft Local Plan Consultation. Information was provided on how to access the draft Local Plan and supporting documents through the Local Plan section of the Council's website. The phone number and email address for the Planning Policy Team were published to enable anyone who had questions to get in touch.
- 6.4.2. All consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database were also informed that hard copies of the Draft Local Plan were available to view at council offices and at local libraries and could be provided in other formats if requested.
- 6.4.3. All consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database were made aware that the Council was using an online consultation system available at: <https://darlington-consult.co.uk/portal>. Comments could be posted in relation to the entire document, individual policies or sites.

6.4.4. Recipients were also informed that, if they were no longer interested in receiving updates on the Local Plan, they could withdraw from the Local Plan Consultation Database by calling 01325 406724 or by emailing their details to planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk.

6.5. Key Stakeholder Events

6.5.1. Officers of the Council attended existing group meetings and organised additional events in order to gain the views and opinions of a wide variety of individuals and groups. Details of the key meetings/events attended are set out below in Table 6. Additionally, photos of the consultation displays can be seen in Figure 1.

Table 6: Draft Local Plan Consultation: Key Stakeholder Events

| Meeting Name | Date | Details |
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| Darlington Community Carnival - Consultation Event | 28/06/2018 | Over 100 people attended Local Plan stand at Darlington Community Carnival. |
| Darlington Dolphin Centre - Consultation Event | 05/07/2018 | Over 50 people attended a drop-in event at Darlington Dolphin Centre from 10am to 2pm. |
| Festival of Ingenuity - Consultation Event | 12/07/2018 | Well over 200 people attended the drop-in event at the Festival of Ingenuity. |
| Darlington Dolphin Centre - Consultation Event | 17/07/2018 | Around 80 people attended a drop-in event at Darlington Dolphin Centre from 2pm – 6pm. |
| Darlington Dolphin Centre - Consultation Event | 28/07/2018 | Nearly 90 people attended the drop-in event between 11am – 3pm. |
| Darlington Dolphin Centre - Consultation Event | 30/07/2018 | 70 people attended the drop-in event at Darlington Dolphin Centre. |

Figure 1: Draft Local Plan Consultation Photos:





6.5.2. In addition to these public meetings, a series of college drop in sessions were organised to engage with younger generations of the population to increase their awareness not just of the Local Plan but also planning matters in general. At these sessions an exhibition was displayed, and a planning officer was in attendance supported by local students. Drop-in sessions were held on:

1. Thursday 28th June 2018, 11:00 – 13:00, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.
2. Tuesday 3rd July 2018, 11:00 – 13:00, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.
3. Wednesday 4th July 2018, 8:00 – 10:30, Darlington College.

6.5.3. Furthermore, a Live Property Forum Debate took place on the 5th June 2018. A senior council officer and the portfolio holder for economy and regeneration presented the Draft Local Plan to a local property forum (including property owners, estate agents, letting agents and surveyors). The live debate could be viewed online - this allowed communities and other stakeholders to listen to the discussions and to understand different perspectives.

6.5.4. In addition to these key events, an exhibition was set up in the reception area of the Town Hall. Information boards and maps explained and provided information on the Draft Local

Plan consultation. This exhibition was in place when the display is not in use at the drop-in sessions shown in Table 6.

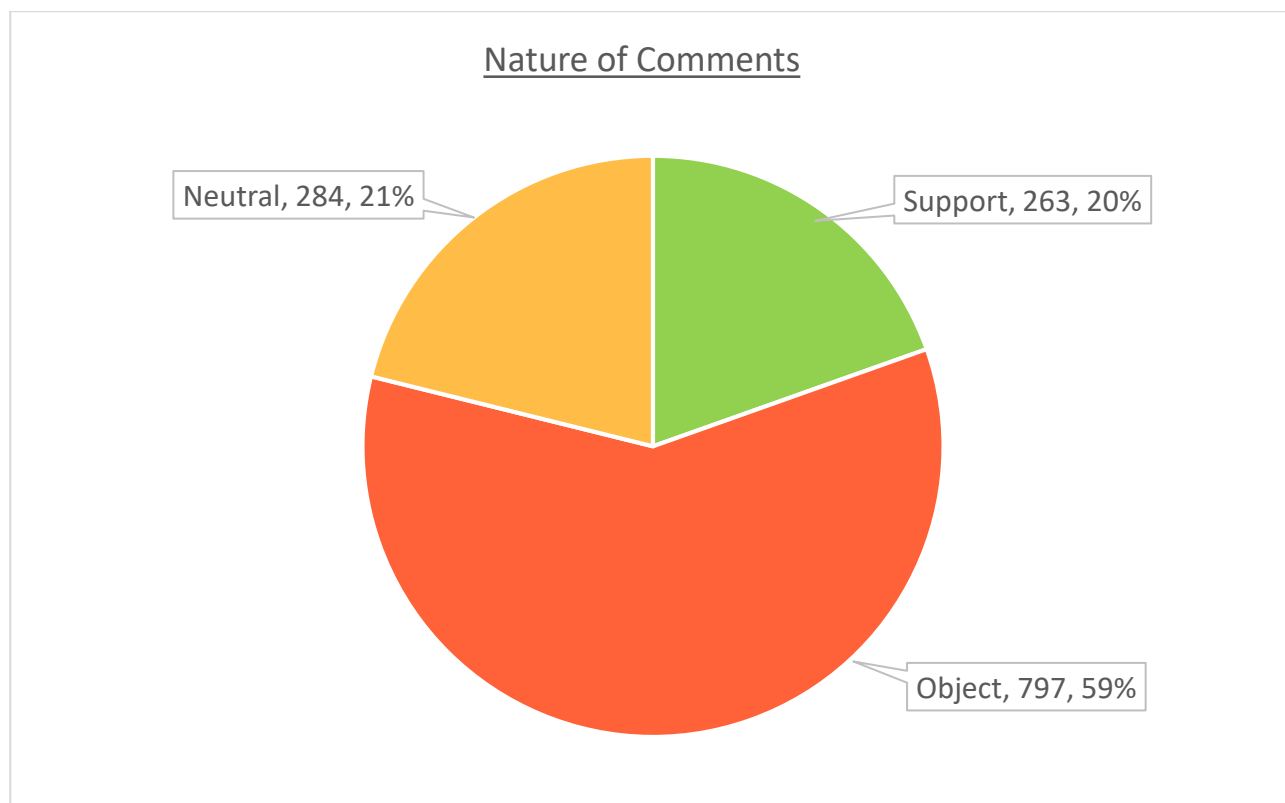
6.6. Multimedia

- 6.6.1. The existing corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to publicise the Draft Local Plan Consultation – to attempt to raise awareness of the Local Plan in a younger broader audience. Posts directed users to the Local Plan Microsite and to drop in sessions with the Planning Policy Team. Posts were not used to try to explain the Local Plan in isolation but instead as signposts to more detailed information.
- 6.6.2. A four-page feature on the Draft Local Plan was published in the July 2018 issue of the One Darlington Magazine. This article provided answers to FAQs to improve Local understanding of the emerging Local Plan. The article also set out the proposed timeline for submission and advertised the ongoing consultation process. An article was also published in the Northern Echo on 27th May 2018 advertising the upcoming consultation.

6.7. Summary of Responses and Key Changes

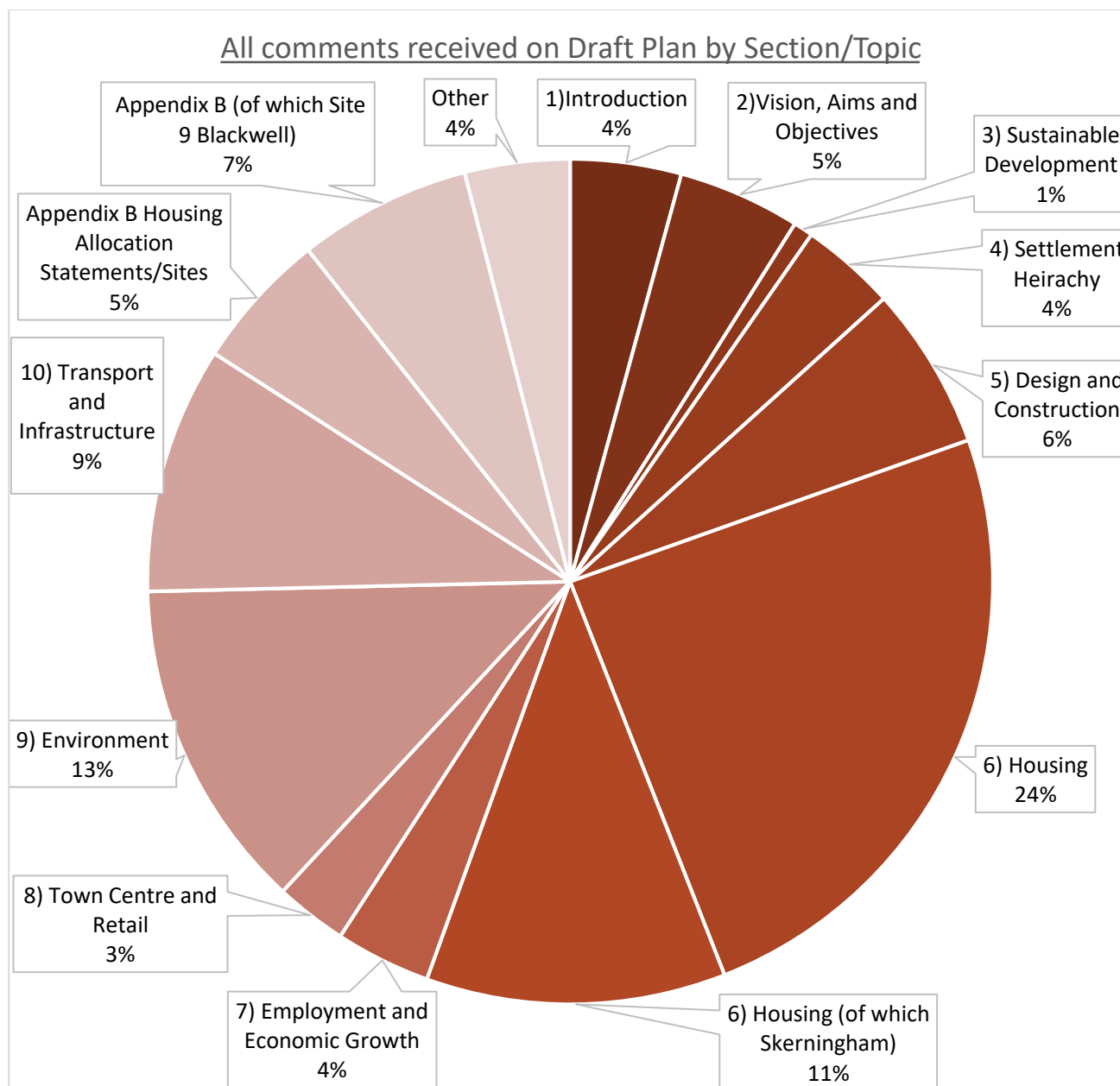
6.7.1. During the consultation 292 individuals and organisations submitted representations generating 1344 individual comments.

Figure 2: Draft Local Plan Consultation - Nature of Comments



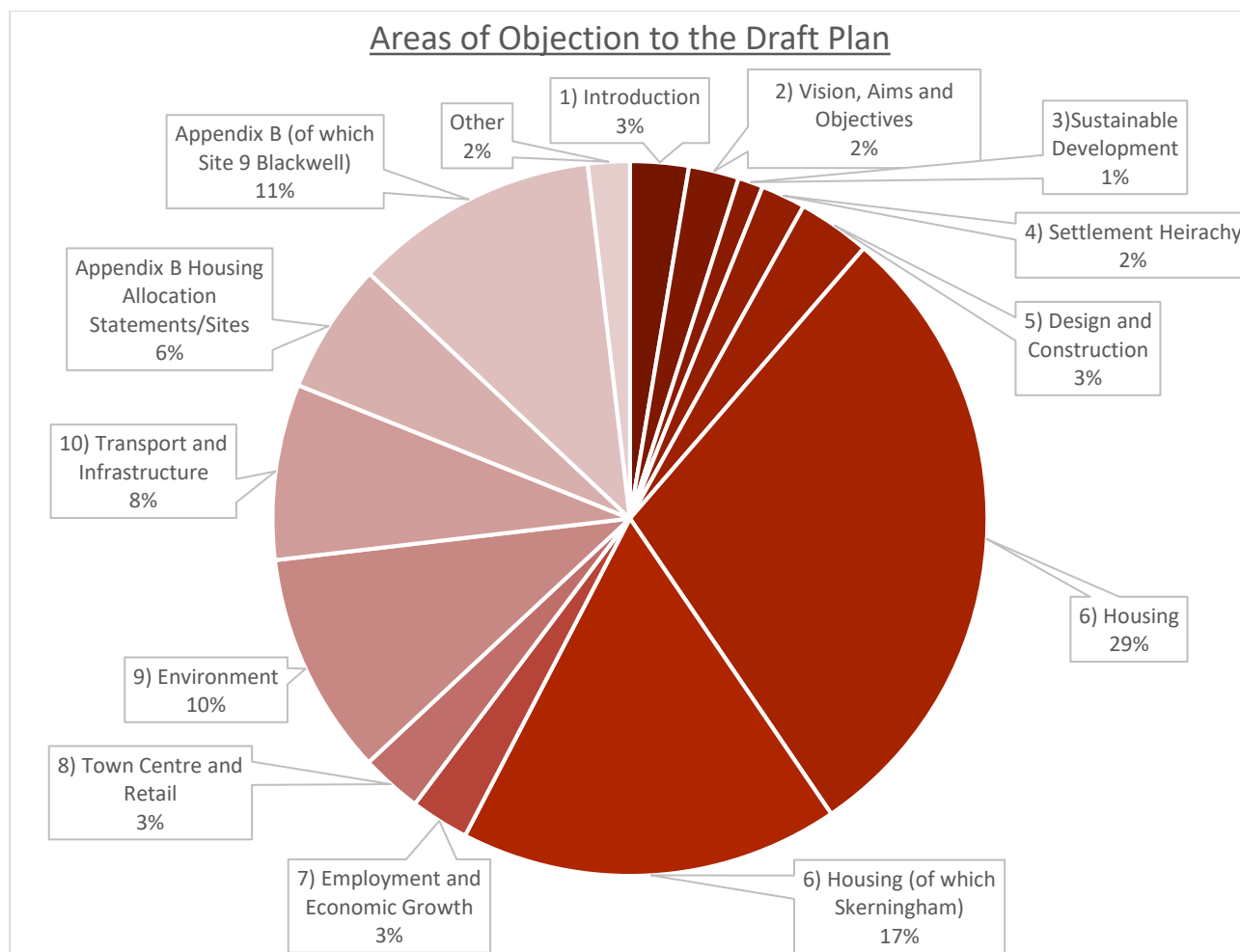
6.7.2. As shown in Figure 2, of these comments 797 or 59% were objecting, 263 or 20% supporting, and 284 or 21% providing neutral comments on the plan.

Figure 3: Draft Local Plan Consultation - Distribution of Comments



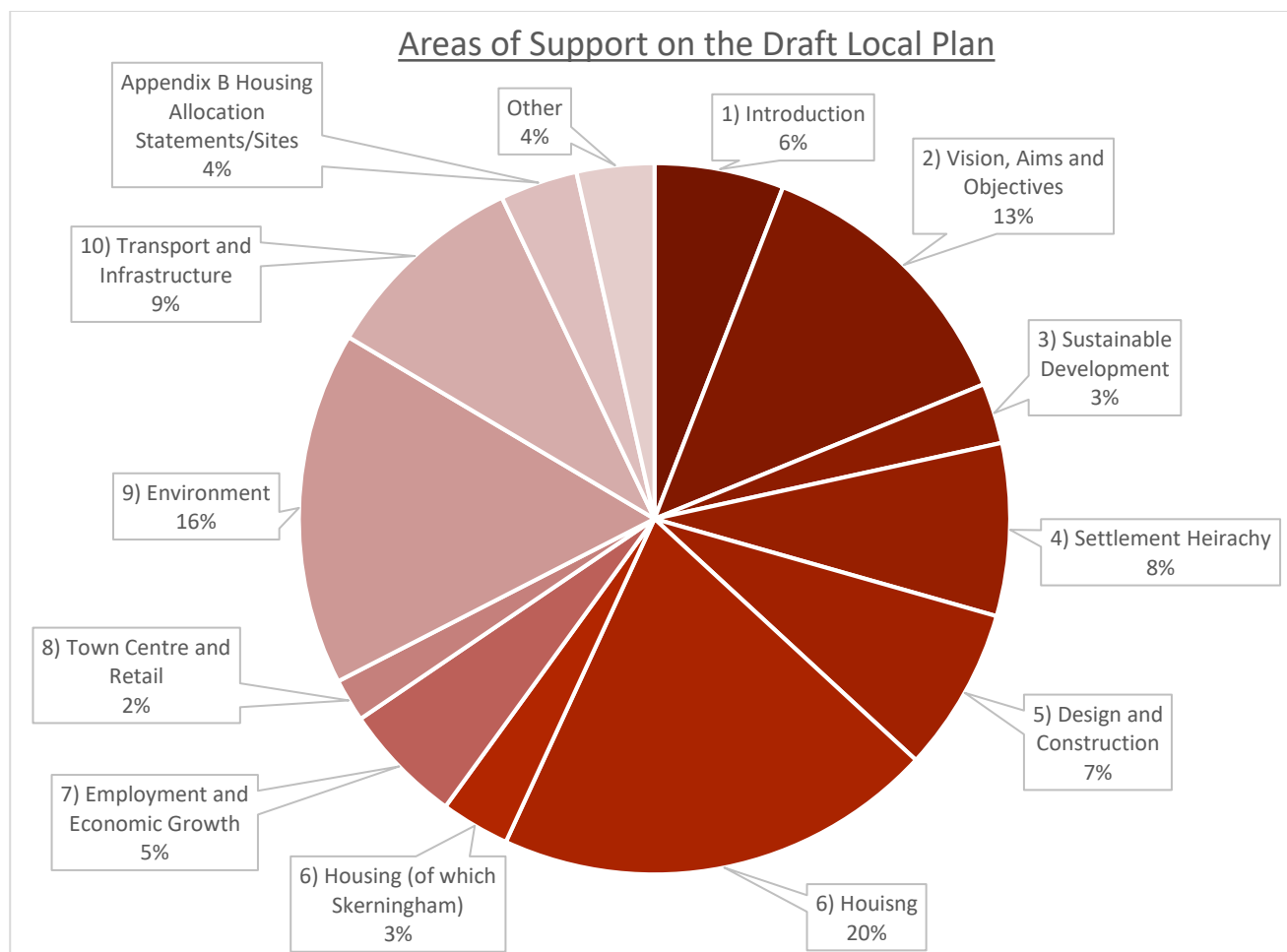
6.7.3. In relation to the areas of the plan comments were submitted on, Housing was by far the most commented on with around 47% of the comments received either being on the Housing chapter or the associated Housing Site Statements contained in Appendix B. Comments on the Environment section were the next highest with 13% of comments then Transport and Infrastructure with 9%. Comments received on Employment and Town Centre and Retail Policies were surprisingly low with only 4% and 3% of the comments received on these areas. The lack of comments in relation to Town Centre and Retail was surprising given the uncertainty at the time of consultation around a number of key outlets in the Town Centre. Details on the percentage of comments received for each section of the Draft Local Plan can be viewed in Figure 3.

Figure 4: Draft Local Plan Consultation - Areas of Objection



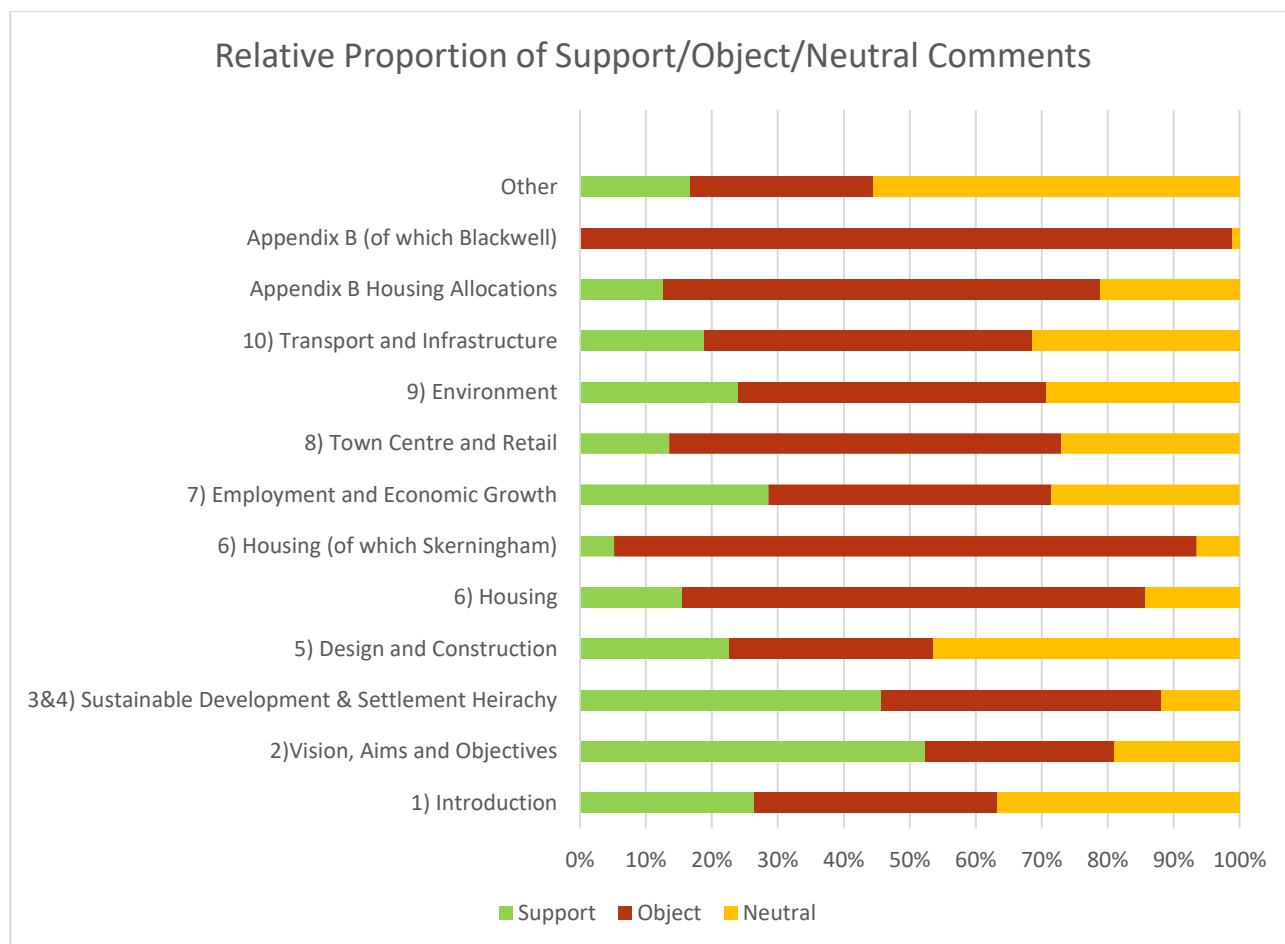
6.7.4. Of the 797 comments categorised as objections, Housing remains the most contentious area. Around 63% of the objections received relating to the Housing chapter or its associated Appendices. Of these, 17% related to proposed development at Skerningham. Following a similar pattern to the total comments received Environment (13%) and Transport and Infrastructure (9%) were the next most objected to areas of the plan. Details on the percentage of the number of objections received by each area of the Draft Local Plan can be viewed in Figure 4.

Figure 5: Draft Local Plan Consultation - Areas of Support



6.7.5. Of the 263 comments in support of the Draft Plan, Housing received around 27% of the supporting comments. It should be noted that a significant proportion of this support was from the development industry in relation to their own promoted sites. The next most supported areas of the plan were the Environment Chapter (16%) and the Vision, Aims and Objectives (13%). In general, areas of the plan offering environmental protection received a higher level of support. Details on the level of support to each section of the Draft Local Plan can be viewed in Figure 5.

Figure 6: Draft Local Plan Consultation - Relative Proportions of Comments



6.7.6. In order to provide a relative comparison of areas of support and objection an analysis of relative numbers was undertaken. The results of this are presented in Figure 6. It should be noted that 'neutral' comments were left out of the previous detailed analysis but were included in Figure 6 to provide an overview of the relative proportions. Areas of particular note from this data included the high levels of support for the vision of the plan and its associated settlement development hierarchy (Sections 2, 3 & 4). There were also significant objections to the housing aspects of the Plan – with the proposed sites at Blackwell and Skerningham receiving by far the majority of objections. Most other areas of the plan were relatively balanced considering the majority of comments received were objections.

6.8. Following the consultation process several changes were made to the new Local Plan. In total 32% of the comments received resulted in changes to the new Local Plan.

Table 7: Summary of Responses to Draft Local Plan Consultation and subsequent Key Changes

| Section | Responses and Key Changes |
|---|---|
| Vision Aims and Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments received were generally supportive in relation to the vision aims and objectives of the plan. |
| Sustainable Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General support with no significant changes recommended. |
| Settlement Hierarchy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes to wording of Policy SH1 |
| Design, Climate Change and Construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments received ranged from the Draft Plan not doing enough to support good design and climate change (mainly from residents and action groups) to the plan doing too much and being too prescriptive on these matters (mainly from the building industry). Significant challenge came from the development industry regarding the requirement for Health Impact Assessments. Minor changes to improve clarity and effectiveness of Policies in this section were suggested. |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most responses received during the Draft Plan Consultation focused on housing requirement targets being considered too high. Although the targets did receive general support from the building industry. Objections to the general principle housing development were received on numerous grounds including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on the natural environment Loss of habitats and wildlife. Loss of land for food production. Green spaces being important for physical health, mental health and general wellbeing. More housing will result in increased traffic and congestion which will subsequently effect health via air pollution. Existing empty homes. Brownfield land should be used first. Infrastructure required to support growth. More homes needed for older people. Etc. In addition, a significant number of objections were received to the Skertingham strategic development site and proposed housing allocation at Blackwell Grange East. Relatively small |

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| | <p>numbers of objections were received to some other proposed housing allocations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy H2 Housing Allocations; site 9 Blackwell Grange East – In response to representations that highlighted the relative sensitivity of Site 009 it is proposed to be replaced with revised Site 403.• Policy H2 Housing Allocations has been altered to remove site 375 Land South of High Stell for 100 dwellings. An initial assessment by the Council's Highway Engineer has raised issues with vehicle accessibility to this site. Concerns were also raised over impact on the amenity of adjacent residential properties. As such it has been decided to remove the proposed allocation from the Local Plan and amend development limits to exclude the land.• The Draft Local Plan identified a number of potential access points into the Skerningham Strategic Allocation site (Policy H 10), one of which was through Springfield Park. A number of objections to this proposal were raised during consultation on the Draft Local Plan in 2018. This was also specifically raised when the Local Plan was scrutinised by Place Scrutiny Committee on 13 June 2019 and it was resolved as there was no modelled evidence to suggest the Springfield Park access road was critical, that this should be removed from the Plan and that paragraph 6.10.13 be removed from the Local Plan. To provide more information to inform decisions on this matter additional traffic modelling work was commissioned to establish how the traffic patterns might change if the access point across Springfield Park was removed from the plan. In addition, the site promoters Skerningham Estates Ltd also undertook additional work to identify how the road could be aligned and what opportunities the sites allocation might create to make improvements to the park as part of development. The additional traffic modelling indicated that, whilst beneficial, an access across Springfield Park has not been shown to be critical at this stage of traffic assessment.• Additional engagement with the public and other stakeholders took place in January 2020 to inform them of the results of the further traffic modelling work, and to share the potential designs for a remodelled park. Two drop-in sessions were held in January where Council officers and representatives of the site promoter were available to answer questions. A questionnaire was produced asking for people's opinions on two matters:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (a) Question 1: The Skerningham Development proposed a number of vehicle access points in the draft Local Plan. The information provided shows the traffic levels that could be generated on the local roads both with and |
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| | <p>without the new link road along the side of Springfield Park. Do you think the new Springfield Park Access Road should be included? - 73% answered No to this question and 27% answered Yes (out of 101 responses).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (b) Question 2: If Included the Springfield Park Access Road is shown to run alongside the edge of the existing Park minimising the impact on the Park. The Park will also be extended in size and significantly enhanced with pedestrian, cycle ways, water features and an improved play area. An illustrative option has been produced identifying what can be provided with the Access Road running alongside of the park? Would you be in favour of the proposal? - 67% answered No to this question and 33% answered Yes (out of 99 responses). • As a result of that resolution and two public engagement events on this matter, it is recommended that Springfield Park be removed from the boundary of the Skerningham Strategic Allocation as highlighted in Policy H 9. It is therefore further recommended that figure 6.1 is amended to remove Springfield Park and any indicated access points (See extract from Figure 6.1 below). Furthermore, that the Policies Map is amended to remove Springfield Park from Site 251 and amend the site boundary of the allocation. It is further recommended that the site area in Policy H 2 is amended to reflect the change. • As a consequence of removing Springfield Park from the proposed Skerningham allocation the site has been reassessed as one of the sites submitted for consideration under policy ENV 6 as a Local Green Space. It is recommended that the site now be designated and listed in Table 9.1 of Policy ENV 6. |
| Employment for Economic Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments received were generally supportive of proposed allocations. Some requested greater flexibility in uses permitted on employment sites. |
| Town Centre and Retail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited comments and minor changes required. |
| Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most comments received on this section were in the wider context of objections to proposed allocations. • Following comments from Historic England Heritage Policies ENV1 and ENV2 have been redrafted (in consultation with Historic England) APPENDIX 2d. In addition, Heritage Impact Assessments for relevant sites have also been produced. • Changes were made to Policy ENV 7 to reflect the revised NPPFs requirement to provide net gains for biodiversity as a result of developments. • Additional Local Green Spaces were submitted for consideration in the plan as well as challenge of some not recommended for |

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| | allocation. More details on this can be found in the Local Green Space Assessment Report. |
| Transport and Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments were received that the plan could be more supportive of sustainable transport methods and appropriate adjustments to policies were made.• A significant number of objections were received from the development industry regarding the proximity requirements to bus stops. Policy has been reworded for greater clarity, but the principle is retained.• Policy IN 9 was reworded to take account of comments from both statutory consultees like Natural England and the development industry. |

7. Regulation 19 Representation Period

7.1.1. At this stage of the process, the Council sought views on the following three issues to be considered by the Planning Inspector:

- Whether the plan complies with the legal requirements;
- whether the legal duty to co-operate has happened; and
- whether the plan is 'sound', the following criteria will be considered by the Planning Inspector:
 - Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategic which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.
 - Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.
 - Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.
 - Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

7.1.2. The representation period ran for six weeks from Thursday 6th August 2020 until 5pm on Thursday 17th September 2020.

7.1.3. The Council had initially intended the consultation process to begin in late April 2020, but after the country went into lockdown due to the COVID19 pandemic the consultation was indefinitely delayed. A microsite update conveying this was posted on 20th March 2020. The post urged anyone interested in commenting on the Local Plan in the future to sign up to the consultation portal at: <http://darlington-consult.objective.co.uk/portal>. It was advised that all users registered on the consultation portal, and anyone who has previously commented on the Local Plan, would be contacted when the Council was able to place the Local Plan on Deposit.

7.1.4. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government expressed the requirement for Local Plans to continue to be progressed throughout the pandemic, recognising them as a vital means for supporting economic recovery and in line with its aspirations to have plans in place across the country by 2023. Therefore, a microsite update was posted on 8th July 2020 advising that the Council was looking to restart the Local Plan preparation process, and that the Council was aiming for the statutory six-week representation period to begin in early August.

7.1.5. On 16th July 2020, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 changed the requirement for Councils to make copies of

development plan documents available for inspection at their principle office as set out in Reg. 35 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. From this date, councils were permitted to comply with Reg. 35 by making development plan documents available on the council's website. This change was applicable from 16th July 2020 and continues until the 31st December 2020.

- 7.1.6. As is standard practice by the Planning Policy Section at Darlington Borough Council, all documents were made available on the designated Local Plan website (www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan) and the designated consultation portal (darlington.objective.co.uk/portal), where comments could be submitted online.
- 7.1.7. The Council also updated its Statement of Community Involvement (Part 1) in line with current Government advice relating to restrictions caused by Covid19.

7.2. Direct Consultation

- 7.2.1. Notification emails and letters were sent out to all consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database on the 6th August 2020. The letter publicised the dates of the Regulation 19 Consultation. Information was provided on how to access the draft Local Plan and supporting documents through the Local Plan section of the Council's website. The phone number and email address for the Planning Policy Team was published to enable anyone with questions to get in touch.
- 7.2.2. All consultees on the Local Plan Consultation Database were made aware that the Council was using an online consultation system available at: <https://darlington-consult.co.uk/portal>. Comments could be posted in relation to the entire document, individual policies or sites.
- 7.2.3. Despite the COVID19 pandemic, the Council also continued to accept paper copies of representations, abiding by the relevant quarantining advice prior to them being handled by Officers. Responses by email were also accepted and were logged onto the consultation portal by Officers on behalf of the responder.
- 7.2.4. Recipients were also informed that, if they were no longer interested in receiving updates on the Local Plan, they could withdraw from the Local Plan Consultation Database by calling 01325 406724 or by emailing their details to planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk.

7.3. Key Stakeholder Events

7.3.1. Due to the COVID19 pandemic no key stakeholder events were arranged during the representation period. However, the Planning Policy Section worked closely with the Customer Services Team within Darlington Borough Council to provide an appointment-only service within the Customer Contact Centre at the council offices. On each day of the consultation, pre-booked timeslots were made available for members of the public so that they could view the consultation documents in a designated, isolated room. The appointment was subject to a time limit to allow for the relevant cleaning of the room and documents to be carried out before the next appointment slot. There was also scope to book an extended time period. Details of these arrangements were set out in the Statement of Representations which was published on the Local Plan Microsite.

7.4. Multimedia

7.4.1. The Council, as in the previous Regulation 18 consultations, used the existing Corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts to send messages out to build awareness of the consultation, and to direct residents and stakeholders to the Local Plan Microsite. Seven Facebook posts were created – details of their reach and engagement can be seen in Table 8. Tweets were also released on Twitter, at the same time as the posts on Facebook. Unfortunately, no data is available regarding the reach and engagement with these tweets.

Table 8: Regulation 19 Representation Period Facebook Posts

| Post No. | Date | Reach | Reactions/Comments/Shares | Link Clicks |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Preparatory | 30 th July 2020 | 3294 | 31 | 77 |
| 1 | 6 th August 2020 | 4165 | 16 | 161 |
| 2 | 13 th August 2020 | 3386 | 9 | 99 |
| 3 | 20 th August 2020 | 1789 | 6 | 41 |
| 4 | 27 th August 2020 | 4090 | 12 | 164 |
| 5 | 3 rd September 2020 | 3601 | 19 | 115 |
| 6 | 10 th September 2020 | 4105 | 8 | 107 |

7.4.2. The new Local Plan again featured in the One Darlington Magazine in March 2020. The start of Regulation 19 Representation Period, following the COVID19 pause, was publicised by an article in the Northern Echo on 30th July 2020. The article stated the date of the start of the representation period and how long the period would last.

7.5. Summary of Representations

7.5.1. There were 712 responses to the Proposed Submission Local Plan (2016 – 2036) Consultation prior to the deadline from 208 consultees. Of these 712 comments, eight were discounted as inadmissible - as they were either duplicates or blanks. Therefore, in total, 704 comments were processed.

7.5.2. Chapter 6 - Housing was the section of the plan most commented on, with 301 comments received, this represents 42.8% of the total number of comments received. Chapter 9 - Environment attracted 86 comments (12%) - the second highest total. Chapter 10 - Transport attracted 75 comments (11%) - the third highest total. Comments were received on all sections of the Proposed Submission Local Plan except Appendix D - Civil Aviation Authority Safeguarding and Appendix E - Affordable Housing Requirements. A breakdown of the number of comments received on each section of the Proposed Submission Local Plan can be viewed in Figure 7 and Table 9.

Figure 7: Reg. 19 Consultation - Distribution of Comments Received

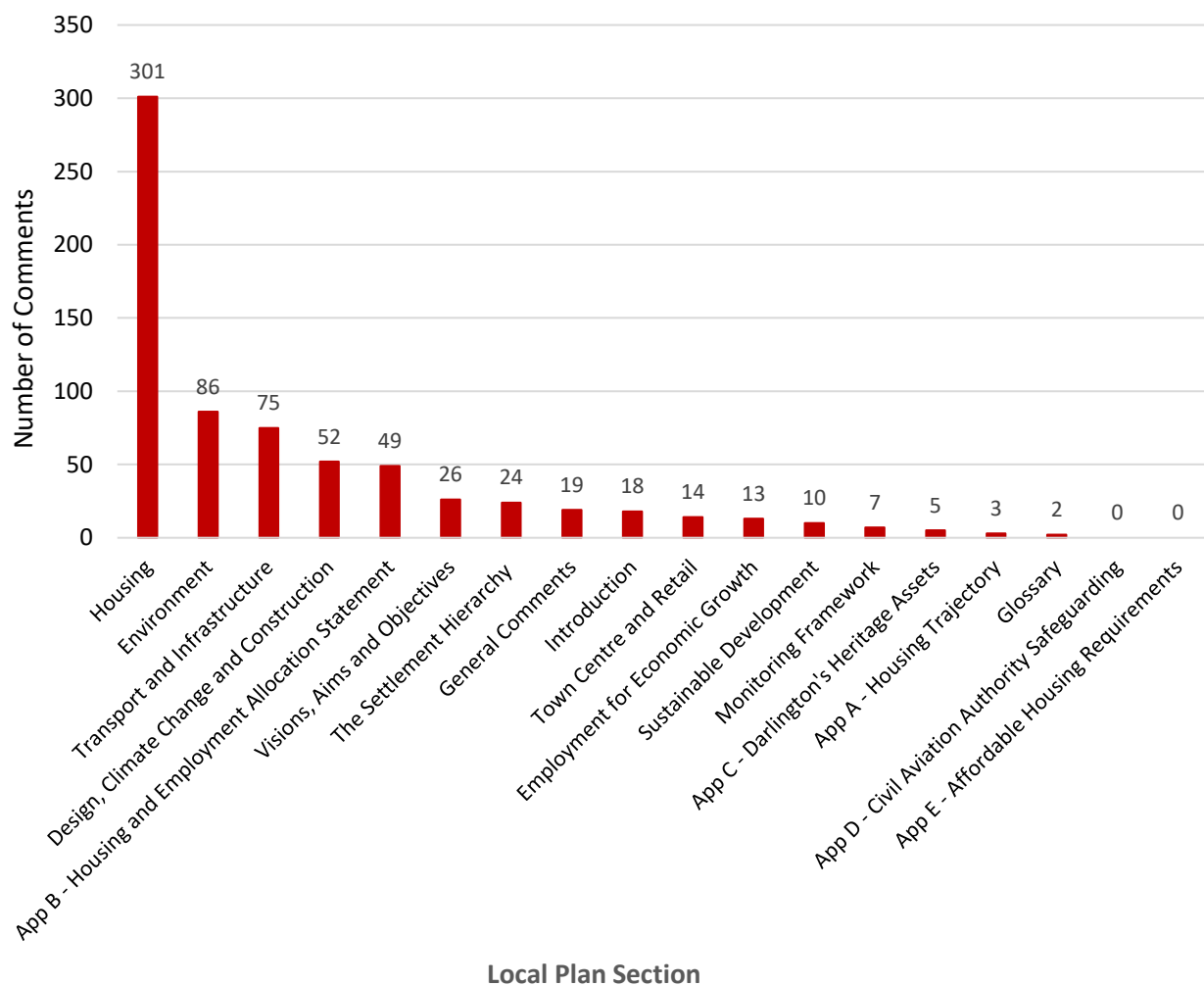


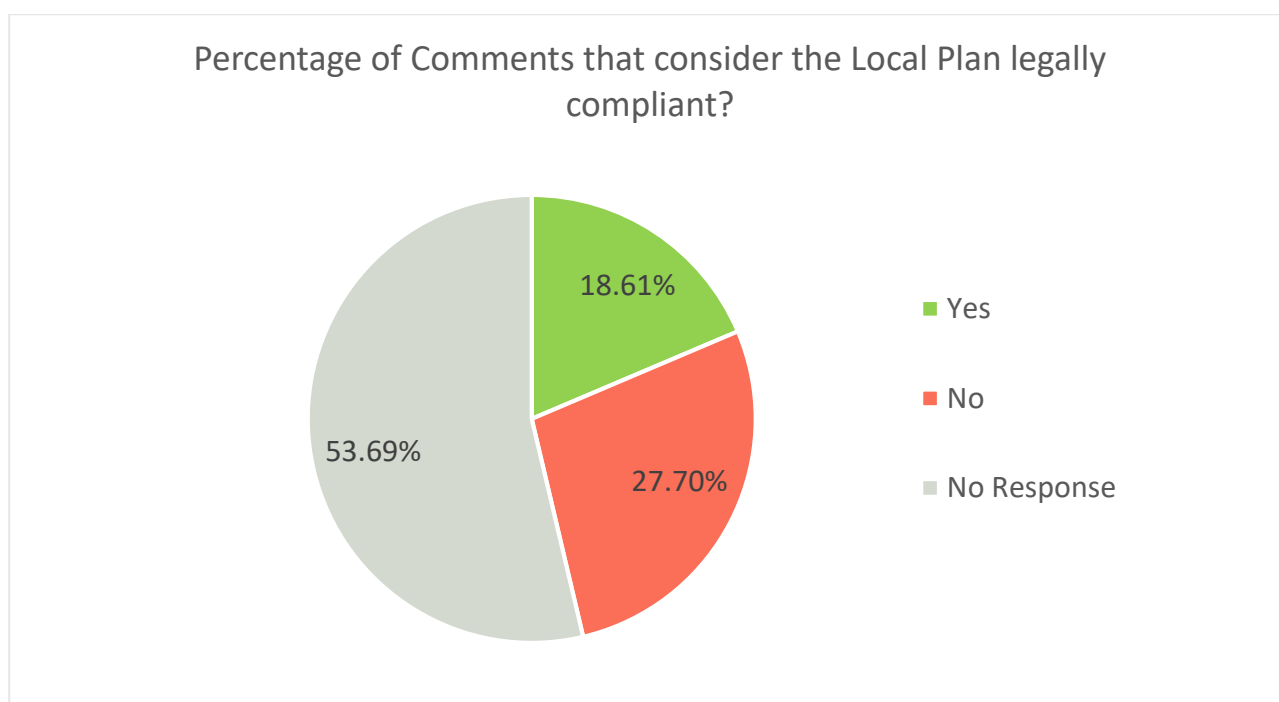
Table 9: Distribution of Comments Received

| Local Plan Section | Number of Comments |
|---|--------------------|
| Housing | 301 |
| Environment | 86 |
| Transport and Infrastructure | 75 |
| Design, Climate Change and Construction | 52 |
| App B - Housing and Employment Allocation Statement | 49 |
| Visions, Aims and Objectives | 26 |
| The Settlement Hierarchy | 24 |
| General Comments | 19 |
| Introduction | 18 |
| Town Centre and Retail | 14 |
| Employment for Economic Growth | 13 |
| Sustainable Development | 10 |
| Monitoring Framework | 7 |
| App C - Darlington's Heritage Assets | 5 |
| App A - Housing Trajectory | 3 |
| Glossary | 2 |
| App D - Civil Aviation Authority Safeguarding | 0 |
| App E - Affordable Housing Requirements | 0 |

7.5.3. As part of the consultation process, those commenting on the local plan were asked a series of questions about their views on whether the Proposed Submission Local Plan is legally compliant (has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation) and whether it is 'sound' i.e. positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. This next section presents the results of these questions where it was possible for reasonable statistics to be extracted.

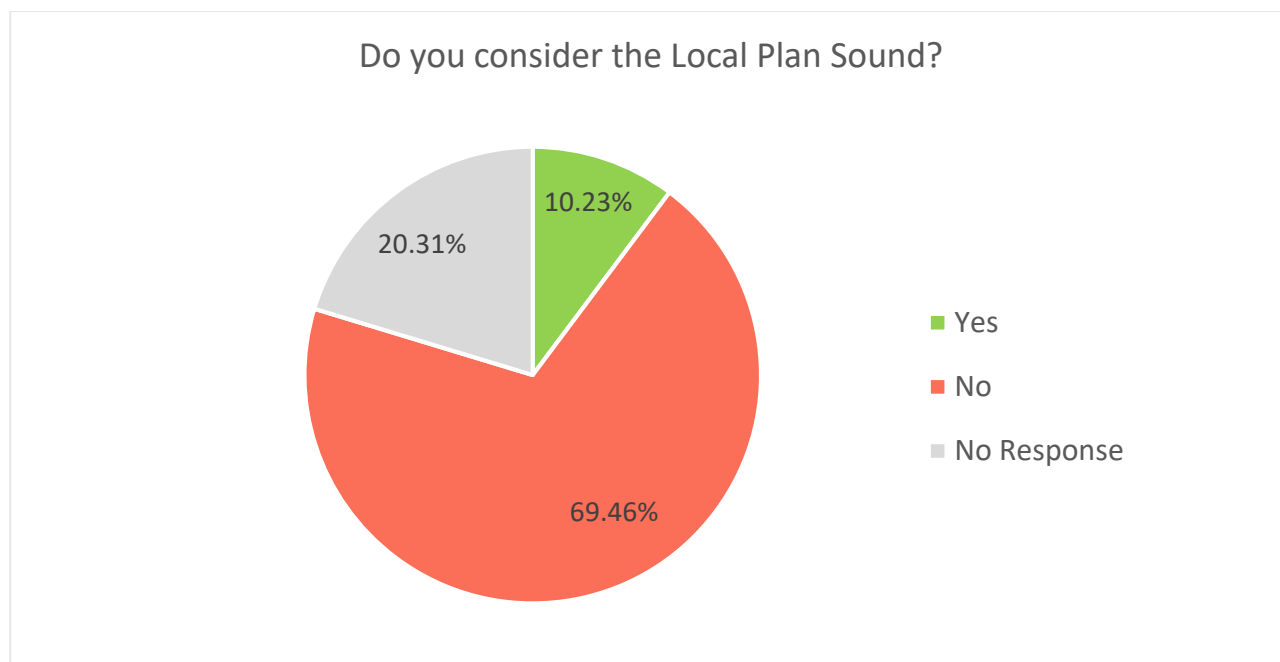
7.5.4. As shown in Figure 8, of the 704 comments received, 27.7% did not consider the Proposed Submission Local Plan to be legally compliant. 18.61% did consider the Proposed Submission Local Plan to be legally compliant. However, most comments (53.69%) returned no response to this question.

Figure 8: Reg. 19 Consultation - Percentage of comments that considered the Local Plan legally compliant



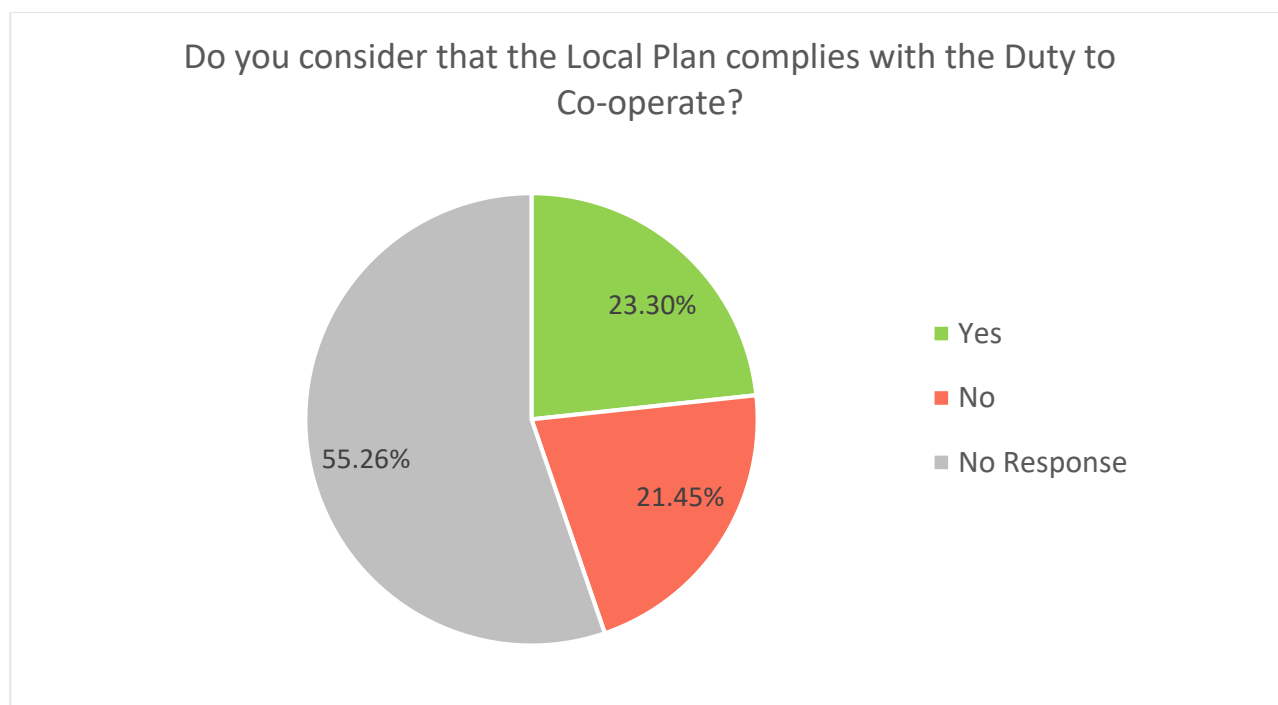
7.5.5. Of the responses that considered parts of the Local Plan to be unsound, under the tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, 26% considered the part commented on to be unjustified, and 21% considered the part in question not to be consistent with national policy. 20% considered the part in question to not be effective, and 18% considered it not to be positively prepared.

Figure 9: Percentage of Comments that consider the Local Plan Sound



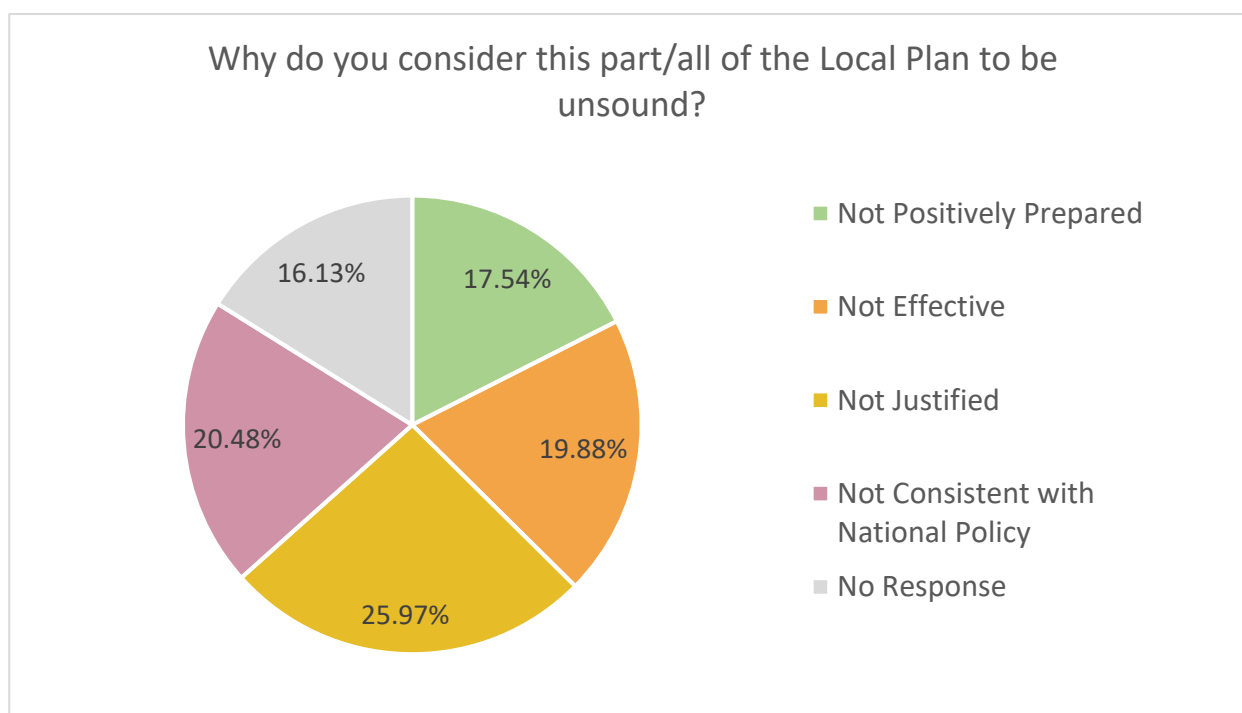
7.5.6. The number of comments received expressing an opinion on whether the Proposed Submission Local Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate was split fairly evenly between positive responses (23.3%) and negative responses (21.45%). However, most comments provided no responses on this question (55.26%).

Figure 10: Percentage of Comments that consider the Local Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate



7.5.7. Figure 11 presents details on the reasons why consultees who objected judged part/all of the Proposed Submission Local Plan to be unsound. The following statistics are based on the total number of objections made because the consultee considered the plan unsound (463) – it should be noted that since only 208 consultees made comments in the whole consultation several comments may have been made by the same organisation. The greatest reason for judging the Proposed Submission Local Plan to be unsound was considering it to be not justified at 26%. The second greatest reason, at 20.5%, was regarding the plan as not consistent with national policy. 19.9% judged the Proposed Submission Local Plan to not be effective. 17.5% judged that the Local Plan was not positively prepared. 16.1% of respondents gave no response when asked why they considered the plan unsound.

Figure 11: Reasons for Considering Part/All of the Local Plan Unsound



7.6. A summary of the main representations made during the Representation Period is given below in Table 10.

Table 10: Summary of Representations

| Chapter | Representations Summary |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction | |
| 2. Visions, Aims and Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of recognition of environmental protection within vision. • Lack of reference to addressing and responding to climate change within vision. • Need for time to pause and reflect on vision considering Covid-19 and societal change it has brought about. • Further emphasis should be placed on the commitment to provide a variety of house types and sizes through the delivery of much needed new homes in sustainable locations. |
| 3. Sustainable Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan should be more positively prepared in relation to sustainability and has not been carbon audited. • Policy wording conflicts with the specific wording set out in national policy. |
| 4. The Settlement Hierarchy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions raised regarding Middleton St George classification as a Service Village. • Request for Sadberge to be considered as a Service Village. • Request for School Aycliffe to be considered as a Service Village. • Request for Great Stainton to be classified as a Rural Village. • Need to include policy to enable rounding off villages. |
| 5. Design, Climate Change and Construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DC1 lacking in sustainability measures to contribute towards reducing carbon emissions and mitigating and adapting to climate change. • Design SPD is referred to in Policy DC1 which is out of date and requires updating. • Questions raised regarding justification of requirement for Health Impact Assessment in Policy DC3 and need to clarify specific steps required to undertake this. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DC4 needs to provide greater reference to the Agent of Change principle established in national planning policy. • Policy DC5 skills and training requirements should be viability tested. |
| 6. Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main challenge from residents, parish councils and environmental groups is the housing requirement of 422 and housing target of 492 dwellings per annum (dpa). The argument put forward is that we do not have exceptional circumstances to exceed the Government's Local Housing Need figure of 177 dpa. The standard method for calculating housing need and this figure of 177 should be utilised. • Jobs target of 7,000 questioned and also argued that the impacts of Brexit and Covid19 have not been considered in terms of housing need. • Several objections against Skertingham. • Developers challenge the housing requirement range 422 – 492dpa. They state there should be one housing requirement figure of 492dpa to meet the boroughs objective assessment of need and a range could be unclear / ambiguous. • Concerns raised from residents over large green field sites and the lack of brownfield allocations in the plan. It is commented frequently that the allocations are not required if the housing target is reduced to 177dpa. • Developers challenge the none inclusion of their sites. They also argue for a greater buffer of sites above the housing requirement. • Evidence challenge on a number of areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - viability of affordable housing percentages - affordable housing need and the related tenure split - supporting evidence on accessible and adaptable dwellings. |
| 7. Employment for Economic Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth planned for is overly ambitious and does not take account of Brexit and Covid-19. • Need to clarify uses suitable in Policy E1 at Teesside Airport. • Need to clarify suitable uses in Policy E3 at Darlington Auction Mart considering revised use classes order. |

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| 8. Town Centre and Retail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns raised regarding justification for proposed de-designation of several Local Centres including Whinfield, North Road, Yarm Road, Neasham Road and West Park. |
| 9. Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to illustrate branch lines of the Darlington and Stockton Railway on the Policies Map and reflect within ENV2 the ambitions to create a walking and cycling route along the length of the railway. Potential conflict between rural gap identified in ENV 3 at Great Burdon and Brampton and the Skerningham Strategic Allocation (H10). Need to illustrate rural gaps referred to in ENV 3 on policies map and provide greater justification and clarity on the areas they cover. Need to identify the Low Coniscliffe, Merrybent and main urban area rural gap with the rural gaps in ENV 3. Further clarity and justification required on green wedges identified in ENV 3 Green Infrastructure requirements in ENV 5 are too rigid and relies on the Planning Obligations SPD which is out of date. Eastmount Park suggested for inclusion as Local Green Space identified in policy ENV 6. Comments reiterating that Skerningham Community Woodland and Blackwell Parkland should be identified as Local Green Spaces in policy ENV 6. Policy wording of ENV 7 needs clarifying to avoid internal inconsistencies regarding net biodiversity gain requirements. |
| 10. Transport and Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further clarity sought on highway modelling being undertaken and identification of projects within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Range of detailed comments made suggesting minor amendments to policies wording. Concerns raised regarding the viability testing of District heating requirements and Electric vehicle charging points[. |

7.7. Sustainability Appraisal

As well as the Proposed Submission Local Plan, the Sustainability Appraisal was made available for comment. 47 representations were submitted from 22 different consultees. The main points raised were:

- The Environment Agency commented that further consideration needs to be given to the impacts of climate change.
- Historic England commented on a number of sites and areas of the SA. They suggested a different scoring on certain areas and outlined further work which is required (heritage impact assessments).
- Overall, there were objections to the development of greenfield sites and the environmental impacts of doing so. Particular focus was given to Skertingham, Middleton St George, Hurworth, Coniscliffe Park and Blackwell Grange East.
- Challenges against the housing growth proposed in the plan and a number of the sites e.g. their scoring.
- Concerns and objections regarding the impacts of climate change and carbon reduction and whether the plan meets relevant legislation on these areas.

Appendix A: List of Consultees (Organisations)

- All Saints' Church, Blackwell
- Anderson Ellis Architecture Ltd
- Archdeacon Newton Parish Meeting
- Arriva
- Arriva Rail North
- Avant Homes
- Avison Young
- Banks Group
- Banks Property Ltd
- Barmpton and Skerningham Preservation Group
- Barratt Homes
- Barton Willmore
- Bellway and Story Homes (represented by Barton Willmore)
- Bellway Homes (represented by Barton Willmore)
- Bellway Homes Limited (Durham)
- Big Tree Planning Ltd
- Bilfinger GVA
- Bishop Auckland Cycling Club
- Bishopton Parish Council
- Blackwell Action Group
- Blackwell Neighbourhood Forum
- Blue Kayak
- Bowcliffe Chartered Surveyors
- Brafferton Parish Meeting
- BT Openreach
- Bussey & Armstrong (represented by Savills UK Ltd)
- Campaign for Real Ale Darlington Branch / Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) - Darlington Group
- Carlton & Co
- Carlton Parish Council
- Carter Jonas LLP
- Carvers
- Central Community Partnership
- CH2M
- Chief Inspector Helen McMillan
- Chris Thomas Ltd
- Church Commissioners for England (CCE) (represented by Barton Willmore)
- Civil Aviation Authority
- CLA
- Clerk to Girsby Parish Meeting
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Coatham Mundeville Parish Meeting
- Conservative Group
- Countryside Properties
- County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters
- County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- Cushman and Wakefield
- Cycling UK
- Dalton on Tees Parish Council
- Darlington Association of Parish Councils
- Darlington Association on Disability
- Darlington Borough Council / Healthy New Towns
- Darlington Building Society
- Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group
- Darlington Friends of the Earth
- Darlington Green Party (represented by Blue Kayak)
- Darlington Housing Association
- Darlington Quaker Meeting
- Davis Planning Partnership
- Defence Estates
- DEFRA
- Denton Parish Meeting
- design-north east (North East Design Review and Enabling Service)
- Disability North
- DPDS Consulting Group
- DPH DARLINGTON LTD
- DPP
- DTVA (represented by Turley)
- Durham Bird Club
- Durham Cathedral
- Durham Constabulary
- Durham County Badger Group

- Durham County Council
- Durham County Council (Archaeology Section)
- Durham County Council (Planning Policy)
- Durham Police
- Durham Wildlife Trust
- East and West Newbiggin Parish Meeting
- Education Funding Agency
- EIPublican Partnerships
- ELG Planning
- ELG Planning for Fintry Estate
- England Lyle Good
- Environment Agency
- EPICH
- Eppleby Parish Council
- Eryholme Parish Council
- Esh Group
- Etherley Parish Council
- Fairhurst
- First TransPennine
- Fore Consulting
- Forestry Commission
- Forestry Commission, North East England Region
- Four Housing
- Friends of North Lodge Park
- Friends of North Park & North Cemetery
- Friends of the Earth (FOE)
- Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway
- Gainford and Langton Parish Council
- Galliford Try
- GDL
- Gentoo
- George F White
- GL Hearn Limited
- Gladman Developments
- GOLD
- Great Aycliffe Town Council
- Great Burdon Parish Meeting
- Great Stainton Parish Meeting
- Groundwork NE & Cumbria
- GSM
- Guide Dogs
- GVA
- GVA Grimley Ltd
- Hambleton District Council
- Hanover Housing
- Hansteen
- Hartlepool Borough Council (Planning Policy Team)
- Hartlepool Now
- Health and Safety Executive
- Healthwatch Darlington
- Healthy New Towns Darlington
- Heaton Planning
- Heighington Parish Council
- Heighington Womans Institute
- Hellens Group
- High Coniscliffe Parish Council & Headlam Parish Meeting
- Highways Agency
- Highways England
- Hince Estates
- Historic England
- Home Builders Federation
- Home Group
- Homes England (represented by Savills UK Ltd)
- Homes England, Hellens Land (represented by Savills UK Ltd)
- Houghton Le Side Parish Meeting
- Hurworth ADD
- Hurworth Parish Council
- IDPartnership
- ID Planning
- Indigo Planning
- Keepmoat
- Kenbys
- Killerby Parish Meeting
- Lambert Smith Hampton
- Leith Planning Ltd
- Lichfields
- Little Stainton Parish Meeting
- Littleton IT Ltd
- Long Newton Parish Council
- Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council
- Luxi Ltd
- Maidendale LNR Charity
- Manfield with Cliffe Parish Council

- Marine Management Organisation
- McGough Planning Consultants Limited
- Methodist Church
- Middlesbrough Council
- Middleton St George Parish Council
- Middridge Parish Council
- Miller Homes
- Mobile Operators Association
- Mordon Parish Meeting
- Morrison Trust
- Morton Palms Parish Meeting
- Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Nature Friendly Farming Network
- Neasham Parish Council
- Network Rail
- NFU
- NHS County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England North
- NLP Planning
- North Associates
- North East Chamber of Commerce
- North East Combined Authority
- North Riverside Residents Association, Friends of Darlington Libraries and Darlington Keep Fit Association
- North Star Housing Group
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Northern Gas Networks
- Northern Powergrid
- Northgate Councillor
- Northumbrian Water
- Blackwell Grange
- Openreach
- Over Dinsdale Parish Meeting
- P+HS Architects
- Paul Brannen MEP
- PD Ports
- Peacock & Smith
- Pegasus Group
- Persimmon Homes
- Persimmon Homes (Teesside)
- Piercebridge Parish Council
- PlanArch Design Limited
- Planning House
- Planware
- Pollywood Ltd
- Prince Bishop Homes
- Prism Planning
- Procters
- Public Health Principal
- Raby Estates
- Rail Freight Group
- Railway Housing Association
- Ramblers Association
- Rapleys LLP
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- Redmarshall Parish Council
- Richmondshire District Council
- RSPB
- Sadberge Parish Council
- Saddington Taylor
- Savills
- Savills - Smiths Gore
- Scarlet Band
- Sensei
- Sgt Paul Robinson, Partnership Liaison Officer
- Sherwoods
- Shildon Town Council
- Sirius Planning
- Skerningham Estates Ltd
- SLR Consulting Ltd
- Smiths Gore for Church Commissioners
- Sport England (North East)
- St Edwin's Church
- St Laurence Church
- St Modwen
- St. Georges Medical Practice
- Stapleton and Cleasby Parish Council
- Stephenson Halliday
- Steve Hesmondhalgh & Associates
- Stillington and Whitton Parish Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Story Homes (represented by Stephenson Halliday)
- Summerhouse Parish Council
- Sustrans
- Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land

- Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd (represented by ELG Planning)
- Tees Rivers Trust
- Teesside International Airport Limited and Teesside International Development Limited
- Tees Valley- Co Durham NHS CCG
- Tees Valley Combined Authority
- Tees Valley Housing /Thirteen
- Tees Valley Nature Partnership
- Tees Valley Rural Community Council
- Tees Valley Unlimited (LEP)
- Tees Valley Unlimited Freight Officer
- Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
- Tesni
- Tetlow King Planning Ltd
- The Coal Authority
- The For Britain Movement
- The Gardens Trust (formerly The Garden History Society)
- The Theatres Trust
- Theakston Land
- Theatres Trust
- Thirteen Group
- TransPennine Express
- Turley
- Two Castles
- Virgin Media
- Virgin Trains East Coast
- Walworth Castle Hotel
- Walworth Parish Meeting
- Ward Hadaway
- Whessoe Parish Council
- Whinfield Residents Association
- Whinfield Residents Association incorporating Friends of Beechwood
- Wood plc. (National Grid)
- WYG
- WYG Newcastle
- York Place Company Services
- Yorkshire and Humber LEP

Appendix B: Example One Darlington Articles

One Darlington – January 2016

Planning – the shape of things to come

One Darlington met with John Anderson, the Council's Chief Planner, to ask about the Council's planning policy.



We have heard that the Council is working on a new Local Plan. What is a Local Plan and why do we need one?

Yes, we are working on a new Local Plan. This is because national guidance has changed and made our existing plan out of date.

We need a Local Plan to act as a framework for how the whole of the Borough will develop, making sure that the right services such as schools and roads are taken into account. A Local Plan will make sure that the distinctive character of Darlington will be preserved whilst still allowing development to take place.

What is the timescale for this Local Plan?

Normally a Local Plan can take around six years to complete. We aim to get ours finished in half this time. This will make sure that we can deal with planning applications, especially for housing, in a sensible and effective way.

We hear that 9,000 new houses have to be built in Darlington by 2036 – why is this?

Nationally the Government is pressing for more homes to be built. As part of this, they have introduced different ways to calculate housing need. These new calculations mean that in Darlington, we now need to build on average 500 new homes every year until 2036.

Surely that is impossible – there is nowhere in Darlington that can cope with that scale of development.

It may seem like a massive amount. However, did you know that over the last 20 years, 450 new dwellings a year have been built in the Borough? There is room for development but it needs to be planned carefully. This is where the Local Plan comes in.

Where will these new houses be built?

We are working to identify possible sites. Some of these will be on what are now open areas of land. Development of these areas may not be well received as residents who have looked out onto open fields for many years find themselves faced with the prospect of looking out onto new homes. However, it is important to note that, even if areas are identified as part of the plan, it will depend on private developers coming forward with plans to build houses. They will only do this if there is a demand.

Why build on open, green areas of land when there are probably lots of other sites that could be developed?

These are what we call brownfield sites, pieces of land that have previously been used for industry or other uses. Central Park is a good example of where a brownfield site has been redeveloped for housing and new business. Developing these areas is very expensive as land is sometimes contaminated. Millions of pounds of government grants were needed before any of this development could begin. This kind of funding is not now widely available and new government guidelines now permit the use of greenfield – open areas of land – for housing development.

Surely the Council decides on any planning applications and you can say no to some of these developments?

It is not that simple. We have to follow national planning guidelines when making a decision on an application, it is not just a case of we don't want any more houses or we don't want development in certain areas. In cases where residents are consulted, there are only certain objections that can be considered in planning decisions.

In many cases our hands are tied. If we continually say no to developers and turn down applications, they will be taken to appeal and the decision will be taken out of our hands and made by an inspector.

One Darlington – May 2016

Local Plan 2016-36

A new plan for long term investment and growth for Darlington is being prepared. It will set out where significant new development should go and will include policies to protect valued environments and heritage.

The local plan will be for the next 20 years, up to 2036. By then, there could be up to 10,000 new homes, creating at least 6,000 new jobs and sustaining a vibrant town centre, high quality built and natural environments, accessible open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and health and education venues.

We think that development and changes in how land is used over the next 20 years should:

- be well planned, high quality and sustainable
- serve everybody's needs
- be located and designed to withstand the effects of climate change
- be co-ordinated with new and improved roads, open spaces and schools etc.
- ensure Darlington remains an attractive place to live, invest in and to visit
- bring economic growth, new jobs and prosperity
- sustain shops, the markets, leisure and commerce in a vibrant town centre
- ensure that Darlington's heritage and key open spaces are protected and cherished

Do you agree?
What else should we be striving for in Darlington's new local plan?

Plan preparation timetable and opportunities to have your say

It will take three years to prepare and adopt the plan. You can find out more about the process, and current and future opportunities to get involved, on the Council's website. Visit our website now to sign up for notifications about the opportunities to have your say. You can already have your say on our draft revised Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out proposals for engaging with people, groups and organisations.

The closing date for comments is Monday 15 August 2016

For all the latest information about the local plan, and to find out about the opportunities to have your say, visit www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan, or call 01325 406724.

All comments received will be considered, and the main issues raised by them will be reported to a Place Scrutiny Committee meeting in the autumn.

Proposals for New Development Now

Until the plan is adopted, decisions on new development will take account of national planning policies, existing relevant local development plan policies and the Council's 'Interim Planning Position Statement' agreed in April. These can all be found on the Council's website, www.darlington.gov.uk/lpps



Work progressing on the Central Park development in Darlington

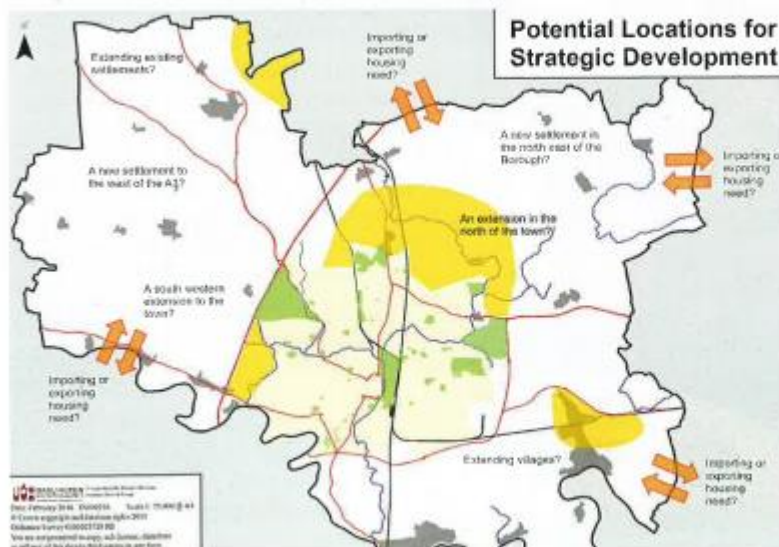


Where should new development go?

There is ample space at established and emerging employment locations like Faverdale, Lingfield, Morton Palms, and central Darlington for the businesses that would provide new jobs.

In contrast, there are few opportunities for new housing in established residential locations, so new neighbourhoods, urban and village extensions and new settlements will all have to be considered alongside brown field regeneration.

If we're going to provide all the housing Darlington needs, an average of about 500 new homes must be built every year throughout the plan period. At current building rates, this is at least 15 separate developments underway all the time. Whilst several of these could be in one or more broad strategic locations, a range and choice of sites and locations will be needed. Initial options and areas of search that are being considered are shown on the map which can be viewed on www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan.



Other themes

Many points need to be assessed through the planning process and we want to ensure Darlington remains an attractive place to live in, work in and visit. These points are set out in an Interim Planning Position Statement which can be found on the Council's website. This takes account of national planning and comments we've received from the public in the past.

One Darlington – July 2016



Last chance to share your vision for Darlington's Future



As part of the first stage of preparing a new local plan, the Council has suggested a vision of what the Borough will be like in 20 years' time:

"Darlington will be a more sustainable community, where a real step change has been achieved in enhancing the quality of life and local environment, and expanding local opportunities for work and for sustainable travel. Those who live in, work in or visit the Borough will enjoy the opportunities and vibrant life of an ambitious city, but within the fabric of a friendly, historic market town with a distinctive atmosphere, surrounded by attractive countryside and villages."

We want to know if you share this vision, or if you have different ideas about the kind of place we should be shaping over the next 20 years.

Which parts of the Borough do you think should be developed, and which parts should be protected?

How should the local plan respond to and reflect the redevelopment and economic growth opportunities for Darlington, specifically highlighted in Lord Heseltine's report *Tees Valley: Opportunity Unlimited*?

The plan will encompass all areas of life in Darlington, from ensuring that Darlington continues to meet the transport needs of its population, to ensuring that every child has access to education and that there are enough businesses and jobs to support the Borough.

You can have your say about the vision until Monday 15 August. We want people to get involved and stay involved throughout the process of creating the new local plan for Darlington.

To respond to this consultation and to find out more about the proposed issues and scope of the new local plan, please visit www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan

One Darlington - September 2017



Another step forward for the new Local Plan

Over the summer, we heard from local residents, businesses, potential developers and others about how they think Darlington should grow over the next 20 years and what sites they think could be used for new development.

The recent consultation on Strategic Issues and Options has now finished. The views you expressed are being considered to help finalise the vision, aims and objectives of the Local Plan. A new local plan is vital to ensure Darlington continues to thrive and provide a great place to live for its growing population.

Popular issues raised in the consultation were the amount of new housing that is being planned and whether the economic growth forecast is likely to materialise. The forecasts of future growth are aspirational, but realistic, because new employment sectors and housing are already appearing.

Concerns were also raised about the ability of the highway network and other infrastructure to cope with the level of growth. Environmental issues were raised; how we will ensure that the Borough's distinctive flora and fauna is allowed to flourish, and that existing green spaces and countryside are protected. Work will be carried

out to ensure that we understand the impacts and can identify improvements.

In response to the call for housing sites, more than 30 potential sites were put forward. Over the coming months, information will be collected to find out which ones could be used to reach the target of 10,000 new homes by 2036. This target includes homes that are already being built and those that have been given approval such as West Park Garden Village and Central Park.

Visit www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan to find out more about what others have said, and keep up to date with what's happening, including when key meetings are taking place and the next opportunity to comment.

Central Park: a prime example

The growing Central Park neighbourhood already includes the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre, the popular Business Central and 108 homes so far. Further housing and development is planned for the brownfield site, and Keepmoat figures show that 84 per cent of the labour comes from within 30 miles of Darlington. The development is providing homes and employment in a sustainable way.

One Darlington - January 2017

The next phase of the local plan

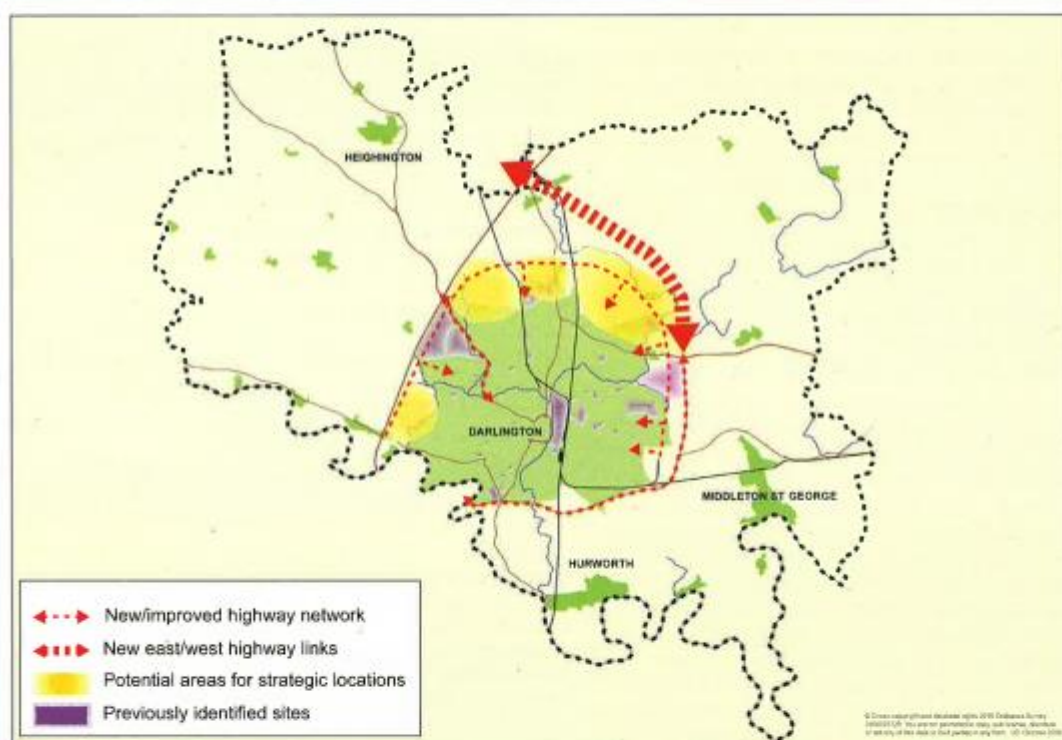
Now that the guiding principles strategic framework of the local plan have been agreed by Cabinet, work has started on developing the detail of the plan.

This includes:

- The policies that will be used to determine planning applications on things like housing, employment, retail, transport, heritage, biodiversity and climate change
- Allocations of land for housing, employment and other uses
- Creation of **masterplans** for strategic development areas
- Development of a robust evidence base to support the plan.

Masterplans

A masterplan is created before a planning application for a site and sets out matters of importance, but not the specific design. It means large areas can be planned in a coordinated way for things like schools, open spaces, community facilities and transport.



This next phase will involve close partnership working with local and national stakeholders such as Highways England, landowners, developers and other interest groups. Consultation with people who live and work in Darlington will also continue.

We already have a good evidence base of work that has been done on previous plans, which will

enable us to prepare a plan much more quickly than usual.

Throughout the development of the plan we will be providing updates on key proposals and consultations on our website. For more information, visit www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan

One Darlington - May 2017



Good progress is being made towards adopting a new Local Plan in late 2018. It will be made up of a written document and a map that will set out where new development should happen to meet our population's needs; and which places and things should be protected and enhanced.

Since we created the vision and objectives last year a number of organisations have come on board to work with us help make our vision a reality. A number of businesses recently got involved in the Town Centre Conference and shared their aspirations and plans for the future of the town centre.

Planning officers are preparing to undertake further surveys and studies over the summer to understand what the Borough is like now and what the effects of new policies could be. As we formulate more ideas and policies, we will be engaging with more stakeholders to hear their views, including local residents.

To keep up to date with the progress of the Local Plan, visit www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan where you will find updates and new information, including opportunities to get involved as the plan progresses.

One Darlington – July 2018

What will Darlington look like in 20 years?

Consultation is underway on the draft Local Plan, a document setting out how and where the new homes and jobs that are needed in the borough over the next 20 years will be located, along with policies to guide development, including the protection of the borough's natural and built environment.

This is YOUR chance to have YOUR say on the proposals and policies that will shape Darlington for the next generation.

The Local Plan has been developed over two and a half years, using population, transport and economic data to give us an idea of what might be needed in the next 20 years.

Darlington's population is growing, with people living for longer and more people living independently. As the economy grows and more jobs are created, more people will be needed to fill these jobs. They will all need homes.

A lot of the focus in the Local Plan is about the housing and employment needs of the borough, and where the council is proposing to allow development over the next 20 years to meet these needs.

The purpose of the Local Plan is to ensure that development takes place in sustainable locations, supported by community facilities and infrastructure, helping the council to restrict building proposals in less suitable locations.

The plan has been developed with input from residents, community groups, external experts and developers.

The aim is to create a framework that will guide planning decisions for the next 20 years and give more certainty, both to residents and the

development industry. It will also be clear to health, education and transport authorities, where development and population growth is expected and what infrastructure is required.

Consultation events

The planning policy team has arranged a series of drop in sessions, at a variety of times and days to give everyone the chance to take part, where they will be available to speak face to face about the Local Plan.

We hope as many people as possible will take the chance to find out more about the Local Plan and find out the facts for themselves, so they can make an informed decision about the plan and its potential impact on the future of Darlington.

**Saturday 14 July, 10am-4pm
Festival of Ingenuity,
Darlington town centre**

**Tuesday 17 July, 2-6pm
Dolphin Centre drop-in**

**Sat 28 July, 11am-3pm
Dolphin Centre drop-in**

**Monday 30 July, 3-7pm
Dolphin Centre drop-in**

There is a website dedicated to the Local Plan, which includes a consultation portal to submit your comments, at www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan

Printed copies of the Local Plan and the policy maps will also be available to view in Crown Street and Cockerton Libraries and at customer services in the Town Hall during the consultation.

Consultation
on the Local Plan is
open NOW – **have
your say before
2 August**

www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

one Darlington 21

Setting out the facts

David Hand, the council's head of planning policy and economic strategy, answers questions on the Local Plan



The council is consulting on a new Local Plan – what is a Local Plan and why do we need one?

A Local Plan is a legal document that all councils must have. It sets out how much development is likely to be needed in the next 20 years across the borough, identifying areas of land that are considered suitable for development.

It looks at where housing development will – and, just as importantly, won't – be allowed, but it also considers things like roads and public transport, as well as the future demand for facilities such as schools, and green spaces.

Why is the Local Plan important?

At the moment we have to follow national guidelines when a planning application is made and often our hands are tied at a local level because the Government wants to encourage house building. That means there has to be very strong planning reasons to turn down a development because otherwise, if it is taken to appeal, the decision can be overruled by an inspector.

The Local Plan brings the power to turn down a development back to the council – if a developer wants to build on a piece of land we've said is not suitable for development, we'll have much more power to say no.

Where will new houses be built?

Across a mixture of sites and locations. Some of which already have permission including Lingfield Point, Central Park and West Park. New sites are primarily located in and around the main urban area of Darlington and the larger villages. Two large strategic allocations are also identified at

Skerningham and Faverdale. The town, as with most settlements, has periodically expanded over the decades since it was established to accommodate changes in population and as a result of economic growth.

Why are so many sites proposed on green field land and not previously developed brown field land?

Whilst the use of previously developed sites is still encouraged in national policy, there are not the financial incentives that previously existed to clean up sites to make them suitable for residential use. The draft plan contains as many brownfield sites as we consider are likely to be developed in the current economic climate, but this will be kept under review. If suitable schemes are proposed on brownfield sites they will continue to be supported in the plan.

To deliver sufficient housing to match Darlington's growth aspirations it is therefore necessary to look at sites that haven't been previously developed and these are often either agricultural land or green spaces on the edges of existing settlements. Assessment of over 350 sites has narrowed down these sites to those that we consider have the most potential to deliver the plan's aims for the next 20 years.

Green space is valuable for numerous reasons including agriculture, biodiversity and people's health and wellbeing and policies are included within the plan to offer protection to these spaces.

Does Darlington have Green Belt?

No. This is a formal designation, typically only found in larger urban areas to prevent settlements merging.

about the Local Plan

But green space is so important for Darlington

We agree, which is why the sites that have been proposed for development in the plan will be expected to provide green spaces to meet the needs of the new residents and/or employees. In particular Skertingham and Faverdale have specific masterplans. For example, if you look at the area outlined as 'development' for Skertingham, you would imagine a sea of houses but that's not the case. More than 45% of the area outlined will be green space.

There are a number of policies dedicated to the environment, open spaces, flood prevention and future energy needs in the plan.

How will the growth of Darlington benefit its residents?

Continuing to grow Darlington's economy will be key to its future over the next 20 years and this has been a key aim of the plan from the outset. An increased population will provide increased investment to support the town centre and other community facilities such as leisure and culture. Additional development also brings additional investment as a result of money paid by developers to spend on improved infrastructure including education, highways, green spaces etc.

Where can I find out more about the Local Plan and have my say?

The planning policy team will be holding a series of public consultation sessions where you can talk face to face with an officer, who will be able to answer any questions you have (see page 21 for the list of dates and locations).

I would urge people to attend these sessions because it's a great opportunity to discuss the plans with officers and find out how to submit your comments for consideration in the final version of the plan.

There's also a lot more information on our dedicated webpage – www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan – which also contains everything you need to know about the Local Plan and access to the consultation portal where you can leave your comments.



Vision for Darlington

How did we get here?

An early stage of the Local Plan development process was to develop a vision for the plan. We held a series of workshops with groups of people who expressed an interest in the Local Plan – individuals, businesses and developers – to talk about the future of Darlington.

Based on the comments received in the summer of 2016, a vision statement was created, which has been used to guide the development of the plan:

"In 2036, Darlington borough will have maintained its identity as a cohesive market town situated amongst countryside and villages, whilst developing its reputation for ingenuity and its status as an economic driver. Its coherent community, natural and historic environment, will continue to be cherished, protected and celebrated.

The opportunities available in Darlington, and its links with other centres, will make the borough an attractive place both for residential and commercial investment, with the borough's needs for housing, jobs and other development being met, supported by new and improved infrastructure and community facilities.

Together with excellent national and regional connectivity and accessibility, these characteristics will mean Darlington continues to be a really good place to live, work and invest."



What happens next?

- 2 August – consultation ends
- Revision of the Plan published for further representation to be made – end of 2018
- Submit Local Plan to Government for examination – January/February 2019
- Public examination of Local Plan – Summer 2019
- Council adopts Local Plan – Autumn/Winter 2019

Consultation on the Local Plan is open NOW – **have your say before 2 August**

One Darlington March 2020

Next steps for Local Plan



Councillors have agreed to move the Local Plan - the legal document setting out the strategy for future development and investment in the borough - on to the next stage.

There will be another, final six week period where anyone – an individual or an organisation – can have their say on the version of the plan the council intends to submit to be examined by an independent Government inspector.

Creating the plan has been a lengthy process, as it provides policies not just for future housing development but also transport, the economy and community facilities like schools and health centres. It also provides guidance on climate change and environmental policies.

All councils must have a Local Plan by law. It gives the council a stronger voice against unsuitable development and provides greater certainty for the public and other public sector organisations, such as the NHS and education authorities, when planning for the future.

A number of changes have been made to the plan as a result of widespread consultation carried out in 2018 while the plan was in its draft stage, as well as changes made as a result of more recent comments.

- Springfield Park has been removed from the Skertingham development area, as has the proposed access point through Springfield Park. Springfield Park will be designated a local green space
- The original site proposed at Blackwell Grange East has been replaced with one that has less impact on Blackwell Grange Hotel and the historic parkland
- Land to the south of High Stell in Middleton St George has been removed
- Policies about biodiversity and sustainability have been strengthened.

How can I have my say?

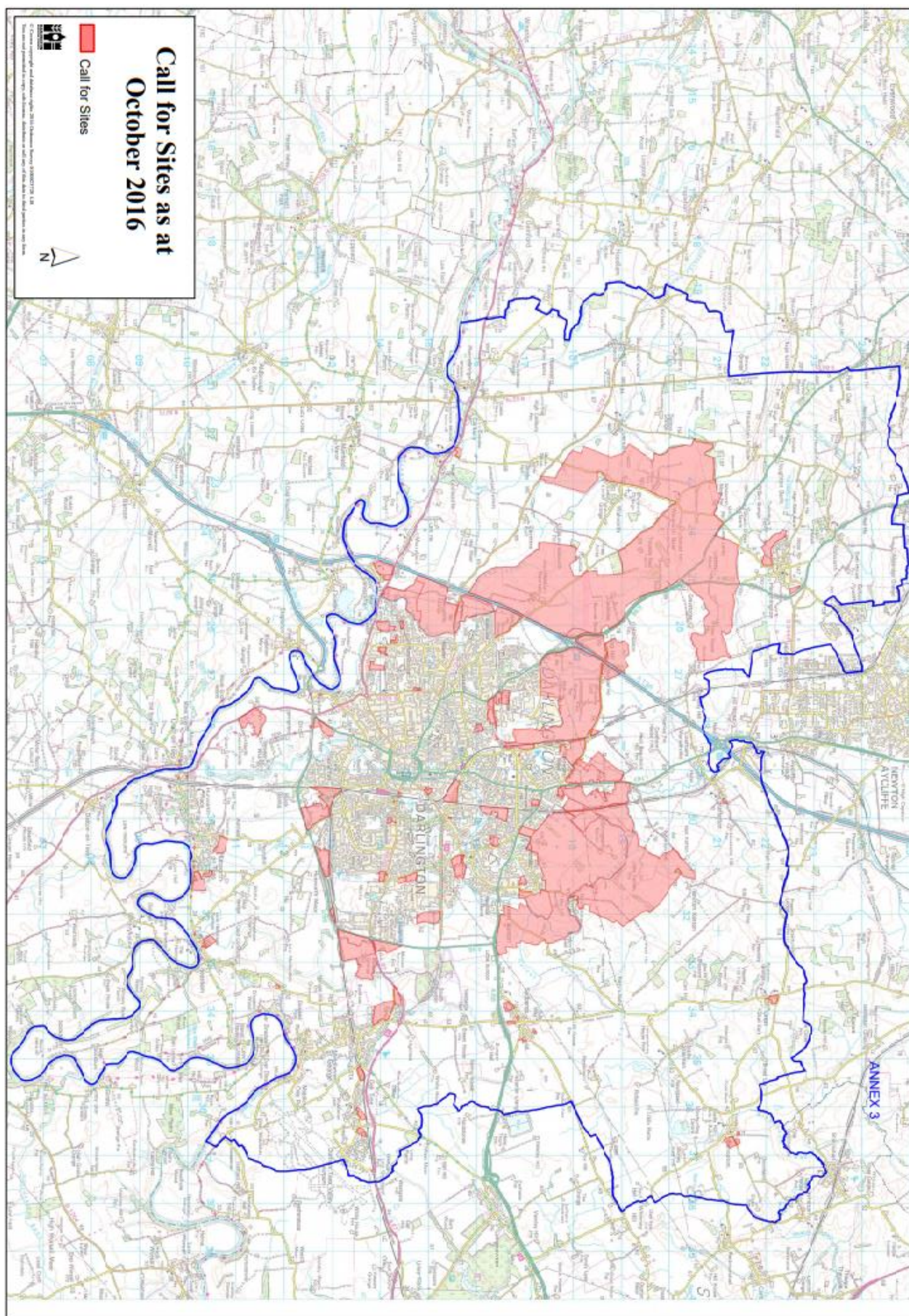
The final six week chance to comment will take place in late spring. Anyone who has previously expressed an interest in the Local Plan will automatically be contacted to take part. All comments received will be passed to the Government inspector for consideration.

Full details of the Local Plan will be available on our website including all information and supporting documents associated with the plan – visit www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan

Sign up to be informed about the next stage of the local plan on our website.

- During the 2018 consultation, more than 1,300 comments were submitted by 292 residents and organisations
- More than 30% of the comments received led directly to a change being made to the proposed plan
- 21% of the comments were neutral, 59% were objections and 20% were supportive.

Appendix C: Call for Sites (October 2016)



Appendix D: Visioning Event Presentations – 4th August 2016

Introduction Slide

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 2.00pm | 1. Introduction |
| | Councillor McEwan, Cabinet member for Regeneration, DBC |
| | Purpose of the day, format, housekeeping (Steve Petch, DBC) |
| | About the Local Plan (David Nelson, DBC) |
| 2.15pm | 2. What do we want Darlington to be like in 2036? |
| | What is visioning, and its role in local planning (David Snelson, ATLAS) |
| | Some visions done earlier (Isabel Nicholls, DBC) |
| 2.40pm | Introduction to the workshop (David Snelson, ATLAS) |
| 2.50pm-4pm | Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ planning for the whole Borough ○ local planning matters ○ social and community issues ○ environmental issues |
| 3.15pm | Tea and coffee |
| 4.00pm | Feedback from groups |
| 4.10pm | 3. What should be considered when deciding which sites should be for new housing in the Local Plan? |
| | Selecting new housing sites (Valerie Adams, DBC) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitated discussion |
| 4.35 pm | 4. Next Steps and close (Steve Petch, DBC) |

ATLAS Visioning Presentation

Successful places
with homes and jobs



A NATIONAL AGENCY WORKING LOCALLY



Darlington 2036 – Planning a better place for all

Event 4th August 2016

ATLAS

David Snelson
Jon Sandford
Alan Millington

Introducing ATLAS

- Advisory Team for Large Applications
- Part of Homes and Communities Agency
- Free/ Impartial advice to help local authorities (and others) deliver quality development
- Facilitators

To secure the timely delivery of high quality sustainable development that responds to local ambitions through effective planning processes, collaborative working and the promotion of good practice

Advisory Team for Large Applications



Local Plan Vision...Why?

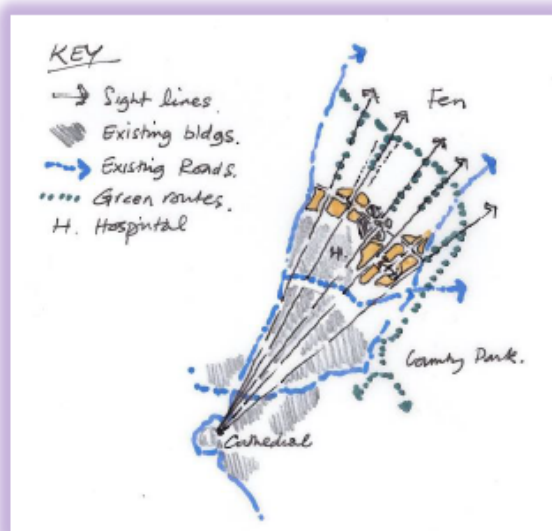
“The Local Plan should make clear **what** is intended to happen in the area over the life of the plan, **where** and **when** this will occur and **how** it will be delivered”. (Para 002, Planning Practice Guidance)

“Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities”. (Para 150 NPPF)



Local Plan Vision...Why?

- Sets out in words and/or diagrams/pictures the kind of place that is required
- Provides the basis and reference point for all discussions and future decisions
- Helps to define more specific objectives
- Helps formulate the basis for collaborative working
- Helps communicate both public and private sector aspirations



A

What should a vision include?

- **Aspirational but realistic**
- Based on a sound understanding of the place and be place specific
- Be based on key data such as that related to population and economy
- Community engagement critical
- Should reflect council and community priorities
- Should give a clear sense of what the place will be like in 20 years time
- Concise and easy to understand



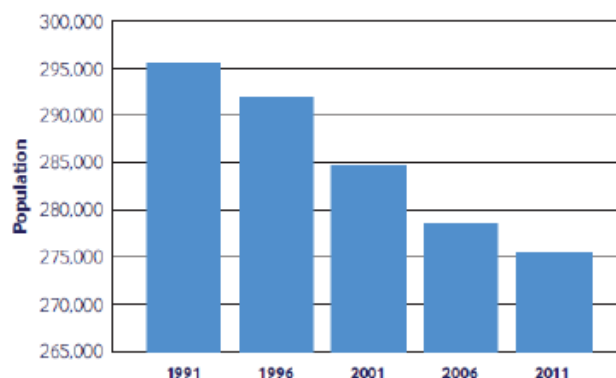
Example - Sunderland



Issues

- Outward migration
- Growth of single person households
- Housing offer/choice
- 2/3 housing in council tax band A

Projected population change in Sunderland 1991-2011



Local Plan Vision (extract)

*“An internationally recognised city which offers a great **quality of life** with an enhanced entrepreneurial and progressive **low carbon economy**... There is an increase in birth rate and in-migration, attracted by the **improved mix of high quality housing** to suit different needs at affordable prices, with more **younger, economically active age groups** are living and studying in the city” (CS Pref Options – 2013)*

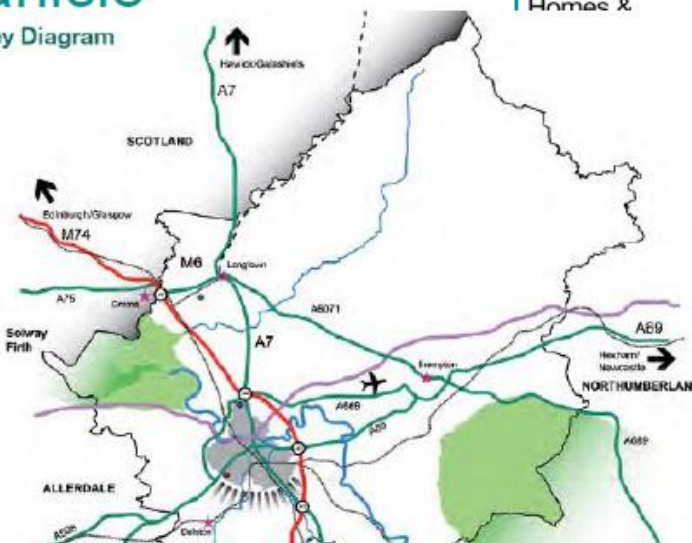
Example - Carlisle

Key Diagram



Issues

- Free standing city
- Remote/isolated
- Traditional manufacturing base
- Retention of skills



Local Plan Vision (extract)

- *"People are attracted to visit, live, work, invest and importantly remain in the District of Carlisle, a key driver of which is the **setting of the historic City**...Key to Carlisle's ongoing success has been an increased supply of new high quality market and affordable homes, the delivery of which has been instrumental in attracting and retaining an economically active workforce and in supporting thriving rural communities. Capitalising on excellent strategic transport connections, including the M6 corridor, rail connections and Carlisle Airport, land has similarly been made available to support the delivery of new business premises and jobs"*

Vision components – Planning for the District



- Creating a successful town
 - Housing choice
 - Employment needs
 - Green spaces/ recreation
 - Transport facilities



Advisory Team for Large Applications

Vision components – Local aspects



- Creating/maintaining good quality places
 - Good quality buildings/spaces
 - Mixed uses
 - User friendly areas of play



Advisory Team for Large Application

Vision components – Social and Community Uses



- Public/private/ community uses meeting peoples needs
 - Education
 - Healthcare
 - Sports/ recreation



Advisory Team for Large Applications

Vision components – Environmental

- Protect and enhance biodiversity/ natural assets
- Opportunities for recreational uses
- Sustainable energy production



Advisory Team for Large Applications



Group workshop

- In groups identify what you think are the priority issues and needs for Darlington over the next 20 years.
- What are the potential options to address these issues/needs?
- How can development make a contribution to resolve these issues and provide for Darlington's needs?

About the Local Plan Presentation



Why are we doing this & why now ?

I will cover.....

- What a local plan is
- Why we are preparing one
- What's involved and how long it will take; and
- When **you** can get involved

What is a Local Plan?

- Provides certainty for residents and investors alike by:
 - Identifying areas for new development and land uses
 - Protecting some land and buildings
 - Setting out requirements on design, layout, etc. for new developments
 - Identifying where new infrastructure is needed
- Promotes sustainable development
- Reflects local ambitions

Why prepare a new Local Plan ?

- To provide certainty
- To promote development opportunities
- Government pressure for an up to date development plan
- The one we did earlier won't cut it.



Why prepare a new Darlington Local Plan?

- To respond to new information on:
 - local housing needs
 - economic growth
- To reflect and respond to updated national policy
- To plan for at least the next 15 years
- To reflect local priorities and ambitions

A successful Local Plan should deliver...

- Well planned, high quality, sustainable places
- An attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in
- Economic growth, new jobs, new housing and prosperity



What's involved? When? Your involvement?

Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036



Get Involved

- Stage 1: Strategic Issues and Scoping
- Comments by 15 August 2016**

www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan
planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk

Development Site Selection Presentation

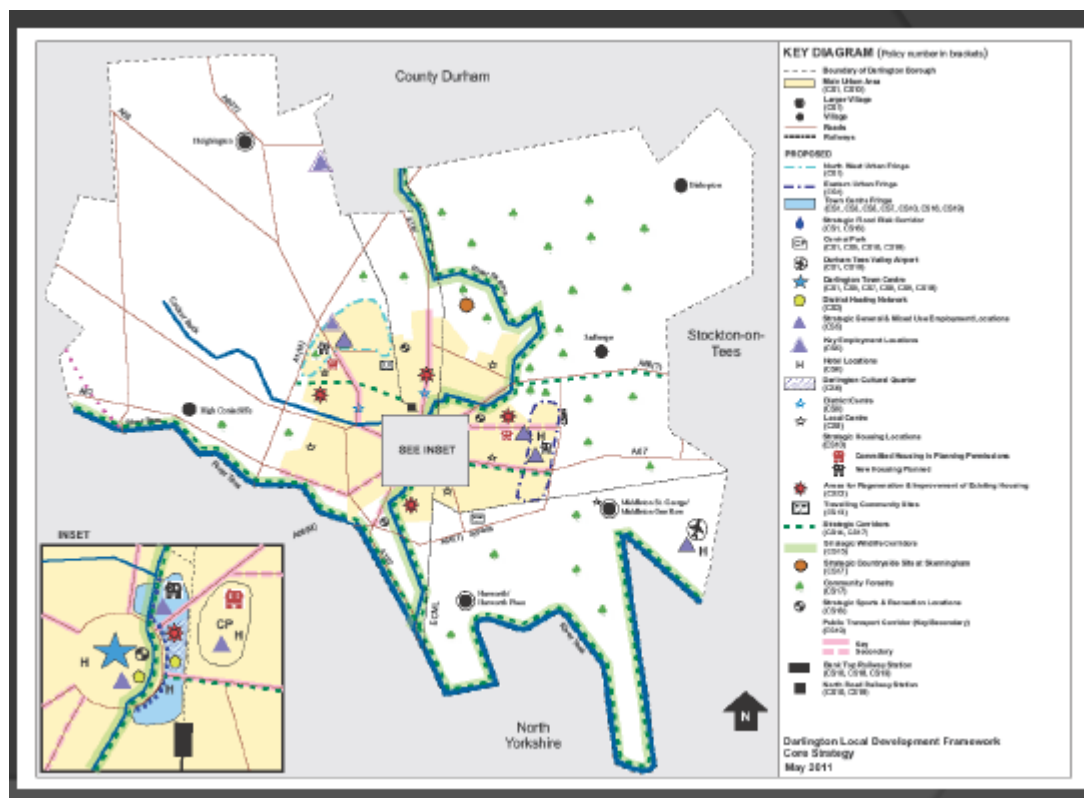


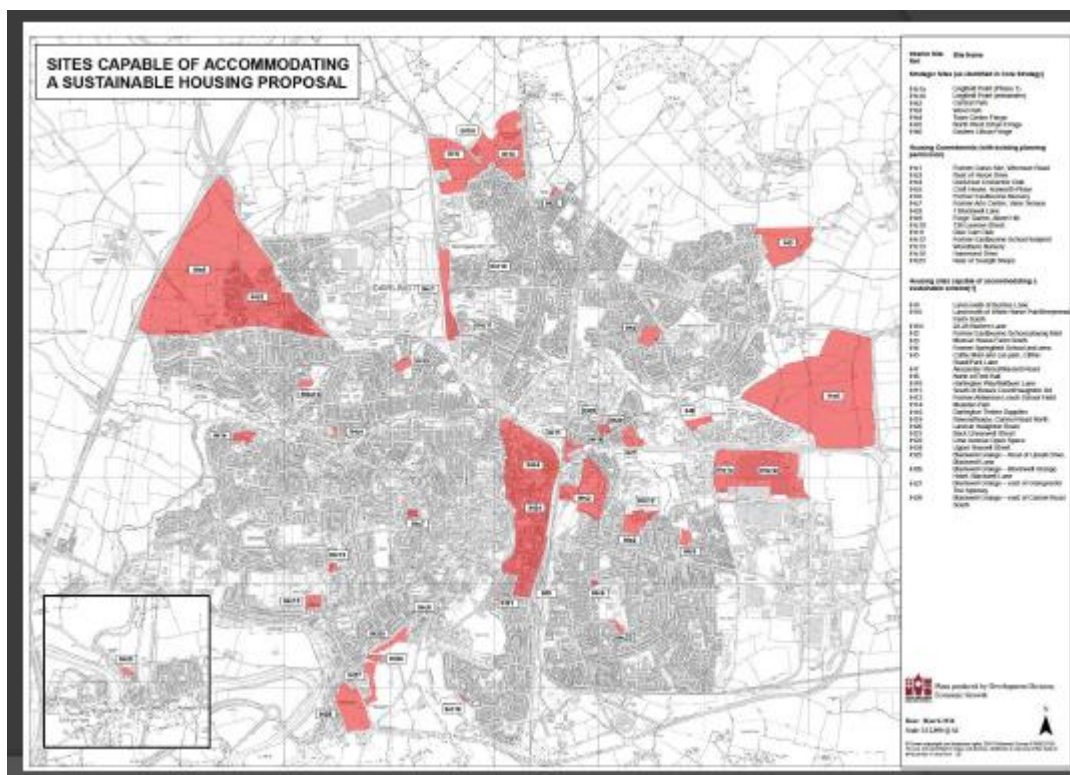
I will cover.....

- How much new land will need to be identified?
- What things does the Council have to take into account in identifying enough land?
- What can you influence?

Amount of new housing land needed

- About 10,000 new homes between 2016 and 2036 (= average of 500 new homes/p.a.)
- Some of the land is already identified.
 - Core Strategy
 - Interim Planning Position Statement
 - Planning Permissions granted





Amount of new housing land needed

- 2,800 new homes on Core Strategy land
- 1,300 new homes on IPPS sites
- About 1,900 new homes already have planning permission
- + allowances for non delivery (10% uplift say)
- of the 10,000 new homes needed, new land for about 4,500 new homes still needs to be identified.

How to select new housing land ?

- Is it suitable for new housing ?
- Is it available ?
- Is it developable ?

Available and developable

- Available = willing seller
Little local ability to influence
- Developable = is it viable, taking account of all planning and other considerations ?
Some local ability to influence

Suitability

- What things can make a site suitable or unsuitable for housing development ?
- Are some suitability matters showstoppers?
- Are there some things that are locally more important than others?

Suitability

- Site and area specific matters
 - Physical & social infrastructure
 - Physical characteristics
- Contribution to what we want the local plan to achieve overall

Next Steps Presentation

What happens next ?

Your feedback today has helped us find out:

- ⦿ how **you** want Darlington to be in 20 years time
- ⦿ the local planning issues that matter to **you**
- ⦿ what **you** think local sustainable development might look like
 - for the Borough as a whole
 - for much needed new development areas

Next couple of months.....

We will be :

- ⦿ Finalising the vision and aims;
- ⦿ Agreeing which broad locations to investigate further as strategic development areas in the new Local Plan;
- ⦿ Working out how much more land will be needed for new homes, and when;
- ⦿ Identifying and programming work on all other planning themes and tasks

Some key milestones

- ⦿ 15th August: closing date for this consultation
www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan
- ⦿ date tbc: Special Place Scrutiny Committee
- ⦿ 11th October: Cabinet

And over the next 2 years or so.....

Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036



Keeping in touch

- www.darlington.gov.uk/localplan
- Register for progress notifications
- Respond to current consultation: closes 15th August
- Regular updates in 'One Darlington' magazine and local & social media.
- Attend public DBC Council meetings – Place Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet

Earlier Visions Presentation

One Darlington

- creating and maintaining a good quality of life by and for everyone in Darlington (One Darlington), &
- making Darlington the best possible place to live and work (Perfectly Placed).

Perfectly Placed:

Is about shaping and improving Darlington as a place by helping to:

- guide investment decisions, spatial planning and care for the environment;
- strengthen the economy; and
- make sure that Darlington has the right homes, jobs, facilities and transport to enable it to thrive.



LDF Core Strategy, 2011

A SPATIAL VISION FOR DARLINGTON

The vision sets out the kind of place we want Darlington to be in 2026, indicating the main features of the development pattern, the types and forms of development and land use change that will be required to get there.

'By 2026 Darlington will be a more sustainable community, where a real step change has been achieved in enhancing the quality of life and local environment, and expanding local opportunities for work and for sustainable travel. Those who live in, work in or visit the Borough will enjoy the opportunities and vibrant life of an ambitious city, but within the fabric of a friendly, historic market town with a distinctive atmosphere, surrounded by attractive countryside and villages'



Darlington Economic Strategy

- A thriving business sector & world class business infrastructure
- Our economic success is underpinned by quality of place
- Key sites at Central Park and the Town Centre Fringe have been developed.



And many other visions.....

- Local Transport Plan Strategy, 2011-26
- Tees Valley Combined Authority's Statement of Ambition – to 2025
- Darlington Green Infrastructure Strategy

....and national policy context to consider

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Ministerial Statements
- Implications of annual Budget and Spending Review
- New legislation

Some things the new Darlington Local Plan could deliver....

- ⦿ High quality, sustainable places
- ⦿ New housing to meet identified needs
- ⦿ Economic growth, new jobs and prosperity
- ⦿ A vibrant town centre, accessible shops & services
- ⦿ Celebrated and protected heritage assets, important landscapes and key open spaces
- ⦿ Joined up planning of transport, social provision and development to meet needs of existing and future residents and businesses
- ⦿ Inclusive and accessible places
- ⦿ Increased resilience to climate change

Appendix E: Middleton St George – Parish Council Priorities

10 July 2017

MIDDLETON ST GEORGE MASTERPLAN – CONSULTATION AND PROPOSALS

Key Requirements

Village Centre. To decongest the village centre by reviewing the retail offering, parking and through route access to other amenities.

Possibilities.

- Provide a small retail hub on a proportion of the central playing field with appropriate parking.
 - Shops, café and perhaps surgery and chemist.
 - Football pitch to be relocated. (Water Park, Station Road, Middleton Lane)
 - Existing children's park and some grass area to remain.
- Some additional short stay parking could be provided in the verges at the top of Woodlands Green.
- Permit parking only on Belle Vue Terrace for residents only.
- Establish parking for the station on the area adjacent to Belle Vue allotments.
- Traffic warden service on irregular basis.
- Alternatively, consider dispersing retail elements away from the village centre.
 - Set up convenience stores or similar in the East and West ends of the village.
 - Retains village playing field.
 - Minimal additional centre parking required.

Roads and Transport. To alleviate traffic load on the central route through the village and enhance bus services in regularity and connectivity to link MSG and other villages with Darlington and Yarm.

Possibilities.

- Consider new access road or western by-pass from village entry at St George's Gate to west side of village.
 - Access to High Stell and Station Road developments from the SW away from Station Road itself.
 - Ideally joining with Neasham Road to keep traffic from the village centre and alternative route to school.
 - Traffic Calming at village entry and key points for speeding ie Middleton Lane.
 - Mini roundabout at Platform 1 to reduce speeding.
- Bus route amended within MSG to include loop to the airport. (5-10 mins max)
 - Subsidize on a trial basis.
 - Alternate the direction to permit in-village travel.

- Improve frequency of service and include evenings.
- Enhance service to link local villages with connections to Darlington and Yarm
- Monitor traffic levels on A67 to Morton Park. Road is already busy at peak times and backing up.
- Maintain roundabouts on A67. Vision poor for access (Sadberge Rd particularly), becoming dangerous.

School. Ensure sufficient nursery and primary school places are available to support growth in development with a longer term view of access to middle and secondary school education.

Possibilities.

- Build a new school to be located on a more accessible site (High Scroggs farm?) to serve MSG and surrounding villages.
 - Consider expansion protection and add Nursery, Middle or even Secondary capacity.
 - Existing school could be taken over for all community activities (Community Hall, Parish Council, Parochial Council, Scouts/Guides etc.
- Build a satellite school fully integrated with St George's Academy but in a location and arrangement to minimize travel bottlenecks.

Doctor's Surgery. Ensure suitable medical services are available to residents. Whilst not the responsibility of the Parish Council or Local Authority it is of major importance to residents.

Possibilities.

- Middleton Hall location not regarded as suitable on a permanent basis unless bus services, footpaths and street lighting issues are resolved.
- Consider a more central location, ie playing field site could be offered.

Community Facilities. Provide community activities for adult and child residents. Existing community facilities are old and some non-existent. Currently inadequate, they will not support further growth in population.

Possibilities

- Build a new Community Centre on the Parish Council Site at the Water Park.
 - A 2-storey building would be needed to provide the appropriate halls, offices and facilities for community events and classes, administration and club activities.
 - On completion, the old Community Association could be demolished for car park and gardens.
- Build a suitable facility for youth and children's activities, Scouts/Guides/Youth Club etc.
- Alternatively, modernize and extend existing buildings.

Leisure. Provide the location and means to support safe leisure activities.

Possibilities.

- Relocate football pitch if necessary, dependent on village centre plan. Several alternative sites possible.
- Develop Water Park. Trim Trail, outdoor gym, skate park etc. Consider draining a reservoir to accommodate activities.
- Improve footpath network.
 - Many paths not maintained.
 - National Cycle Route 14 (Airport – Darlington Ring Road (old S&DR route)) to be resurfaced for foot and cycle use.

Utilities. Ensure the quality and capacity of all utilities are sustainable and improved to account for increased volume.

Possibilities.

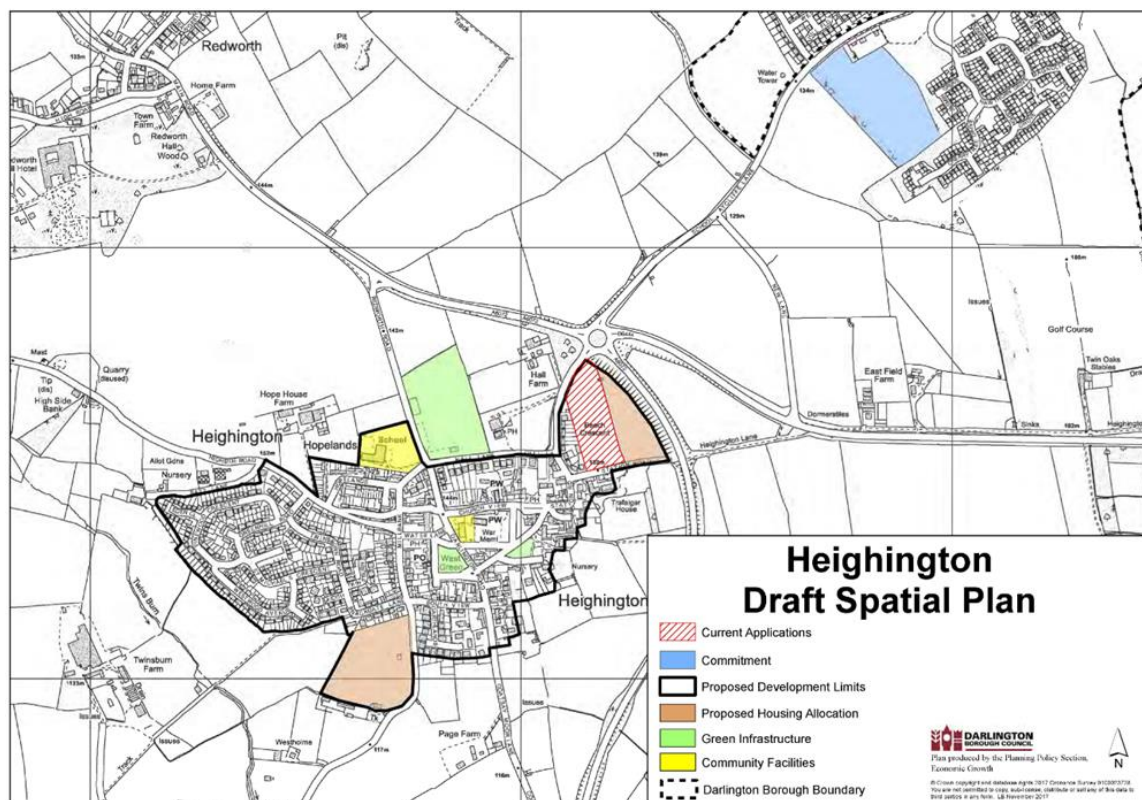
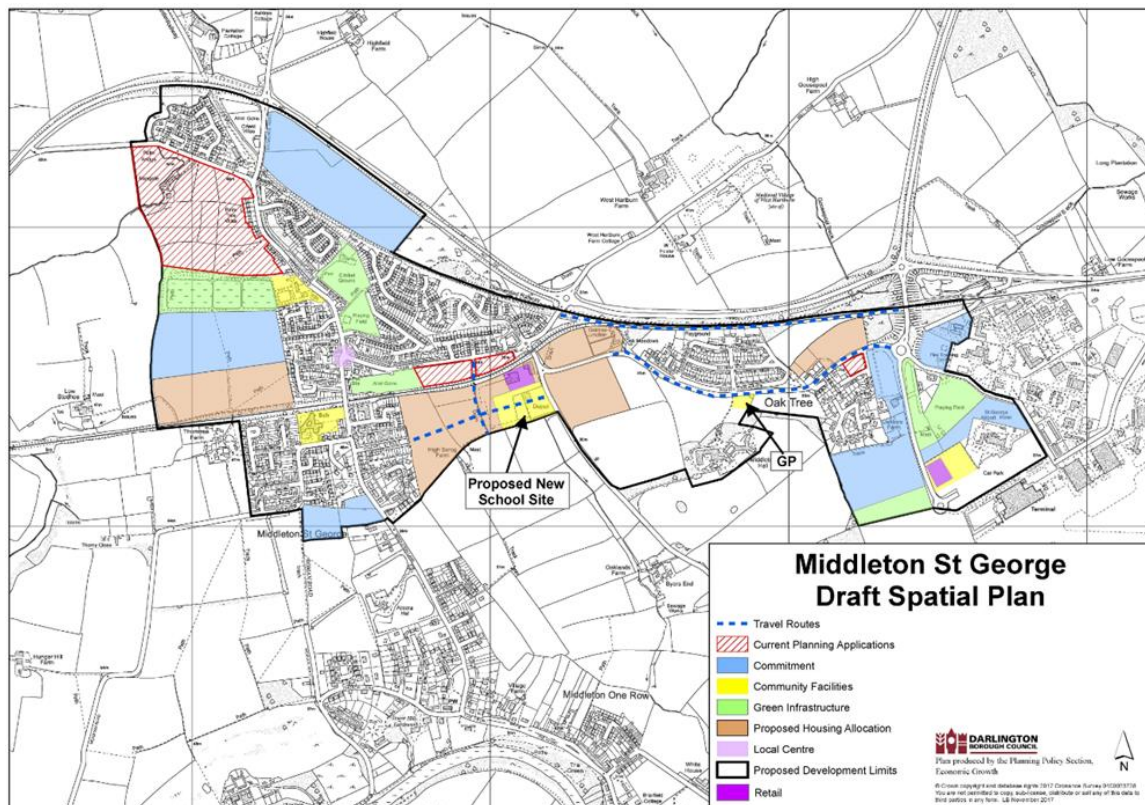
- Ensure gas, electric, water, sewage and surface water drainage plans are comprehensive.
- All new developments to have fibre optic communication connectivity and extended to the rest of the village.
- Mobile phone coverage. Dead-spots, certainly on Western side, require resolution.

Environment and Place-making. To ensure the village retains a pleasant and safe community environment with access to green space.

Possibilities.

- Existing conservation areas to be protected.
- New developments to include green spaces and parks/activity areas on major developments.
- Density and type of housing to be in keeping with adjacent established developments.
- Preference for no 3-storey housing.
- Move away from cul-de-sac planning to enable alternative road and path routes around the village.
- Avoid narrow hidden pathways and garage block areas where anti-social behaviour and littering may occur.
- Ensure a mix of properties for all demographics from starter homes to bungalows for the elderly and/or infirm.
- Improve maintenance of council-managed green areas and paths.
- Provide CCTV monitoring for parks and leisure areas where anti-social behaviour and crime are most likely.

Appendix F: Middleton St George and Heighington Draft Spatial Plans



Appendix G: Middleton St George Draft Spatial Plan Consultation Responses Summary

Total number of representations received – 25

Breakdown

Developers / Landowners – 4

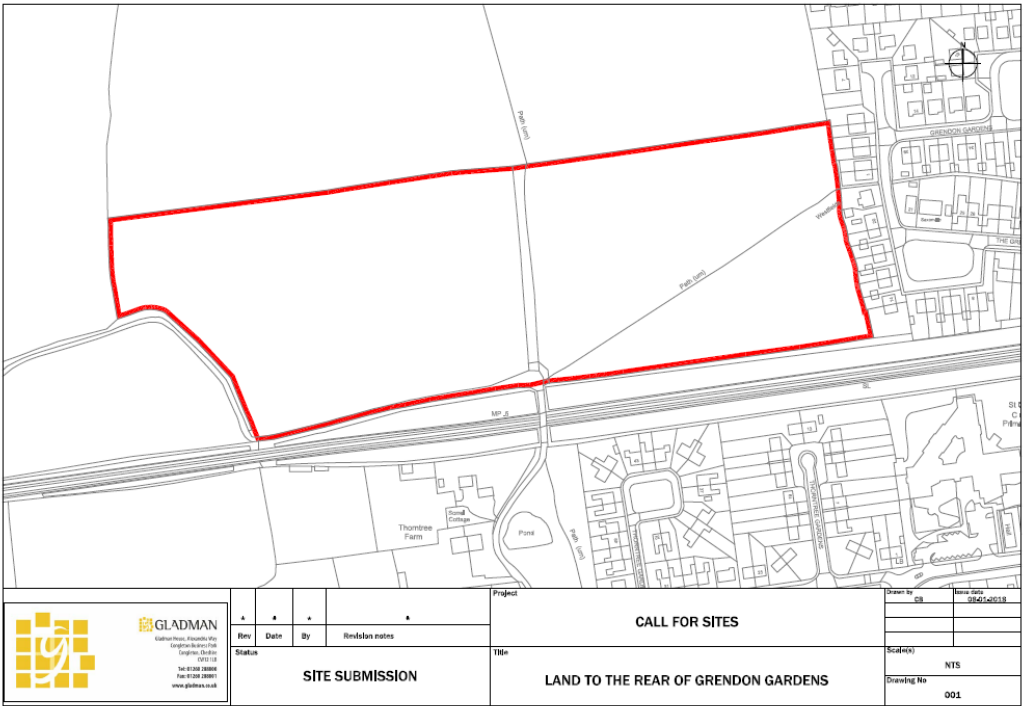
Local residents – 14

Joint ward member response - 1

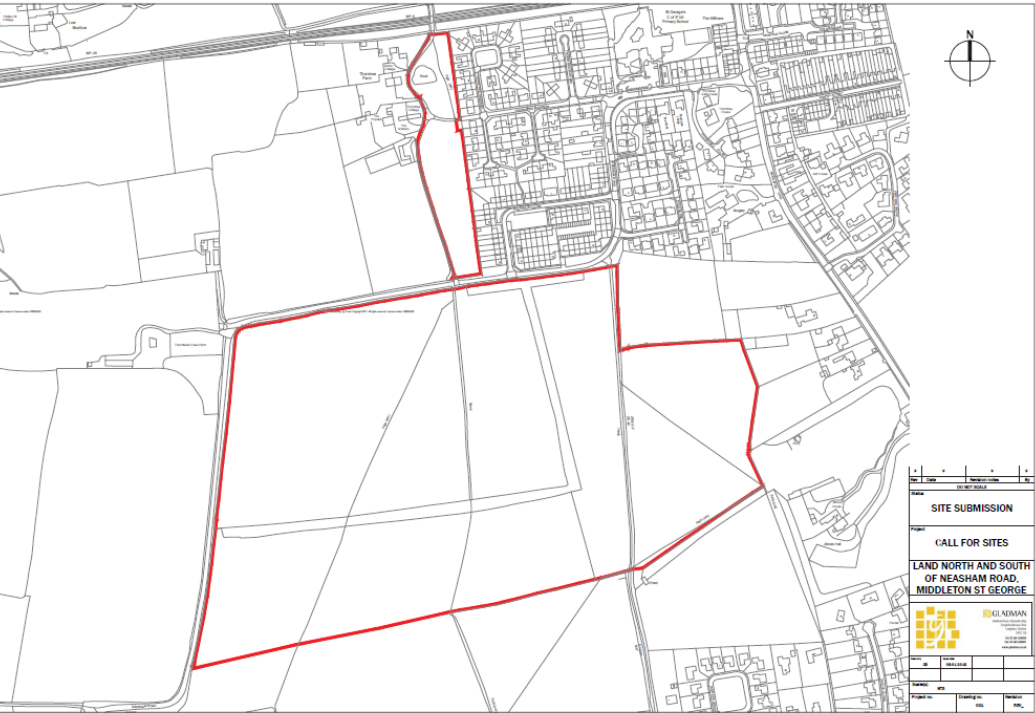
Local Organisations - 6

- **MSG Parish Council**
- **St George's Medical Practice**
- **Friends of Stockton Darlington Railway**
- **Darlington Friends of the Earth**
- **CPRE Darlington**
- **St Laurence Church**

| Name / Organisation | Comments (summary) |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Gladman Developments Ltd | <p>Support given to residential development at the larger villages in the borough.</p> <p>To maximise housing supply, the widest possible range of sites should be allocated so that house builders of all types and sizes have access to suitable land in order to offer the widest range of products. The Council should also be mindful of plan viability.</p> <p>The expansion of the development limits is welcomed however the setting of strict settlement boundaries does not allow adequate flexibility for development to come forward outside the settlement boundary if this is required. Gladman would recommend that future policies should recognise the circumstances in which forms of sustainable development on the edge of settlements (beyond tightly drawn development limits) can be brought forward to address current or predicted shortfalls in housing delivery against objectively assessed needs.</p> <p>It is essential that the Local Plan over allocates housing sites when set against the housing requirement to allow for non-delivery.</p> <p>Middleton St George offers a significant opportunity for growth and the Council should seriously be considering all sustainable development opportunities at the settlement regardless of parish boundaries. Whilst there are opportunities within the parish boundary, there may also be sites which can integrate well with the village which are within adjacent parishes.</p> <p><u>Sites</u></p> <p>Support for the proposed allocation land to the rear of Grendon Gardens.</p> |

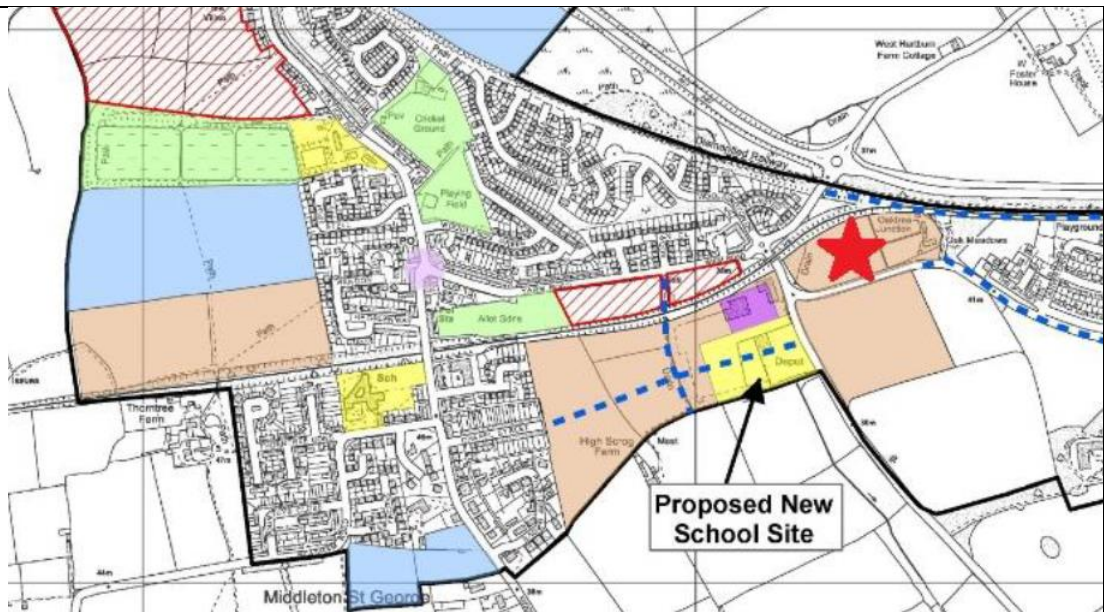


Land to the north and south of Neasham Road submitted for consideration



**Savills
(Agent)
Calmont
Group**

We are supportive of the Council’s proposals to focus growth towards the south-east of the village, in particular land adjacent to Oak Meadows, Yarm Road, Middleton St George (marked with a red-star below), which is both available and deliverable for development within the next 5 years.



Further detail provided as site now subject to planning application for 63 dwellings (ref: 17/01175/FUL). No technical constraints identified on the site.

**Story
Homes Ltd**

We support the adopted planning framework (Core Strategy and Interim Planning Position Statement) that sets out that 'Larger Villages', such as Middleton St George, is a favourable location for housing development alongside urban extensions and previously identified sites that will only meet some of the Borough's identified housing needs. It is therefore of paramount importance that the emerging Local Plan adopts a spatial approach which brings certainty to the larger villages regarding their future sustainable growth.

Fairhurst on behalf of Story Homes submitted an Outline Planning Application for 226 for the erection of up to 226 residential dwelling, a primary school and associated access, landscaping and engineering works with details of appearance, layout, landscape and scale reserved on land at Station Road, Middleton St. George in September 2016 (Ref: 16/00976/OUT).

Following the emergence of the Council's spatial proposals for Middleton St George, which include the provision of a new primary school in a more central location within the village, Story Homes is reviewing its current application proposals. This may involve amending our outline planning proposals for land off Station Road to remove the proposed primary school element to avoid duplication of future education provision in the village should alternative proposals for a school come forwards. This would allow for the delivery of a high quality residential scheme on the land off Station Road.

Story Homes will continue to liaise with the Council and stakeholders in progressing the outline planning application for the site in parallel to the preparation of the emerging Local Plan.

Story Homes considers that land off Station Road, Middleton St George is a sustainable location for residential development (economic, social and environmental benefits of the scheme outlined) and is deliverable in terms of footnote 11 of the NPPF.

We therefore consider that the site should be allocated for residential development in the emerging Local Plan. The allocation of this site will provide certainty for the local community

| | |
|---|---|
| | and will act to boost the active local community within the large village of Middleton St. George and also the Borough of Darlington as a whole. |
| Durham Tees Valley Airport Limited | <p>Given the proximity of the Airport and the village of Middleton St. George, DTVAL considers that it is vital that the planning policy frameworks for both the village and the Airport are prepared in tandem. This approach will ensure the emerging DLP encourages the growth of the village and safeguards the Airport as an important asset whilst fully harnessing its economic growth potential. Consequently, DTVAL wishes to work in partnership with the Darlington Borough Council, and local stakeholders in Middleton St. George, to shape the planning policy frameworks for both the village and the Airport.</p> <p>In light of this, DTVAL has reviewed the draft MSGSP and wishes to make the following observations and suggested revisions:</p> <p><u>(A) Proposed Development Limits and Airport Boundary</u></p> <p>DTVVAL acknowledges that the draft MSGSP illustrates a potential Proposed Development Limit (or “settlement boundary”) for Middleton St. George. The proposed settlement boundary extends to include the main village and the proposed residential allocations; as well as the approved residential and local services centre development at the Airport, the playing fields, the Airport car park, and the St George hotel complex.</p> <p>While DTVAL supports the definition of a revised settlement boundary that supports for the growth of Middleton St George and the Airport, it is concerned about the precise relationship of the proposed boundary with DTVA-related infrastructure and would like to discuss the position in more detail before confirming its position.</p> <p>As a starting point, DTVAL supports the inclusion of the approved residential and the local services centre development (Planning Permission Reference: 16/00578/OUT – see parameters plan at Appendix 1) and the playing fields within the draft settlement boundary for Middleton St, George. Once implemented, these approved developments will operate as a neighbourhood of Middleton St George and therefore it is logical to include them within the village’s settlement boundary for the next plan-period.</p> <p>The Airport’s car park and the St George hotel complex are likely in practice to contribute to both the Airport and the new mixed-use neighbourhood being created. The Airport acknowledges the proposal to include them within the draft settlement boundary but would not wish to support a policy designation that may frustrate their contribution to the Airport. We would therefore request the opportunity to discuss this in more detail once proposed policy provisions are clearer.</p> <p>DTVVAL recognises that this public consultation on the draft MSGSP does not extend to the scope and content of a DTVA-specific policy. However, in advance of the publication draft Local Plan, DTVAL requests the opportunity to meet with the Darlington Borough Council and open discussions on the scope and content of a DTVA-specific policy for the next plan-period.</p> <p><u>(B) Approved Residential Development and Local Services Centre</u></p> <p>DTVVAL welcomes the inclusion of the outline planning permission for the residential and local services centre development (Planning Permission Reference: 16/00578/OUT) as a committed development and its inclusion within the proposed settlement boundary on the draft MSGSP.</p> |

However, for completeness, DTVAL considers that the Proposal Map for the emerging DLP should identify the approved residential and local services centre development and confirm that residential, retail and community uses in these areas are acceptable. This support in the emerging DLP will provide continued planning certainty for developers and ensure the delivery of the housing and local service centre development during the plan-period.

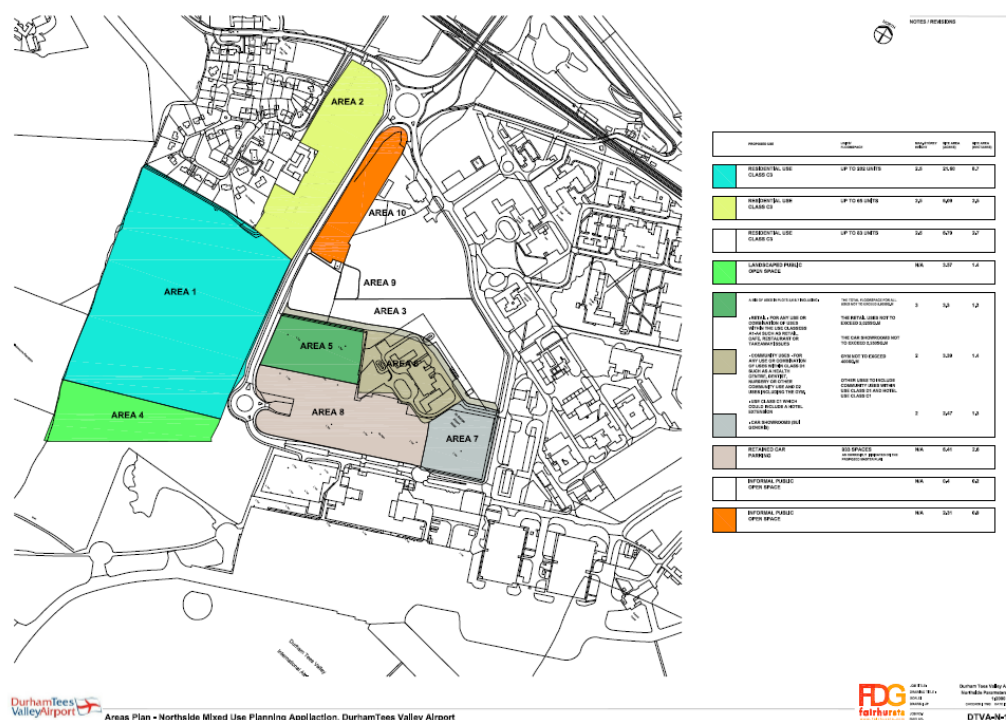
C) Accuracy of draft MSGSP

Following an inspection of the draft MSGSP, DTVAL has noted that the proposed boundaries for the approved residential areas, the local services centre, open space, and hotel extension do not align precisely with the approved planning permission (Planning Permission Reference: 16/00578/OUT).

While DTVAL recognises that Darlington Borough Council does not propose to include the draft MSGSP as part of the detailed Proposal Map (in emerging DLP), it would be prudent to avoid any future doubt by revising the draft MSGSP to be fully consistent with the boundaries approved under the outline planning permission.

In light of this, DTVAL has provided a copy of the approved Parameters Plan (copy provided below) and requests that Darlington Borough Council revise the draft MSGSP accordingly.

Prior to publication of the next stage of consultation on the emerging draft DLP, DTVAL request the opportunity to meet with Darlington Borough Council to discuss these submissions and the future policy framework for DTVA.



St George's Medical Practice

We would broadly support the local plan. Specifically we support expansion in housing allocation locally, as this is required to support a thriving medical practice locally in the face of significant workforce issues affecting sustainability of general practices.

The plan also indicates good pedestrian links between the airport and traditional centres of MSG which currently are inadequate.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Friends of Stockton Darlington Railway</p> | <p>The forthcoming Darlington Local Plan will recognise the heritage value of the S&DR and will put forward policies to protect, enhance and promote its assets. We therefore suggest that the Spatial Plan would be improved if the track bed and adjoining areas of open land, e.g. The Whinnies, are shown as an important element of the green infrastructure of the parish. Within this corridor, the route of the proposed heritage trail for pedestrians and cyclists should be shown.</p> <p>The FSDR will be proposing the creation of a Rail Heritage Hub at Fighting Cocks. This will be one of a series along the whole length from Witton Park to Stockton and will provide a focus of items of interest, information and interpretation and other amenities for the public to enjoy, especially during the 200th anniversary celebrations in 2025. The remains of other trackside features in the parish will be investigated, enhanced and publicised. The hub should be identified on the spatial plan.</p> <p>Finance for the above will be found from a number of sources and funding from the recently announced S&DR Heritage Action Zone will be an important contributor and contributions from developers.</p> |
| <p>Darlington Friends of the Earth</p> | <p>Any housing / residential proposals need to be sympathetic to the existing wildlife and their habitat and promote its longevity. Indeed FoE are keen to understand how wildlife can be encouraged within any proposed development.</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing against their housing requirements. The Council updated its SHLAA on a regular basis up until September 2015, however it has not been updated since then, and so the Council is in breach of the Government's national planning policy.</p> <p>The publication of the Government's consultation on housing need, "Planning for the right homes in the right places" gives a basic calculation for Darlington of 177 dwellings per year as opposed to the 446 per year which the Council is using. This calls into question the whole premise of the number of dwellings required in the borough. More localised demand modelling and a revised way forward needs to be considered.</p> <p>I understand that are now revisions to one of the options to the proposed Northern Relief Road which will act as an enabler for circa 5,000 new homes to the north east of Darlington. I am particularly concerned that this new road will exacerbate traffic congestion in the area and degrade air quality by creating an air pollution corridor. There are alternative options that need to be examined which are less damaging to the environment and the rural villages to the north east of Darlington. Provide a new four way junction off the A1 with the A66 or provide a new cross town link road from the A66 direct to the A1 with four-way access.</p> <p>Middleton St. George experiences very poor public transport links. New housing will only exacerbate car demand and current road congestion. We are concerned with the capacity of the road network, existing NHS services including GP practices and schools to absorb this growth.</p> <p>We would urge ecological surveys to be undertaken in April - June to confirm the current status of all breeding species and to help mitigate and offset the effects of any habitat loss.</p> <p>Development within flood plain areas should be avoided.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| | <p>Over 400 extra homes have received planning approval here since Nov 2015 with 350 new dwellings recently approved (Aug 17) close to the airport. This latest development included a planning condition to impose operational restrictions on the airport. How does this fit with the Tees Mayor campaign to buy back the airport into public ownership?</p> <p>The building of new homes is within close proximity to the Whinnies Local Nature Reserve with its rare grasses and plants. The site holds red and amber listed birds and is good for insects. Whilst we are keen to encourage visitors to our green spaces and local nature reserves we are concerned that building next to this and other local nature reserve (e.g. Maidendale), will increase the risk of disturbance from residents / dog walkers and lead to a loss of biodiversity.</p> |
| St Laurence Church | <p><u>Submission on behalf of the congregation of St. Laurence, Middleton St. George.</u></p> <p>We have an active congregation and regard ourselves as an important component of the village life, both for those who are active practising Christians and others who may only bring us into their lives at special times. Thus, the Church helps to maintain community identity and thereby adds to the well- being of all in the village</p> <p>We lost our Church building some years ago when it was condemned as being structurally unsound and we were obliged to move to, and use, the School Hall for our weekly services with other meetings, events and our offices being in people's homes or, at some additional cost, in one of the other community assets that exist. We therefore have a demand for a Church Centre and, if it proved possible, a new Church Building, to continue and expand our service to the community. Whilst we do not expect to be given land for this purpose by donation, it would be helpful if a site could be allocated for church/community purposes. We have some funds set aside for the acquisition and construction of a Church centre and are prepared actively to seek additional funds once we have a clear project.</p> <p>We believe that such a development could be designed to provide a multi -use building for the whole village. We intend to approach other village organisations to discuss their requirements. Lately we have been in conversation with the Parish Council and discussed with them our needs.</p> |
| MSG Parish Council | <p>Transport and Infrastructure</p> <p>We would ask that the following be considered in the context of the MSG masterplan, as these points were included in the presentation at the workshop on 20th July 2017, following our public consultation.</p> <p>Bus route amended within MSG to include loop to the airport (which would also serve the relocated GP Surgery). (5-10 mins max addition to bus schedule)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidize on a trial basis. • Alternate the direction to permit in-village travel. • Improve frequency of service and include evenings and Sundays • Enhance service to link local villages with connections to Darlington and Yarm <p>Monitor traffic levels on A67 to Morton Park. Road is already busy at peak times and backing up.</p> <p>Maintain roundabouts on A67. Vision poor for access (Sadberge Rd particularly), becoming dangerous.</p> |

Improve footpath network.

- Ensure PROW are registered and maintained
- Ensure that there is footpath provision alongside roads throughout the village
- National Cycle Route 14 (Airport – Darlington Ring Road (old S&DR route) to be resurfaced for foot and cycle use.

Utilities.

- Ensure the quality and capacity of all utilities are sustainable and improved to account for increased volume.

Possibilities.

- Ensure gas, electric, water, sewage and surface water drainage plans are comprehensive.
- All new developments to have fibre optic communication connectivity and extended to the rest of the village.
- Mobile phone coverage. Dead-spots, certainly on Western side, require resolution

Environmental and Place making

We would ask that the following be considered in the context of the MSG masterplan, as these points were included in the presentation at the workshop on 20th July 2017, following our public consultation.

- Ensure a mix of properties for all demographics from starter homes to bungalows for the elderly and/or infirm.
- Improve maintenance of council-managed green areas and paths.
- Provide CCTV monitoring for parks and leisure areas where anti-social behaviour and crime are most likely.
- Density and type of housing to be in keeping with adjacent established developments.
- Preference for no 3-storey housing.
- Avoid narrow hidden pathways and garage block areas where anti-social behaviour and littering may occur.

Further, with regard to conservation, we would like to see the conservation of the former S&D Railway route, and all the heritage artefacts. Therefore, the Parish Council are in agreement with, and support, the representation by the Friends of Stockton & Darlington Railway.

In addition, we would stress that the conservation of all heritage artefacts is important. This includes the Roman Road

Also, vitally important, are the green areas such as The Whinnies Nature Reserve and the Water Park. We would like to see the Water Park listed as a Nature Reserve.

Designated Green Spaces

In accordance with paragraph 77 of the NPPF, the Parish Council wishes to have a number of green spaces within the village designated as green spaces.

The following list may not be exhaustive, as there may be other spaces which we may wish to designate:

- The Water Park
- The Front at Middleton One Row

- The Playing Field at Station Road
- The Allotments at Sadberge Road
- The Roman Road (Cade's Road)
- The fields in the green gaps along Middleton Lane
- The recreation field at DTVA

Boundaries and Green Gaps

Regarding boundaries and green gaps, the spatial plan retains the gap between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row. It should also maintain the gap between Middleton St George and Oak Tree/Airport, and the proposed development boundary should be altered to ensure this.

MSG Emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Whilst the NDP is unable to progress at the moment, it did reach the Second Pre-draft stage. A certain amount of information can still be used to inform the present Consultation on the MSG Spatial Plan. The draft version of NDP should be considered.

Community consultation has revealed that Middleton St George has a drainage problem, including foul drainage black spots in locations such as Middleton Lane. Some residents have started to study the issue in detail and have engaged with Northumbrian Water, which considers that the local drainage and sewerage infrastructure to be adequate and fit for purpose. The residents view is that there are regular and repeated instances of blocked drains, with raw sewage overflowing on to highway, to the detriment of environmental health. Local residents believe therefore, that the system is no longer fit for purpose and requires to be upgraded. They are also very concerned that further developments will be permitted without any improvements to an already unsatisfactory situation. Local attitude towards new development proposals is often openly hostile, in part, because of perceived sewerage capacity problems. Improvements will have to be the subject of negotiation with Northumbrian Water and any new development will be dependent upon the proven capacity of drains and sewers as well as improvements to the system, where required. If practicably possible, new developments will be required to provide independent justification that their proposals will not further compromise an already unsatisfactory situation, because local people are reluctant to believe the advice given by Northumbrian Water.

Evidence will be required from applicants that their development proposals will not adversely impact upon the drainage and sewerage infrastructure of the settlement. When required, creative solutions will be required from developers to avert flood risk from surface water and SUDS systems may be required to address foul sewerage.

Policy Justification: In order to address genuine community concern about the number and frequency of flooding and pollution incidents, residents believe that developers need to provide independent evidence, above that provided by Northumbrian Water, that their proposals will not accentuate existing problems.

Housing Numbers and "Sustainable Village"

A total of 726 houses have been granted planning permission in the village since, and including "Gladman" at Sadberge Road, which would mean at least double the number of vehicles (and if those that are coming through the planning process are granted permission, the figure would come to 1,657 +, which would mean at least 3,314 vehicles (an underestimate) + 2 convenience stores (with extra private and commercial vehicles)).

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| | <p>Darlington Borough Council's estimated housing target is 492 per year. Middleton St George has already supplied almost two years' worth of the housing supply for the whole of Darlington since Gladman. If the all of the housing developments coming through the planning process are granted permission (i.e. 1,657+), the village will have supplied well over three years' supply for the whole of Darlington. This, whilst, according to CPRE calculations, only 493 (one year's supply) have been granted permission over the same period in the rest of Darlington.</p> <p>Two of the Key Sustainability Factors for Middleton St George are no longer valid (ref. Darlington Borough Council's 2016 Interim Planning Position Statement); the GP Surgery is no longer located within 1km of the centre of the village (in fact it is 1.3 miles from the centre of the proposed development site), and the bus service, as well as only being an hourly service weekdays until 6pm, does not serve the GP Surgery in its new location (we continually request an improved bus service, but so far in vain). We need, in order of priority (a) an improved route to take in the GP Surgery, (b) restoration of evening and Sunday service (c) restoration of half-hourly service, and (d) route linking other villages and Yarm.</p> <p>The Parish Council consider that it is extremely unjust to expect Middleton St George to supply three times as many houses as the rest of Darlington, especially given the fact that, now that the Council has published its Brown Field Land Register, there is the potential for developing that land prior to doing so on greenfield sites, as recommended by the Government, and also taking account of the fact that Middleton St George now fails two of the "sustainable village" criteria.</p> <p>We are of the opinion that, in light of the above, the "sustainability" of the village should be re-evaluated, and therefore we should not be asked to accept more housing.</p> <p>We consider that it is essential that DBC communicates with us on this issue as early as possible.</p> <p>We look forward to further information with regard to the timetable and other elements of the Consultation process, in order to be able to count on a finally agreed development limit to the village that will be able to be relied on in planning terms.</p> |
| Ward Members Joint Response (Cllr D. Jones, Cllr B. Jones & Cllr York) | <p>Housing Development</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>To protect the village from inappropriate development and ensure that the needs of the present and future residents are provided for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing development should only take place at the extremities of the village where vehicular access out of the village is directly onto the A67 at St Georges Gate or the roundabout to the East with no through flow of traffic through the centre of the village Housing development should cover the needs of the community and not just the developers. There should be an appropriate mix of housing types to include flats, starter homes and affordable homes, together with special needs accommodation and elderly person's bungalows and housing for those with disabilities and special needs subject to it meeting a proven need and being on a sustainable site and does not compromise the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not good enough for the council to accept cash in lieu of affordable - even if they do use the cash to build affordable elsewhere, • Housing developments should be sensibly planned with aesthetically well designed properties. Developments should incorporate sufficient off road parking to cope with modern needs and should incorporate good green open spaces. • Development should be structured so that it is spread over a prolonged period. We currently have several very large developments approved which will cause the growth of the village to be too rapid and will put too much strain on facilities. <p>Durham Tees Valley Airport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any further development at the Airport should be to expand commercial activities (e.g. small business units) to generate employment and every encouragement for continued use as a workable airport. <p>Village Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village facilities need to be expanded - additional schooling is essential (ideally with a single site school). Further, secondary schooling requires considerable thought. Even with current approved plans, we must be moving to a point where an additional secondary school would be justified. • Additional (better quality) local shopping facilities are needed to reduce the need for travel outside the village. A 'local' supermarket, butcher, baker perhaps. <p>Roads and Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transport infrastructure needs to be improved. Traffic flow around the centre of the village (particularly by the Square and pharmacy) needs tackling as does the roundabout at Morton Palms - Peak time traffic lights perhaps? Additionally, the airport needs to be...an airport. <p>Conservation Area and Green Open Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, protect and enhance green spaces and ensure that these are of high quality and allow the community to use them for health and wellbeing. In pursuit of this ensure that the landscape character is maintained and enhanced and that the coalescence of Middleton St George with adjacent settlements is prevented. • The conservation area must be ...conserved with no development permitted. • The open spaces which define areas within the village must be maintained - e.g. between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row and between Middleton St George and Oak Tree • Additional leisure facilities should be provided - Additional sports facilities - open up the cricket club to create a "Recreation Hub" for all type of sport, age group and gender this club is a valuable part of Middleton St George history having been in existence over 100 years but now badly in need of refurbishment to accommodate the growing population and contribute to the quality of life for all age groups. • Existing footpaths must be preserved. The old railway track will be like walking through a housing estate now so what we have left needs preserving/enhancing |
| Local Residents | <p>Summary of comments submitted:</p> <p>General housing and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The potential extent of new development is too numerous and will change the nature of the village. - An appropriate mix of housing should be provided. There is a lack of affordable homes and suitable housing for the elderly. |

- Concerns that the village is being asked to bear a disproportionate share of Darlington's housing need. 10% of the 10,000 homes have already been granted in the village.
- Concern regarding employment forecast and the uncertain impact of Brexit.
- Housing market is relatively stable and no shortage of a particular class of housing.
- Clarification required how housing target is derived.
- Clarification required on how homes built since 2016 (beginning of plan period) contributes to meeting targets.
- Brownfield land should be utilised for new homes.
- Consideration should be given to the airport for a 'new town' site.
- Phasing of building new homes is important. New design and technologies may become apparent / available later in the plan period.
- No information provided on what kind of homes would match needs and how much demographic analysis underpins this.

Highways & sustainable transport

- Road infrastructure is not adequate.
- Pedestrian safety a concern.
- Parking provision is an issue in the village particularly within central areas.
- Traffic congestion already problematic.
- Highway safety and traffic concerns, particularly around the lorry park site, Yarm Road, Greenway / Middleton Rd junction, Station Rd and Morton Park junction.
- Poor / no pedestrian links and lighting in areas adjacent to the lorry park site.
- Concerns with vehicle access to the sites particularly via The Greenway, Grendon Gardens and High Stell. Suggestion that a new access and road should be provided from the west to these sites and linking to the A67.
- Less concern with sites around the edges of the village. Considered to have less of an impact on highways.

Infrastructure

- General infrastructure constraints.
- The plan's infrastructure proposals are piecemeal.
- Surface and foul water implications. The village is susceptible to drainage issues.
- New community facilities, services and recreation required.
- No church in Middleton St George. Worship currently takes place in the primary school.
- Local primary school oversubscribed.
- Clarification required over how new education provision will be delivered, including secondary facilities.
- The latest application from Story Homes outlines that they will have school facilities on the site which is not shown on the Council's draft plan.
- The airport permission also includes a primary school, why is the Council proposing another in the village.
- Concern regarding location of new school site in the draft plan.
- Location of GPs surgery inconvenient in relation to where most people live. Engagement needed between planners and GPs.
- Clarification required on how planning obligations will be requested from development sites.
- If proposals are granted planning permission, planning obligations should support required infrastructure.
- The plan should protect the water park and consider its management. Consideration should also be given to its rural nature, elevated position and links to the wider area.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Durham Wildlife Trust are now managing the Whinnies Nature Reserve. They are looking for funding for fencing etc as this site is used daily by villagers. Could 106 monies be given to support the site. <p>Heritage and Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separation between the two settlements Middleton St George and Middleton One Row supported. - Will the protection of the conservation area be upheld, recent decision suggests not. - Objection to the additional linear extension of the site at High Scrog Farm by Steve Hemsondhalgh & Associates, which is not included on the Council's draft spatial plan. The extension will impinge on the views from Middleton Lane across the fields and set a precedent for infilling between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row. <p>Development Limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development limits welcomed as development so far appears uncontrolled and sprawling. <p>General Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criticism that the consultation period was over the Christmas period. - Residents feel that consultation to date has not been respected with no compromises made to schemes. - Some support for the draft plan. - Concern over the social cohesion of the community for both existing and new residents. - Concern over the accuracy of the site submission boundaries for land to the rear of Pinetree Gardens. Land registry Plans are unclear. - Better explanation needs to be provided with regards to the 'call for sites' plan. - Issue of homes being sold with a ground rent and maintenance charges. This causes problems for future homeowners. The planning authority should only give consent to developers who don't adopt this practice. |
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Appendix H: Heighington Draft Spatial Plan Consultation Responses Summary

Total number of representations received – 28

Breakdown


Developers / Landowners - 4


Local Residents – 22

Local Organisations - 2

- **Friends of the Earth, Darlington**
- **Campaign to Protect Rural England, Darlington**

| Name / Organisation | Comments |
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| Savills (Agent) Mr D. Porterfield | <p>As part of the consultation on the Draft Spatial Plan for Heighington, we would like to propose a new site to be considered for residential development in the village. Please find enclosed a Location Plan identifying a parcel of land that is within sole ownership of our client.</p> <p>Our clients land is approximately 1.03 hectares in size and is located on the eastern edge of Heighington Village. It is well defined by strong physical boundaries. Existing residential development is located to the west, the A6072 (Bypass) bounds the site to the east, and Station Road is located to the north. The south of the site is also defined by a fence, established hedgerow and some mature trees. As such, the site is well bounded and any future development would be well contained by the bypass, avoiding any future urban sprawl to the east.</p> <p>The larger villages have been identified in the Core Strategy as the next most favourable location for housing Development to that of the main urban area of Darlington Town. Our clients land is therefore considered a prime site to accommodate future residential development to meet the identified need of the village / local area.</p> <p>Site is in a sustainable location and no physical constraints identified. Although the site is in the conservation area this should not preclude development. Recent planning consent ref 16/00820/FUL provided as a comparison. The site is considered to be suitable, available, achievable and deliverable to accommodate residential development.</p> |

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| |  <p>This plan is published for convenience only. Although it is thought to be correct, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed.</p> |
| <p>Savills (Agent) Mrs McKinlay</p> | <p>I act on behalf of Mrs McKinlay who owns and occupies 16 Snackgate Lane, Heighington – edged blue below. The land edged red is garden space belonging to Mrs McKinlay and directly adjoins 16 Snackgate Lane. Both the red land and blue land are within the same curtilage, enclosed by a boundary wall and mature trees.</p> <p>We would support an amendment to Draft Spatial Plan which incorporates the red-land within the development limits.</p> <p>The red land is considered to be suitable for residential development in terms of its relationship to neighbours, access (which can be easily accommodated from Snackgate Lane) and proximity to local services. The land is extremely well screened by views to the south by existing boundary treatment and mature trees and hedgerows (which could be retained as part of development scheme).</p> <p>The McKinlay family wish to develop a bungalow on the land in order to free-up the existing family sided host-dwelling for occupation by Mrs McKinlay’s daughter who would provide care and support for Mrs McKinlay into later life.</p> <p>The proposed bungalow represents a suitable development solution for the site and including the site within the development limits would allow for logical development of a windfall site thus making efficient use of land within the village and reliving pressure for the same accommodation elsewhere within Heighington.</p> |

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| <p>Fairhurst (Agent) Bellway</p> | <p>This representation will act to confirm the commitment of Bellway Homes to the delivery of residential development on land to the west of Walworth Road and support the allocation of the site within the Draft Spatial Plan, alongside supporting the principle of growth in the village outlined in the Draft Spatial Plan.</p> <p>Bellway support the principle that sites for housing within larger villages must be identified to ensure that the need for housing in the borough is met.</p> <p>Current policy position in Core Strategy and Interim Planning Position Statement supports the growth of the village. Suitability of the village for residential development summarised in terms of access to services and sustainable transport links.</p> <p>Bellway are aware that in order to facilitate any significant housing growth in the village the existing primary school would require expansion with adjacent parking and recreational facilities identified for improvement.</p> <p>The site subject to this representation is considered to form the most logical extension to the village. The development of the site would form a modest expansion of the village while ensuring that the development does not extend the village further to the east or west. To the south of the site lies an existing barn conversion with the proposed extension of the village to the south not extending the village any further to the south than this existing residential development.</p> <p>Bellway can also confirm that a range of technical surveys have been undertaken including an ecology appraisal, noise assessment, geophysical survey and tree survey which demonstrate that the development of the site is achievable and will not conflict with planning policies which aim to protect the built and natural environment.</p> <p>In respect of discussions undertaken during the plan-making process, pre-application discussions and the progression of an imminent planning application and associated technical documentation, there is also certainty that the development will come forward should planning permission be granted and/or a positive allocation be received. In this regard Bellway can also demonstrate that the site is 'deliverable' in terms of footnote 11 of the NPPF in that it is available, suitable and achievable.</p> |

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| | <p>Bellway support both the principle of the growth of the village of Heighington and the allocation of land west of Walworth Road for residential development.</p> |
| <p>PlanArch Design Ltd (Agent)</p> | <p>Whilst the principles set out in the Council's approach to a spatial plan for Heighington, and the need for development in the larger villages, is fully supported, the solution for new housing on the south side of the village comes across as almost one of planning by accident or default, rather than logical, proactive forward planning. The proposal for the south edge of the village gives the impression of being only half thought through, responding solely to what the developer is offering, rather than providing a more consolidated and comprehensive planning solution both visually as well as pragmatically.</p> <p>Land is potentially available for consideration immediately adjacent, on its western side, to the proposed housing allocation on the southern edge of the village. In the short term, an area of the field west of the proposed allocation is available for development in association with the allocated land, this additional area providing for a rounded-off solution to the development area, rather than the present solution of the proposed allocation appearing something of an appendage attached to the village's southern edge.</p> <p>Not only does this additional area provide a more visually acceptable solution, it also offers opportunities for more appropriate connectivity with the village and with the surrounding countryside, particularly via Snackgate Lane and the routes connecting to this well-used footpath. The proposed allocation appears to lack an attractive level of connectivity.</p> <p>In the longer term and for appropriate forward planning, further areas of land could be considered for the future development of the western side of the village, again offering environmental opportunities as well as simply development potential, but it is felt these areas are not for immediate consideration, although on the face of it, they do offer what could be argued more logical planning solutions than the somewhat random and arguably unsustainable development recently approved at nearby School Aycliffe.</p> |
| <p>Darlington Friends of the Earth</p> | <p>Any housing / residential proposals need to be sympathetic to the existing wildlife and their habitat and promote its longevity. Indeed, FoE are keen to understand how wildlife can be encouraged within any proposed development.</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing against their housing requirements. The Council updated its SHLAA on a regular basis up until September 2015, however it has not been updated since then, and so the Council is in breach of the Government's national planning policy.</p> <p>The publication of the Government's consultation on housing need, "Planning for the right homes in the right places" gives a basic calculation for Darlington of 177 dwellings per year as opposed to the 446 per year which the Council is using. This calls into question the whole premise of the number of dwellings required in the borough. More localised demand modelling and a revised way forward needs to be considered.</p> <p>I understand that are now revisions to one of the options to the proposed Northern Relief Road which will act as an enabler for circa 5,000 new homes to the north east of Darlington. I am particularly concerned that this new road running parallel to the A1150 and the new housing development will exacerbate traffic congestion in the area and</p> |

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| | <p>degrade air quality by creating an air pollution corridor. There are alternative options that need to be examined which are less damaging to the environment and the rural villages to the north east of Darlington. Provide a new four-way junction off the A1 with the A66 or provide a new cross town link road from the A66 direct to the A1 with four-way access.</p> <p>Heighington sees a half hourly bus service and an hourly rail service between Darlington and Bishop Auckland. New housing will only exacerbate car demand and current road congestion. We are concerned with the capacity of the road network, existing NHS services including GP practices and schools to absorb this growth.</p> <p>We would urge ecological surveys to be undertaken in April - June to confirm the current status of all breeding species and to help mitigate and offset the effects of any habitat loss.</p> <p>Development within flood plain areas should be avoided.</p> |
| Campaign to Protect Rural England, Darlington. | <p>CPRE Darlington is deeply concerned at proposals for additional housing sites in Heighington:</p> <p>The additional sites if developed will represent a major increase in the number of dwellings and it is questioned whether the local facilities and services can cope.</p> <p>CPRE questions whether the number of houses Darlington Borough Council is planning for are required. However, this is a difficult topic to comment upon as at the time of this consultation on the Draft Spatial Plan for Heighington the Council is currently working on this figure. We understand the council is planning for substantially more than the 177 houses per year as proposed in the Government's "Right Homes Right Place" consultation. We consider that the lower figure proposed by the Government is the way forward and consider this can be absorbed within the urban area and not require further expansion of the villages.</p> <p>There are particular concerns about the site to the south of the village. Depending on the elevations and the precise design of any development there is a possible potential for buildings to be visible from a great distance in view of the village's elevated position. This is an impact on the landscape CPRE would not wish to see.</p> |
| Local Residents | <p>Summary of comments submitted:</p> <p>Housing and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns with the provision of affordable homes in the village. - If new homes are necessary bungalows are needed for the elderly and affordable homes. - Clarification required over housing and jobs needs over the plan period. <p>Highways & sustainable transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns over highway safety and traffic congestion in the village particularly around central areas e.g. Millbank, Snackgate Lane, South View, Water Lane, Highside Rd and Hall Lane. - Traffic congestion and parking is an issue at school drop off and pick up times particularly around Hopelands. - Access to Walworth Rd site is too close to other junctions and the bend in the road reduces visibility. - Roads are too narrow. |

- Footpaths are limited in the village particularly to the school.
- Parking is already an issue in the village.
- There should be adequate off street parking in new estates.
- Traffic calming, 20mph and new car park away from the village centre suggested.
- No direct bus link to Newton Aycliffe. Villagers are reliant on cars to get to Aycliffe and the industrial estate.
- Nearby centres are not easily accessed i.e. West Auckland, Darlington, Newton Aycliffe.
- New footpaths and cycle ways required.
- Bus services need to be improved.
- There are no jobs in the village, commuting will add to traffic congestion.

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure in the village is not suitable for a growth in population.
- The primary school is at capacity.
- Expansion of the school will affect standards.
- Education funding via pupil numbers is short sighted.
- Provision should be made for a nursery potentially at the school. A private nursery should be considered also to provide care outside of term time, if there is commercial interest.
- Development will affect secondary school choices.
- Suggestion to build a new school on the edge of the village and develop the existing site for housing.
- Reduce the number of children attending the local primary school from the Durham area.
- Doctor's surgery is at capacity.
- Concerns regarding surface and foul water drainage. There are existing problems with drainage; new homes will worsen the situation.
- Walworth Rd prone to flooding.
- New green spaces should be provided in the village including play facilities for all ages and abilities if possible.
- Issues with gas mains in the village.
- Developers should be required to pay significantly towards new infrastructure provision.

Heritage and Conservation

- Development should be sensitive to the character of the village and conservation area.

Development Limits

- General objection to the expansion of the village and development limits.
- Small amount of residents do comment that growth in the plan appears to be a controlled expansion.

General Comments

- There is understanding that new homes need to be built but not in Heighington village.
- The Council need to be more proactive in preparing a Local Plan.
- Heighington's 'best village' status will be ruined.
- Heighington will no longer be a village.
- Growth should not be focused on the larger villages. Instead allow development in the smaller villages where infrastructure can be provided and altered.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some support for the draft plan – the village boundaries have not been extended too much but infrastructure should be considered. - Brownfield sites within the urban area of Darlington should be developed first. - No concerns with the sites at School Aycliffe and Beech Crescent. - Walworth Rd site unacceptable; not sympathetic to the village character, impact on highways, junctions in this area are dangerous and road network not designed for such an increase in traffic. - At the Walworth Rd site concern that the SUDs area is also to be used as open space. How can this be the case if the area is in flood. - School Aycliffe site is an unsustainable form of development. It is disappointing that this scheme was approved. - New homes should include solar panels and triple glazing. These issues should be part of the planning process. - Concerns regarding the design and quality of new homes. New development should be in keeping with the character of the village and be low density. - Residents have not been consulted on highways or education issues. This should be undertaken, and any assessments should be available to the public. - Land between Heighington and School Aycliffe should be considered for development rather than the village. - Concerns that Bellway held a consultation on the Walworth Rd site before the Council's consultation. Suggests that this scheme will be approved. - No transparency of who the other developers are. - Will developers be able to sell these properties? Potential impact on the sale of existing properties. - Development which destroys green belt in an area of outstanding natural beauty should not be allowed. - Area adjacent to Cumby Arms suggested for development and car park to the rear of the village hall. |
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Appendix I: Draft Local Plan Governance Structure

